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POLITICAL AND LITERARY LIFE OF SCOTLAND: PARTY, PROSE,

AND THE POLITICAL AESTHETIC.

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# **DECLARATION**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis
is the result of my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or to any
other institution.
Signature

# **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the substantive and verifiable political and cultural legacy of the social reformer and author, Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936), one of the most famous and controversial Scots of his generation. Much has been written about Graham before and after his death, in biographies, memoirs, and analyses of his large canon of essays, but there has been little analysis of his political beliefs and the influences that shaped them, and how these directed his efforts into the creation of the first party of labour in Britain, and his later involvement in the first nationalist party in Scotland. The thesis therefore seeks to uncover Graham's philosophies through his political statements, and to extrapolate them, where possible, into the themes of his political campaigns and in his later literary works. It is thus the intention to transcend previous perspectives by looking at Graham not solely as a politician, nor an author, but as an eloquent, disquieted, principled, fervid moralist and contrarian, for whom politics and writing were fundamentally the same thing, the means by which his deeply felt moral anger could be expressed.

TABLE of CONTENTS		
01.	INTRODUCTION	7 - 10
02.	REVIEW of LITERATURE	11 - 20
03.	CHAPTER 1, 1885-1892. INTRODUCTION LAND and LABOUR POLITICAL INFLUENCES SUBSEQUENT POLITICAL CAREER POLITICAL JOURNALISM EMPIRE COLONIALISM IRELAND SCOTLAND CONCLUSION	21 - 90
04.	CHAPTER 2, 1893-1913. INTRODUCTION LAND and LABOUR NEW LITERARY CAREER EMPIRE THE SKETCHES COLONIALISM IRELAND and SCOTLAND CONCLUSION	91 - 157
05.	CHAPTER 3, 1914-1936. INTRODUCTION LAND and LABOUR EMPIRE and COLONIALISM IRELAND and SCOTLAND CONTINUING LITERARY WORKS OBITUARIES AND APPRECIATIONS CONCLUSION	158 - 199
06.	CONCLUSION	200 - 203
07.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	204 - 213
	ANCILLARY MATERIALS CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM'S POLITICAL ARTICLES, PAMPHLETS, and LITERARY SKETCHES.	1 - 9
	SCHEDULE of BIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS.	1 - 62

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

ASLS Association of Scottish Literary Studies BSP The British Socialist Party **EUL** Edinburgh University Library ILP The Independent Labour Party **NLS** The National Library of Scotland **NPS** The National Party of Scotland SDF The Social Democratic Federation **SHRA** The Scottish Home Rule Association SL

The Socialist League

SNP The Scottish National Party

SPLP The Scottish Parliamentary Labour Party

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Cunninghame Graham family archives are deposited in The National Library of Scotland, but the largest collection was accumulated by his biographer Herbert Faulkner West and is preserved in The Rauner Library, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. According to Anne Taylor, Graham was complicit in ensuring that this archive reflected him as he wished to be perceived, and Aimé Tschiffely reported that much of the notable correspondence to him was destroyed by Graham himself. <sup>2</sup> Several other universities hold small collections, including the University of Michigan and the University of Texas. Two limited editions of correspondence have been published, W. H. Hudson's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham (1941), edited by Richard Curle,<sup>3</sup> and A Selection of Letters to Edward Garnett (1981), edited by Edward Thomas.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Cedric Watts edited Joseph Conrad's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham (1969),<sup>5</sup> containing over eighty of Conrad's letters, mostly dealing with literary matters. No correspondence from Graham to Conrad has been found. The NLS also holds the papers of R. E. Muirhead, a major promoter of the SHRA and the NPS, which contains Muirhead's correspondence with Graham, carried on over 15 years, providing an insight into Graham's later life in nationalist politics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Anne Taylor, The People's Laird: A Life of Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, (Edinburgh: The Tobias Press, 2005),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 'Following directions, he had already destroyed letters which, in a money sense would have been very valuable letters by famous men to Cunninghame Graham; and he had to do this although it almost made him weep.' A. F. Tschiffely, 'Reminiscences: Letters Destroyed,' Scotsman, 19 October 1936, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Richard Curle, ed., W. H. Hudson's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham, (London: Golden Cockerel Press (1941).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Edward Thomas, ed., A Selection of Letters to Edward Garnett, (Edinburgh: Tragara Press, 1981).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Cedric Watts, ed., Joseph Conrad's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Cambridge University Press, 1969).

Gente Scotus, Anima Orbis terrarum Civis.

#### 01. INTRODUCTION

Cunninghame Graham's career in the public eye demonstrated an extraordinary longevity, spanning over fifty years, moving from the aristocratic, radical bête noir of the British political establishment, to a state of near veneration amongst every class in society. In 1927, the gossip columnist of The Sunday Post reported, 'There are few men nowadays so well known as Mr R. B. Cunninghame Graham,'6 and on his death in 1936, his early biographer Aimé Tschiffely stated that 'his name will surely grow,'7 but he quickly faded from both the academic and the public consciousness, and a mere sixteen years later, the cultural revivalist, Hamish Henderson, posed the question, 'Who Remembers Cunninghame Graham?'8 However, there have been brief episodes of reawakened interest in him. These have been stimulated by occasional biographies and new anthologies of his writings, references by writers and academics who have portrayed him as a visionary or a quaint anomaly, and by exaggerated or simplistic claims, often sponsored by those who wished to promote or justify their own political agendas. There have also been periodic attempts to revive his name and works by those whom Wendell Harris called 'eager champions," but Graham's name and reputation have stubbornly refused rehabilitation, and his literary works, which were never commercially popular, remain little read. Consequently, Graham's champions focused on the romantic aspects of his life. Foremost among these have been his Hispanic connections and early adventures among the gauchos and the natives of South America; his radicalism and erratic behaviour as a member of parliament; the establishment of an early socialist presence there, and the formation of an early Labour party;10 his large literary output,11 and later, his role as an inspirational Scottish patriot. These have, however, obscured rather than illuminated Graham's life, and, aggregated, they have left us with a unique simulacrum of a romantic idealist, an aesthete, and an adventurer, portrayals that this thesis will challenge.

The reasons for Graham's eclipse are complex, but part of the explanation is that his career appeared both disparate and contradictory, bifurcated between the radical left-wing political campaigner, and the reflective and idiosyncratic author, a man of peace, and a disturber of the peace, a nationalist and an internationalist, an ardent polemicist, and a nostalgic essayist. Graham's legend also fed off apparently disparate and contradictory elements in his character; great charm and charisma, a powerful and deeprooted morality and philanthropy which frequently militated against his own best interests; a personal vanity coupled with a surprising humility about his literary talents, counterpoised by elitism, and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Sunday Post, 13 November 1927, p. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Aimé Felix Tschiffely, Fortnightly Review, May 1936, p. 559.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Hamish Henderson, 'Who Remembers Cunninghame Graham?' *Daily Worker*, November 1952. (Reprinted in *Alias, MacAlias: Writing on Songs, Folk and Literature*, London: Polygon 1992), pp. 319-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Wendell V. Harris, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham,' in *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, Vol.3 (1987), p. 221.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> First-hand accounts of Graham's role in the founding of the first Labour party are rare.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> These eventually comprised thirty-four published volumes in his lifetime, equally divided between histories, and anthologies of his sketches, which originally appeared in literary journals; over one hundred polemical essays for small left-wing publications, five pamphlets, and fifty prefaces, forewords, and introductions.

instincts of an adventurous and incautious showman, combinations outwith normal human experience, and thus, he has remained elusive. This thesis, however, will propose that despite occasional impulsive acts and injudicious utterances throughout his life, that Graham, driven by strong moral impulses, demonstrated a remarkable consistency of thought, and that his proposed solutions to perceived political and social disparities were practical.

Of his literary achievements, opinion was also extraordinarily divided, ranging from William Power's assessment that Graham was 'perhaps the finest literary artist alive in Europe today,'12 to his obituary a year later in *The Times* in which he was described as 'neither an essayist nor a historian.'13 In 1910, a critic in *The Observer* wrote of Graham's sketches, 'Judged upon their style, they rank among the best things ever written in this country . . . little works of art that place the writer by the side of the great story-tellers of France and Russia,'14 while the biographer of Graham's great friend, Joseph Conrad, believed that Graham was 'never primarily a writer, let alone an artist.'15

In an attempt to de-'mistify' Graham's radical and controversial beliefs, and his achievements, this thesis has set aside, where possible, the more colourful aspects of his life, particularly his nostalgic overseas memoirs, and focussed on his contributions to the political and cultural life of Scotland. However, Graham's foreign experiences cannot be ignored entirely, for there are strong political and thematic parallels with his Scottish works, which consolidated rather than dissipated his nostalgic preoccupations, and, it was his international and cross-cultural perspectives that fitfully broadened out the Scottish experience onto the world stage, and is a significant factor in the position he now occupies in the pantheon of notable Scots.

The motivations behind Graham's urge to speak out and rebel can only be conjectured, but the thesis will examine his early social and political influences, where there is documentary evidence, or tangible philosophical links. In pursuance of this, although Graham kept no journal, and his handwriting was notoriously obscure, <sup>16</sup> many of his early speeches were reported verbatim, and at the beginning, the thesis relies heavily on newspaper reports, as it attempts to identify and abstract common political themes or causes, and contextualise them in the turbulent political circumstances of his times. Later, when Graham pursued his political campaigns through polemical journalism, his opinions were more fully expressed, and these, hitherto, have not been analysed. Later still, while remaining politically active, Graham pursued a more prestigious career as a memoirist for mainstream publications, and while he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> William Power, Literature And Oatmeal, (London: George Routledge, 1935), pp. 168-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Times, 23 March 1936, p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Observer, 16 October 1910, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Jocelyn Baines, *Joseph Conrad* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1960), p. 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Many people have commented on the illegibility of his handwriting. In an Editorial in *The People's Press*, the writer humourously stated that one of Graham's handwritten articles had 'gone within an ace' of bringing about a strike, and that two compositors had retired to the peaceful seclusion of a padded room in an asylum. *People's Press*, 3 September 1890, p. 3.

was obliged to frame his views more subtly for a politically conservative readership, the thesis will propose that the common themes explored in his early journalism, fed obliquely into his more literary works, to the extent that despite an increasing tendency towards nostalgic reminiscence, his preoccupations did not fundamentally alter.

The first of these identified themes or causes, the one which formed the basis of his early disquiet, was exclusivity in land, particularly in Scotland and Ireland, but after his first-hand experiences of working and living conditions of the poor, this was quickly subsumed into his campaigns on behalf of labour and against Capitalism, which would dominate his early political career. By the beginning of 1887, land, as a campaigning issue at home, had almost disappeared; however, it persisted as an underlying factor in Graham's attitude towards Britain's empire, which he directly equated with capitalist exploitation. In the wake of imperial expansion, came the detrimental effects of colonialism, and his concerns over ethnic, cultural, and environmental destruction and loss, which Graham ironically described as 'progress.' Colonialism, however, was not restricted in Graham's mind to foreign intrusion, but also to the creeping imposition of detrimental political, economic, and cultural attitudes everywhere, including Scotland. Finally, Graham's involvement in the politics of both Ireland and Scotland would encompass all of the aforementioned themes, culminating near the end of his life, in his support for Scottish independence.

To facilitate this investigation, the thesis has divided Graham's life into three chronological chapters, representing distinctive boundaries between liminal phases. The first chapter, from 1885 to 1892, examines Graham's early political views and his likely political influences, his campaigns in and out of parliament, and his early journalism. In the majority of the histories of the early socialist movement in Britain, Graham occupies a minor and often incongruous position, but the thesis will examine the fragmentary evidence, from first-hand accounts, Graham's role in the founding of the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Party, and his relationship with Keir Hardie, which has not previously been done.

The second chapter examines the period from 1893 to 1913, during which time Graham remained politically active, but where, apart from some notable exceptions, his literary sketches were dominated by nostalgic reminiscences of South America and Scotland, but which, in their own way, continued to reflect his political, social, and cultural concerns. It will also conjecture on Graham's choice of literary form, and question the conclusions of previous commentators.

The third chapter covers the period from 1914 until Graham's death in 1936, the chronologically longest, but least active period. It will examine the considerable impact of the First World War on Graham's political outlook, which has not previously been done, his later Scottish writings, and the extent of his engagement with nationalist politics. In this context, the thesis will attempt to set his works in the contemporary Scottish milieu, and question whether they can be seen as part of any literary or

cultural movement, peculiar to Scotland.

Finally, in the CONCLUSION, an attempt will be made to bring these fundamentally political themes together, and to establish what substantive and lasting contribution Graham made to Scottish life and letters.

#### 02. REVIEW of LITERATURE

## THE BIOGRAPHIES

To date there are eight dedicated biographies of Graham in English, and one in Spanish. The first was published in his lifetime, by the American, Herbert Faulkner West, A Modern Conquistador: Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham: His Life and Works (1932).<sup>17</sup> The second, and the best known, was published a year after his death, Don Roberto: Being the Account of the Life and Works of R. B. Cunninghame Graham 1852–1936 (1937), by his friend, the Swiss horseman, Aimé Félix Tschiffely. We have to wait 30 years for the third, by another American, Richard E. Haymaker's Prince-Errant and Evocator of Horizons: A Reading of R. B. Cunninghame Graham (1967). In 1978, Alicia Jurado published her El Escocés Errante: R. B. Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography (1979). Watts published his own biography, R. B. Cunninghame Graham in 1983. The seventh, R. B. Cunninghame Graham: Fighter For Justice was published privately by the Reverend Ian Fraser in 2002, and Graham's great-niece, Jean Cunninghame Graham, published her Gaucho Laird: The Life of R. B. Don Roberto Cunninghame Graham, in 2004. The ninth, The People's Laird: A Life of Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, was published in Scotland by Anne Taylor in 2005.

The first four biographies can be dismissed as semi-fantasies that focused on the heroic and romantic life of their subject. Tschiffely's book, for example is severely compromised by what he described as 'the conflict between truth and affection,'21 and it showed signs of being published in a hurry, soon after his subject's death. Graham had asked Tschiffely to undertake the task, apparently because he found West's biography dull,<sup>22</sup> but more likely because he wished to exert more control of how he would be perceived after his death. Taylor exposed much of it as romantic fabrication,<sup>23</sup> adding that after publication, Graham dead became instantly more famous than Graham alive.<sup>24</sup>

Watts and Davies' *Critical Biography* (1979) was derived in part from both author's doctoral research, and takes a much more pragmatic view of their subject, confining Graham's early and less verifiable life to a mere 48 pages. Watts had already produced a spirited critical profile of Graham in the Introduction

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> H. Faulkner West, Cunninghame Graham: His Life and Works (London: Cranley & Day, 1932).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Richard E. Haymaker, *Prince-Errant and Evocator of Horizons: A Reading of R. B. Cunninghame Graham* (Printed Privately, 1967).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Alicia Jurado, El Escocés Errante: R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1978).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Cedric Watts & Laurence Davies, Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> A. F. Tschiffely *Don Roberto: Being the Account of the Life and Works of R. B. Cunninghame Graham 1852–1936* (London: Heinemann, 1937), p. xix. Hugh MacDiarmid described Tschiffely has 'the editor of an autobiography for which the writings and correspondence of Cunninghame Graham supplied the material.' Hugh MacDiarmid, *Cunninghame Graham: A Centenary Study* (Glasgow: Caledonian Press, 1952), p. 22. In a review of this biography, the critic V. S. Pritchett described Tschiffely as having 'a capacity for hero-worship.' V. S. Pritchett, *London Mercury*, January 1938, p. 339.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Anne Taylor, *The People's Laird: A Life of Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham* (Edinburgh: The Tobias Press, 2005), p. 328.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 331.

to his Joseph Conrad's Letters to Cunninghame Graham (1969), which showed an interest in untangling the Graham legend, and that motivation continued here. The book comes into its own, however, when Graham's writings were systematically examined, at the point when Graham began to marshal his talents in more subtle ways to challenge prevailing orthodoxies, and demonstrating a particular abhorrence of the Kailyard School of Scottish writing. Graham's unsettling dialectic style is discussed in some detail, making this the only biography that is a worthy companion for anyone approaching Graham's writings for the first time.

Watt's own biography of Graham, R. B. Cunninghame Graham (1983) was published four years later in the United States, and we might presume it was aimed at an American readership. This book had a more general intent and appeal than his more critical collaboration with Davies, and in the beginning at least, there is a strong heroic element in his recounting of Graham's life. Graham's political beliefs and activities are confined to this opening biographical chapter, and passed over in a fairly cursory manner. Watts did, however, briefly deal with Graham's early political writings, but made no attempt to integrate these with Graham's later literary works, and there is a strong feeling of disjuncture. The major part of this biography discusses Graham's later literary sketches, and these were dealt with in a perceptive, readable, and sympathetic manner, although he concluded that Graham was not a major author.<sup>25</sup>

The Reverend Ian Fraser's self-published R. B. Cunninghame Graham Fighter For Justice: An Appreciation of His Social and Religious Outlook (2002) was also derived from his PhD thesis (1955), and is the nearest we get to what Tschiffely described as 'the Freudian dissecting table.'26 However, Fraser made no concerted attempt to speculate on his subject's psychology in any real depth, admitting that insights into his character were rare.<sup>27</sup> Initially, Fraser focused on Graham's social background, his experiences among indigenous peoples whom, he stated, Graham saw clearly 'without the cataract of class or national prejudice,'28 which he believed was a vital clue in understanding his subject, and set him in direct opposition to Victorian beliefs and imperial ambitions. By sifting through Graham's writings, Fraser collected together common themes, such as the idea of progress, liberty, industrialisation, economics, imperialism, morality, and the political and sexual liberation of women, etc., and there emerges a picture, not only of consistency, but of startling radical idealism, although Fraser insisted that Graham could not have been a genuine socialist.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast to Tschiffely's hurried account, Jean Cunninghame Graham's family-style biography, containing letters and personal anecdotes, need not detain us long. Three-quarters of the book is taken up with her great-uncle's boyhood and adventures in the Americas, presumably to satisfy her obscure

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Cedric Watts, R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Boston: Twaynes English Authors, 1983), p. 114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Tschiffely, p. xix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ian M. Fraser, R. B. Cunninghame Graham Fighter For Justice: An Appreciation of His Social and Religious Outlook (self-published, 2002), p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

publisher's equine interests. However, it is not entirely without interest, as it offered valuable connections to real events that Graham incorporated into his works, reinforcing the idea that Graham only wrote from his own experiences. The author failed to mention, however, that her great uncle died when she was only seven years old, and that she spent all of her childhood in England and South Africa.

Distance lent disenchantment to the final biography, Anne Taylor's *The Gaucho Laird*, a work that added a new level of detail and understanding to Graham's life, and on occasions, his psychology, when much of the mythology is stripped away and the two early biographies debunked as being fabricated by Graham himself. At once intimate and matter-of-fact, it is the most comprehensive, detailed, explicit, and brave biography, extensively researched and referenced, with the judicious use of reports from Hansard and local newspapers, to trace Graham's political career in and out of parliament. Taylor also tackled Graham's father's severe mental condition; the fiction that in childhood Graham was educated by his Spanish grandmother; his reputation as a youthful philanderer; his dubious experiences as 'a gaucho;' his morganatic and possibly bigamous marriage to a woman with a shady past, who invented an exotic *alter ego*, subjects that the other biographers were either unaware of, or treated as taboo. It is difficult to see how this biography can be improved upon as a factual record of events, and a perceptive and objective commentary on Graham's life. It was, however, badly let down by the poor production values, and neither she, Haymaker, Jean Cunninghame Graham, nor Fraser, found mainstream publishers, which may reflect on the perceived commercial viability of their subject.

Although not a biography *per se*, Watts's collaborator, Laurence Davies, chose Graham as the subject of his 1972 doctoral thesis, and it should, perhaps, be included at this point.<sup>30</sup> Davies's thesis was derived from the simple fact that Graham had described himself to his editor, Edward Garnett, as 'an impressionist,' and had taken him literally, which provided Davies with the inspiration to carry out extensive research into impressionism in art and in literature. It is not the object in this thesis to call into question Davies's linkages into the wider world of impressionism, however, at no point did Davies ask why Graham had chosen the impressionistic sketch form, assuming that it had been a deliberate choice at all. This thesis will question that assumption, and proffer a much simpler rationale. It will also question the belief that Graham was motivated by what Davies called 'scepticism and assertiveness,'<sup>31</sup> which sounds distinctly puny in the context of Graham's turbulent life.

#### CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM

There were innumerable contemporary reviews of Graham's books and anthologies, too many to be included here, but the following may give a flavour of the diversity of opinion. In 1912, V. S. Pritchett

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Laurence Davies, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham and the Concept of Impressionism,' Thesis, University of Sussex, 1972.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

wrote that Graham was 'one of the very best writers in the English language.'32 A year later, Edwin Clark wrote that he was sadly neglected, and despite being admired in certain quarters, 'he has failed to excite popular interest.'33 In 1916 Frederick Watson opined that success had eluded him because 'people hate being instructed,'34 and in 1924, Leslie Chaundy, who compiled the first bibliography of Graham's works, wrote that Graham told him that his works were written largely for his own amusement, 'since he is not a professional writer.'35 Frank Harris thought that his physical advantages and wealth prevented him from being a great writer, and referred to him as 'an amateur of genius.'36

#### **MEMOIRS**

There are also many memoirs of Graham, again too numerous to all be included, but the Scottish commentaries have significance for this study. Among those Scots who knew him, Hugh MacDiarmid wrote the most spirited defence of Graham, both as a politician and as a writer, in two studies written on the centenary of Graham's birth. In the first, like his previous works, MacDiarmid used Graham as a means by which he could attack the Scottish political and literary establishment, particularly the SNP, and offered an interesting picture of Graham's role within that organisation. The second is more celebratory, concerning itself with Graham's personality, but as usual, MacDiarmid could not resist further attacks. Tellingly, for someone who knew him, MacDiarmid admitted that Graham had left, 'the enigma of his personality unsolved.'37

A friend of both, and sharing Graham and MacDiarmid's political views, was the popular author, Compton Mackenzie, who recorded his memories of Graham in his autobiography.<sup>38</sup> This is a useful record of Graham's early involvement with Scottish nationalism, particularly his candidature for the Rectorship of Glasgow University. Mackenzie also wrote an appreciation of Graham on his death,<sup>39</sup> which gave an insight into his own, and Graham's attitude to the SNP. However, Mackenzie's reference in his *Literature In My Time* (1933), paid scant attention to Graham's writings with the epithet 'he has taken the trouble to write as well as he could about the life of a man with an appetite for living, '40 which was less than rapturous.

The most comprehensive and informed obituaries of Graham came in three consecutive articles in Outlook & The Modern Scot, in May 1936, by Henry Nevinson, Mackenzie, and George Scott Moncrieff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> V. S. Pritchett, Current Literature, Vol.LIII., October 1912, pp. 470-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Edwin Clark, New York Times Book Review, 6 October 1929, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Frederick Watson, *Bookman* Vol.IXL (March 1916), p. 176.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Leslie Chaundy, A Bibliography of the First Editions of the Works of R. B. Cunninghame Graham (London: Dulan, 1924), p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Frank Harris, Frank Harris: His Life And Adventures (London: The Richards Press, 1947), p. 476.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> MacDiarmid, Cunninghame Graham: A Centenary Study (Glasgow: Caledonian Press, 1952), p. 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Compton Mackenzie, My Life and Times, Octaves Four and Six (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Mackenzie, C., Outlook & The Modern Scot, May 1936, p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Mackenzie, C., Literature In My Time, (London: Rich & Cowan, 1933), p. 178

#### EAGER CHAMPIONS

The foremost of Graham's later 'eager champions' was another Scot, Professor John Walker, who in 1981, described Graham as 'a Scots literary giant,' and optimistically predicted the revival of his name and reputation.<sup>41</sup> Between 1966 and 1986, Walker published nine articles on Graham, and three anthologies of his sketches, including *The Scottish Sketches of Cunninghame Graham* (1982),<sup>42</sup> which will be critiqued later in this thesis. Walker's anthologies were accompanied by perceptive commentaries on the works, and he did much to keep Graham's name alive during that period.

More recently, Graham's complete sketches were published in five volumes by Alan MacGillivray, John McIntyre, and James Alison,<sup>43</sup> which, like Walker's anthologies, were taken from Graham's own anthologies, not their original sources. These too are accompanied by informed analysis of Graham's personality and writing skills, but they have done little to reawaken interest.

#### ACADEMIC BOOKS

Graham received no mention in important contemporary works of literary criticism, such as A Literary History of Scotland by J. H. Millar (1903), although by that time his writing career was only eight years old. Nor was he mentioned in the important text that was to influence MacDiarmid's thought, Scottish Literature: Character & Influence (1919), by G. Gregory Smith. Kurt Wittig's comprehensive The Scottish Tradition in Literature (1958) also ignored Graham's contribution.<sup>44</sup>

It was again MacDiarmid, writing under his own name, C. M. Grieve, who gave the first comprehensive appreciation of Graham in his *Contemporary Scottish Studies* (1926).<sup>45</sup> MacDiarmid regarded Graham highly, however, this critical and acerbic work was MacDiarmid's first attempt to use Graham as an example of how the Scottish establishment had rejected its best talents, stating that Scottish culture was beset by mediocrities whilst the few with real talent, such as Graham 'who was potentially the greatest Scotsman of his generation' were driven out.<sup>46</sup> He classed Graham as belonging to the second rank of imaginative artists, but one who was virtually unknown in Scotland due to Scotland's debasement as a cultural nation.<sup>47</sup>

# COMPANIONS to LITERATURE

Graham's name appeared occasionally in literary companions, meriting a chapter in W. M. Parker's florid and romantic *Modern Scottish Writers* (1917), where Parker confidently stated that 'his fame is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> John Walker, Scotsman Magazine, June 1981, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> The Scottish Sketches of Cunninghame Graham, ed. by John Walker, (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Photographed on the Brain, Living With Ghosts, Ice House of the Mind, Fire From a Black Oval, A Ring Upon the Sand, ed. by Alan MacGillivray, John McIntyre, and James Alison (Edinburgh: Kennedy & Boyd, 2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Kurt Wittig, The Scottish Tradition in Literature (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1958).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> C. M. Grieve, Contemporary Scottish Studies, First Series (London: Leonard Parsons, 1926).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.49. There were also passing references to Graham in MacDiarmid's autobiography, *Lucky Poet: A Self Study* (London: Methuen, 1943), and *The Company I've Kept* (London: Hutchison, 1966).
<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

assured.'48 Much later, Maurice Lindsay, who had complimented Graham's stylishness in 1953,49 classified him in his *History of Scottish Literature* (1977), as one of 'who wrote of Scotland from the outside, looking in,' and described his prose works as vivid, full of sharp insights and strong narrative threads, but his characterisations were broad and colourful rather than psychologically subtle. He also believed that Graham's sketch-tale, 'Beattock to Moffat,' deserved a place 'in most anthologies of Scottish short story.'50 He repeated his praises in David Daiches's *A Companion to Scottish Culture* (1981).51 In *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature* (2012) Graham received no mention. In *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (1970), George Sampson stated 'Unfortunately, he [Graham] lavished much of his literary skill on South American adventurers and dictators who have little appeal to English readers.'52 Ian Campbell made the briefest mention of Graham in *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol. III, remarking that his writing career was 'hard to encapsulate,'53 while in Volume IV (1987), Graham was only mentioned in the context of Mackenzie's nationalism,<sup>54</sup> as he was in *Scotland's Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (2007).55

#### THE LABOUR PARTY

Despite his role in the early labour movement, and the first declared socialist M.P., Graham remains on the fringes of Labour history in Britain. Thomas Johnston's influential *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (1920), for example, mentioned him briefly twice, and in Francis William's history of the Labour Party, *Fifty Year March* (1949), he is mentioned briefly three times, where he was described as 'a Scottish laird and Radical M.P., a wild, quixotic and fantastically distinguished figure,'56 while Keir Hardie takes central stage in both works. G. D. H. Cole referred to Graham several times in his *British Working Class Politics 1832-1914* (1941), but only as an associate of Hardie, who was 'the principal organiser.'57 In a biography of Hardie (1975), Kenneth O. Morgan described Graham as 'a maverick free-lance,' and 'a cross-party figure,'58 and another biographer of Hardie, in the same year, wrote, 'After being badly defeated in 1892 General Election he [Graham] disappeared from British domestic politics, to reappear in the late 1920s as a Scottish Nationalist,'59 which was demonstrably incorrect. In A. E. P. Duffy's *Differing Policies and Personal Rivalries of the Independent Labour Party*' Graham appears only

<sup>48</sup> W. H. Parker, *Modern Scottish Writers* (1917) (New York: Books For Libraries Press, 1968), p. 210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Maurice Lindsay, The Lowlands of Scotland: Glasgow and The North (London: Robert Hale, 1953), p. 113.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Lindsay, A History of Scottish Literature (London: Robert Hale, 1977), pp. 433-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Ibid, in A Companion to Scottish Culture, ed. by David Daiches (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> George Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, 3rd Edition, Revised by R. C. Churchill (1970), p. 689.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Ian Campbell, in *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol.III, ed. by Douglas Gifford and Cairns Craig (Aberdeen University Press (1988), p. 178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Gavin Wallace, in *The History of Scottish Literature*, Vol.IV, ed. by Cairns Craig (Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p.250. Mackenzie was described as, 'the epoch-making figurehead of an entire political movement.' Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Crawford, Scotland's Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature (London: Penguin Books, 2007), p.569.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Francis Williams, Fifty Years' March: The Rise of the Labour Party (London: Odham's Press, 1946), p. 61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> G. D. H. Cole, British Working Class Politics 1832-1914 (London: Routledge, 1941), p. 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, Keir Hardie: Radical & Socialist (London: Phoenix, 1988), p. 21, p. 143.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Iain MacLean, Keir Hardie (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp. 33-4.

A more comprehensive reading can be found in Henry Pelling's textbook *Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900* (1965), wherein Graham's role in the development of early socialism in Britain is acknowledged, meriting a dozen references, but he is not in any way part of a central narrative, occasionally flitting in as an extraordinary, exposed, and ultimately doomed political figure. In Ian MacDougal's *Essays on Scottish Labour History* (1978) Graham received the scantest of mentions, and in James D. Young's *The Rousing of the Scottish Working Class* (1979) he received none. T. C. Smout's account in 'A Century of the Scottish People' (1987), stated that parliament found it hard to take Graham seriously, and 'after the mid 1890s he passed from the political limelight only to surface in 1928 as a cosponsor of the Scottish Nationalist [sic] Party.'63

More modern texts are no more laudatory. One slight exception was A. J. Davies' *To Build A New Jerusalem* (1996), where Graham is described as: 'an extraordinary character,' but his involvement in early Labour politics was credited as 'demonstrating that any new venture would not be exclusively a proletarian grouping,'64 Paul Edelman's: *The Rise of The Labour Party* (1996) did not mention Graham, and neither did Andrew Thorpe's *A History of the British Labour Party* (1997). Graham received no mention in 'The Scottish Labour Party: History, Institutions and Ideas (2004),<sup>65</sup> and in William Kenefick's *Red Scotland! The Rise and Fall of the Radical Left, c.1872 to 1932* (2007), he is referred to only as 'a well known figure.'66

Of the later Labour historians, Emrys Hughes and Caroline Benn were the only two writers who gave Graham a significant role in early Labour history.<sup>67</sup> However, Graham's name appeared in memoirs of his early socialist colleagues. The most valuable was by the journalist David Lowe in his *Souvenirs of Scottish Labour* (1919),<sup>68</sup> which recorded the many trials and tribulations of the SPLP, and Graham's inspiration and commitment.<sup>69</sup> Two other rare eyewitness accounts of these early days were written by Robert Smillie,<sup>70</sup> and his colleague, Alexander 'Sandy' Haddow,<sup>71</sup> which give us an insight into Graham's role.

<sup>60</sup> A. E. P. Duffy, Differing Policies and Personal Rivalries of the Independent Labour Party, (Indiana University Press, 1962).

<sup>61</sup> H. M. Pelling, The Origins of The Labour Party 1880-1900, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Essays in Scottish Labour History, Ian MacDougal (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1978), p. 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> T. C. Smout, A Century of the Scottish People (London: Fontana Press, 1987), pp. 254-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> A. J. Davies, To Build A New Jerusalem (1992) (London: Abacus, 1996), p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> The Scottish Labour Party: History, Institutions and Ideas, ed. by Gerry Hassan (Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> William Kenefick, Red Scotland! The Rise and Fall of the Radical Left, c. 1872 to 1932 (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 71

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Emrys Hughes, *Keir Hardie* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), and Caroline Benn, *Keir Hardie* (London: Hutchinson, 1992). It might be noted, that Benn's husband, Tony Benn, was another aristocrat who dedicated himself to working class and labour issues, against his own best interests.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> David, Lowe, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour (Glasgow: W. R. Holmes, 1919).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> In 1937, Lowe would publish a series of articles for *Glasgow Evening Times* on Graham, his relationship with Hardie, and accounts of the early SPLP.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Robert Smillie, My Life For Labour (London: Mills & Boon, 1924).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Alexander Haddow, 'Reminiscences of the Early Socialist Movement in Scotland,' Forward, 8 May 1909, p. 6.

## SCOTTISH HOME RULE.

Apart from contemporary newspaper reports and brief references in the early biographies, very little had been written about Graham's participation in the early Scottish Home Rule Movement. His name was only briefly mentioned by Lewis Spence as being a participant in the new NPS in 1928,<sup>72</sup> and also in John Barbour's critique of the party the following year.<sup>73</sup> It was not until 1955 that John MacCormick's book *The Flag In the Wind* described Graham's participation in the Rectorial election at the University of Glasgow in 1928, as a Scottish nationalist.<sup>74</sup> Much of this was collaborated in Compton Mackenzie's autobiography.<sup>75</sup>

After Graham's death, there were only very occasional references to his nationalism in books and political journals. In Sir Reginald Coupland's Welsh and Scottish Nationalism (1954), there is a brief mention of Graham as someone who 'linked the cause of Labour with Home Rule.'76 H. J. Hanham's Scottish Nationalism (1969),<sup>77</sup> and Keith Webb's The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland (1977),<sup>78</sup> which were key texts in the mid-20th century during the nationalist resurgence, made only the briefest mention of Graham, and notwithstanding high offices in the early and later nationalist movements, he is treated as a marginal figure. Surprisingly, there was no mention of Graham's involvement with the nationalist cause in Christopher Harvie's Scotland and Nationalism (1977), only his membership of the SPLP, 79 which was repeated in Ewen Cameron's Impaled on a Thistle (2010). Graham received several brief mentions in Michael Keating and David Bleiman's book Labour and Scottish Nationalism (1979), but only as a 'nationalist enthusiast' who 'had been prominent in the Labour Party in Keir Hardie's day.'80 In his influential book, A Political History of Scotland, Iain Hutchison only mentioned Graham's involvement in the early days of the SPLP81 and made no mention of his nationalist politics. However, Richard J. Finlay briefly mentioned Graham as lending credibility to the NPS's image in his Independent and Free: Scottish Politics and the Origins of The Scottish National Party 1918-1945 (1994), but he did not believe that Graham played a significant role in the party's formation, that accolade going to John MacCormick.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Lewis Spence, The National Party of Scotland, Edinburgh Review (July 1928). Reprinted in Modernism and Nationalism, Literature and Society in Scotland 1918-1939, ed. by Margery McCulloch (Glasgow: ASLS, 2004), p. 325.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> John Barbour, 'Scotland - The New Dominion,' *The Edinburgh Review* (April 1929). Reprinted in *Modernism and Nationalism, Literature and Society in Scotland 1918-1939*, Ibid. p. 326.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> John MacCormick, *The Flag In The Wind* (1955) (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Mackenzie, My Life and Times, Octave 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Sir Reginald Coupland, Welsh & Scottish Nationalism, (London: Collins, 1954), p. 298.

<sup>77</sup> H. J. Hanham, Scottish Nationalism, (London, Faber & Faber, 1969), p. 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Keith Webb, *The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 1977), p. 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 22.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Keating and David Bleiman, Labour and Scottish Nationalism (London: MacMillan, 1979), p. 104.

<sup>81</sup> I. G. C Hutchison, A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), pp. 181-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Richard J., Finlay, *Independent and Free: Scottish Politics and the Origins of The Scottish National Party 1918-1945* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1994), p. 80.

In Finlay's other books, A Partnership For Good?: Scottish Politics and the Union Since 1880 (1997),83 and Modern Scotland 1914-2000 (2004),84 Graham's name is not mentioned, and in his more detailed studies of the early Labour party and the nationalist groups, such as 'Pressure Group or Political Party: The Nationalist Impact on Scottish Politics, 1928-1945,' (1993)85 and 'National Identity in Crisis: Politicians, Intellectuals and the 'End of Scotland', 1920–1939' (1994,86 Graham's name is again absent.

Peter Lynch's book, *SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party* (2002) made only one brief mention of Graham as a member of the SHRA along with Hardie and others,<sup>87</sup> but made no mention of his later roles in the NPS or the SNP. Considering these very uneven acknowledgements, it is surprising that Graham was included as a 'leader' of the SNP in a recent book entitled *Scottish National Party Leaders* (2016). After spending much of his analysis recording Graham's history as a socialist, Cliff Williamson, conceded that Graham only took honorary roles in the NPS, and played little part in the management. However, Williamson agreed with Finlay, that Graham helped bring both the NPS and SNP to greater prominence.<sup>88</sup>

# ANTI IMPERIALISM

Outwith the biographies, Graham's anti-imperialism is mentioned briefly in a footnote in Bernard Porter's, Critics of Empire: British Radicals and The Imperial Challenge (2008),89 and in Gregory Claeys, Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850-1920 (2010), he is described as one who lamented the deleterious effects of the expanding empire on the British at home.90 Finlay made no mention of Graham's anti-imperialist views in his paper 'For or Against?': Scottish Nationalists and the British Empire, 1919-39' (1992),91 but by 1919, Graham's views on empire had radically changed.

# CONCLUSION

Apart from Taylor, all of Graham's biographers have more or less swallowed his myth whole, particularly the early biographers, who simply eulogised Graham's slanted recollections and vanities, aimed at keeping his own memory alive. Deeper investigations reveal an altogether more complex picture, involving many failures and disappointments. Watts and Davies' works were the first serious attempt to get at the truth, but they too seemed in awe of their subject, and written to help resuscitate

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., A Partnership For Good?: Scottish Politics and the Union Since 1880 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Modern Scotland 1914-2000 (London: Profile Books, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Ibid., 'Pressure Group or Political Party: The Nationalist Impact on Scottish Politics, 1928-1945,' 20th Century British History (1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Ibid., 'National Identity in Crisis: Politicians, Intellectuals and the 'End of Scotland', 1920-1939,' *History, Journal of the Historical Association*, June 1994.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Peter Lynch, SNP: The History of the Scottish National Party (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2003), p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Cliff Williamson, 'Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham,' in *Scottish National Party Leaders*, ed. by James Mitchell and Gerry Hassan (London: Biteback Publishing, 2016), p. 83 and p. 85.

<sup>89</sup> Bernard Porter, Critics of Empire: British Radicals and The Imperial Challenge (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008), p. 100n.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Gregory Claeys, Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850-1920 (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Finlay, 'For or Against?': Scottish Nationalists and the British Empire, 1919-39,' *The Scottish Historical Review*, 1992.

Graham's name and reputation. Their strength, however, lay in their analysis of Graham's works, natural for two academics whose background and interests were in literary criticism. This, however, has resulted in a disjuncture between Graham's political and his literary life, which this thesis will argue are inseparable.

Graham's literary reputation has fared badly in the academic world, and he was not regarded as a major author in his own lifetime, nor subsequently. What has distinguished Graham from his contemporaries was his ability to radically divide opinion both as a writer and as a politician, and it seems that his personality and his politics have influenced opinion. Certainly, the large majority of his high-profile supporters who admired his writings knew him personally, or were other Scots of a similar political persuasion.

Political persuasion has also, perhaps, influenced Graham's reputation in Labour history, where his profile and views did not fit the standard model of the working-class hero, and it was Hardie who has been lionised by Labour historians. However, apart from Graham's agitation within and without parliament, recorded in newspapers, the evidence for his role in the creation of a party of labour is thin, and largely conjectural. This is also true of his role in the early Home Rule movement, and in the later nationalist parties.

#### 03. CHAPTER 1, 1885 - 1892.

INTRODUCTION

LAND and LABOUR

POLITICAL INFLUENCES

SUBSEQUENT POLITICAL CAREER

POLITICAL JOURNALISM

**EMPIRE** 

**COLONIALISM** 

**IRELAND** 

**SCOTLAND** 

CONCLUSION

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Cunninghame Graham was a scion of Scotland's hereditary landed class, and on his permanent return from South America, and on the death of his father in 1883, he became the new laird of the Gartmore Estate in rural South Perthshire. Subsequently, Graham, whose family had a long history of radicalism and support for the Liberal party, either applied for, or was approached to become a Liberal candidate in the upcoming general election of 1885.92 The Liberal party had seemed like a natural home for Graham, and despite William Ewart Gladstone's dominance of party and policy, Graham believed that Liberals considered the interests of others more highly than their own, stating, 'If this is the case, I am proud, and you all may be proud of belonging to that party, as, what higher morality is there in the world than 'to do to others as you would they should unto you.'93

Graham's attempt to become a member of parliament occurred during a period of political disarray for the Liberals, major schisms within the party over land issues, church disestablishment, and Irish Home Rule; what Hutchison described as 'faddist issues,'94 as well as disputes over party structures and organisation;95 a growing sense of unease among moderates over the party's future direction,96 and resistance to change from the party executive.97 Graham's candidacy for an industrial seat would, however, have been particularly attractive to party managers, where any radical appeal would be more palatable coming from the lips of someone of his pedigree, on the basis that, 'If a workman votes for a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Iain Hutchison related how that in some parts of Scotland, the power and influence of 'county families' persisted until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I. G. C. Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland 1832-1924* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), pp. 221-2. Also, Hutchison, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 19 September 1885, p. 6.

<sup>94</sup> Hutchison, Political History of Scotland, p. 176.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> James Kellas, 'The Liberal Party in Scotland 1876-1895,' *Scottish Historical Review* Vol.XLIV, No.37, April 1965, p. 5.

man with a carriage and pair it is because he believes that his views will be more adequately and effectively represented by him than his opponent, who may have to do his business on foot, <sup>798</sup> and he was selected to stand in the constituency of Camlachie, a deprived area in the East End of Glasgow.

Graham's early political speeches, prior to his entry onto the national stage, provide us with a window into his views, unalloyed by his later political experiences, but from the beginning, he placed himself at the radical end of the party.<sup>99</sup> The influence of his family inevitably impacted on Graham's views, however, it was obvious that his real-life experiences living and working among local populations in South America, instilled in him a more egalitarian spirit than would normally be encountered in someone with a similar social background.

#### LAND and LABOUR

The issue of land-ownership and Irish Home Rule were highly significant and fiercely debated topics during this period, and were particularly relevant in the constituency that Graham wished to represent, which contained significant Irish and Highland populations, and they became fundamental and recurring themes of his early campaigns. Land ownership and distribution became a political entry point for many reformers and proto-socialists, at a time when The Scottish Land Restoration League was contesting seats at the upcoming election, 100 and encouraging land raids in Tiree, which were regularly reported in Scotland's industrial heartland. 101 David Lowe who ran the office of Hardie's *Labour Leader* publication, related how Graham had demurred from standing at his initial choice of seat at Blackfriars in Glasgow, when he heard the Crofter's Party candidate, Shaw Maxwell, speak, 'Graham did not go to the platform, but from the front seat he followed the speeches with great eagerness. The ideas which had long been simmering in his head were being clothed in words and adorned by reason.'102

Graham's first recorded political speech was on 11 August 1885, when he was a guest speaker at Coatbridge in the contiguous constituency of North-West Lanarkshire, which, like Camlachie, was an industrial black-spot, with significant Irish and Highland populations. <sup>103</sup> As a landowner himself, Graham began diffidently on the subject of the speed of social and political reform, but unexpectedly, as if to distance himself from his own social position, he launched into an attack on the British class system, and their monopoly of the land:

98 Quoted in P. F. Clarke, Lancashire and the New Liberalism (Cambridge University Press: 1971), p. 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Heyck and Klecka defined radicals in this specific context as 'persons devoted to the destruction of privilege in landowning, church and state.' T. W. Heyck and William, Klecka, 'British Radical M.P.s, 1874-1895: New Evidence From Discriminant Analysis,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 4:2 (Cambridge MA: M.I.T Press, Autumn, 1973), p. 179.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Kellas wrote that 'the Highland land reformers played an important part in the establishment of the Scottish Labour Party.' James Kellas, 'The Mid Lanark Election (1888) and The Scottish Labour Party (1888-1894),' *Parliamentary Affairs* No.18, 1964, p. 318. Also, Cole, p. 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> 'The Tiree Crofters,' Airdrie Advertiser, 21 August 1885, p. 3.

<sup>102</sup> David Lowe, Forward, 9 April 1910, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Since 1883, there had been large and active Highland Association in Coatbridge, where land ownership was hotly discussed. *Coatbridge Express*, 11 November 1885, p. 2.

Here, and here almost alone, has the existence of enormous territorial possessions continued, and whilst in other civilised countries we find the land almost exclusively cultivated by the peasants or agricultural labourers themselves, in Great Britain is still to be found a class of feudal magnates who . . . still enjoy privileges such as no class should enjoy to the exclusion of the rest in a civilised country.<sup>104</sup>

Here we can detect the source of Graham's general disquiet and perturbations, that there were glaring disparities and imbalances at the very foundations of society, which were deforming it, for the benefit of the few, but to the disadvantage of the many. These were common, but deeply moral, aesthetic and social impulses, the judgment of which, Raymond Williams asserted, are closely related 105 acting on someone who was already predisposed to strong feelings of compassion and a sense of justice. At this stage, however, this disparity was most obvious in the ownership and distribution of land, particularly in Ireland and Scotland.

According to Graham, these monopolies had led to the extinction of 'our ancient class of sturdy yeomen,' and in the Highlands, the population was 'constrained to live on the salvage of the land . . . situated between the devil and the deep sea.' <sup>106</sup> His proposed solution was the abolition of the inheritance laws, and free trade in land, but also, that he would support a tax on land. <sup>107</sup> These views, which were closer to the doctrines of H. M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, in which William Morris had previously been active, would already have placed Graham among the supporters of 'Scottish advanced Liberalism,' <sup>108</sup> but they were met with enthusiastic support from the floor. The chairman assured the audience that the local Association intended to proceed on the matter of selecting a candidate 'with some vigour,' and a week later, Graham was invited to stand as their candidate, <sup>109</sup> which the Liberals in Camlachie did not oppose.

The land issue was also part of a growing political and cultural awareness in both Ireland and Scotland, and a growing dissatisfaction with their place in the Union. In Scotland's case, dissatisfaction had initially grown over the treatment of Scottish legislation in parliament, and the issue of absentee landlordism, particularly English owners of Scottish estates, referred to as 'holiday Celtic chiefs.' Vociferous objectors to this state of affairs included men such as the classicist and Scottish patriot,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 15 August 1885, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p. 130. Williams also asserted that this concept was 'essentially, a product of the intellectual history of the nineteenth century.' Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 15 August 1885, p. 6.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> At least one other potential candidate (name unknown) had previously spoken to the Constituency Association. *The Airdrie Advertiser*, 15 August 1885, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> H. J. Hanham, 'Mid-Century Scottish Nationalism: Romantic and Radical,' *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain*, ed. by Robert Robson (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1967), p. 156.

Professor John Stuart Blackie (1809-95),<sup>111</sup> the Free Church minister, James Begg (1808-83), the novelist James Grant (1822-87),<sup>112</sup> and through his newspaper *The Highlander*, John Murdoch (1818-1903), who had worked in Ireland, and associated with Irish nationalists. Employing Irish Land League methods, rent strikes began in Skye, followed by riots and arrests, which spread to other communities, and James Hunter described parts of the Highlands and Islands, in the first weeks of 1883 as passing 'out of the United Kingdom's jurisdiction.'<sup>113</sup> The Irish National Land League had been founded in 1879 to further Irish claims, and by the spring of 1881, parliament had begun debating an Irish Land Bill, which gave Irish tenants rights, which were not available to Highland crofters.

The creation of The Scottish Land Restoration League in 1884, and an increase in civil disobedience in Ireland and Scotland, had also been inspired by the American Henry George's book *Progress and Powerty* (1879),<sup>114</sup> and by George's popular speaking tours in Britain and Ireland in the 1880s, considered by many as the major catalysts for the new breed of British radicals and socialists. Although he had developed radical theories of land-ownership, capital, and trade, George declared himself not to be a socialist,<sup>115</sup> but despite this, the Labour politician Philip Snowden recalled, 'Keir Hardie told me that it was *Progress and Powerty* which gave him his first ideas of socialism. No book ever written on the social problem made so many converts.'<sup>116</sup> George's unexpected second place in the New York City Mayoral Election of 2 November 1886, on behalf of The United Labor Party, had also come as a shock to many, and gave great encouragement to British socialists.<sup>117</sup>

According to Peter Jones, Graham was more strongly influenced by George than any other writer, <sup>118</sup> although he presented no evidence for this. However, Hardie would write of George's influence thus:

Some years later, Henry George came to Scotland and I read *Progress and Poverty*, which unlocked many of the industrial and economic difficulties which beset the mind of the worker trying to take an intelligent interest in his own affairs and led me, much to George's horror in

<sup>111</sup> As an influence on Graham's stance on the land issue, it may have been no coincidence that in 1885, Professor Blackie had published his book *The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1885), which contained what he described as 'harrowing narratives' of Highland evictions, p. 49. Blackie put the blame squarely on the shoulders of English landlords, who have 'a right to do what he chooses with his own,' p. 60. Graham, however, did not go so far in his specific 'national' accusations at this early stage of his career. Blackie also deprecated the draining of the Highland population into the large industrial towns, p. 67. As a 'founding member' and President of The Scottish Home Rule Association, Graham would have met and known Blackie, who was the Association's Vice-President. Such a meeting, which both attended, was reported in *South London Gazette*, 9 June 1888, p. 7, but there are no strong evidential links between the two men.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> A founder and joint Secretary of the earliest Scottish 'nationalist' organisation, The National Association For the Vindication of Scottish Rights,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> James Hunter, *The Last of the Free* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1999), p. 313.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, (London: The Henry George Foundation of Great Britain, 1931). The book is estimated to have sold 3 million copies.

<sup>115</sup> George, Protection and Free Trade (London: Kegan Paul, 1886). Notes to Chapter XXVIII.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Philip Snowden, An Autobiography (London: Ivor, Nicholson & Watson, 1934), p. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Glasgow Herald, 4 November 1886, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Peter d'A Jones, 'Henry George and British Labor Politics' in *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Volume 46, No.2, April 1987, p. 250.

later life when he met me, into Communism.<sup>119</sup>

One of George's basic economic tenets was that the restricted ownership of land had driven the working population into poverty, by reducing farmers to tenants and labourers, <sup>120</sup> and forcing the rural population into the slums and sweatshops of the cities. He concluded:

The wide-spreading social evils which everywhere men amid an advancing civilisation spring from *a great primary wrong* – the appropriation, as the exclusive property of some men, of the land on which and from which all must live.'121

George's solution was not to confiscate the land, but to nationalise rents through taxation, and in consequence, 'To abolish all taxation save that upon land values.' Graham had only hinted at this solution in this first speech, but he had proposed giving powers to municipal councils for the compulsory purchase of land around county towns and villages, to be let out as crofts to labourers, desirous of farming on a small scale. He aimed at the re-establishment of strong communities, along with a desire to return to an idealised Scottish rural past. Many years later, William Power wrote of Graham's belief in 'The Scotland of his dreams, which he is valiantly helping to create, is a Scotland nobly self-reliant and bravely idealistic, worthy of her own finest social and cultural traditions.' News From Nowhere, and Earthly Paradise 'particularly appealed in Scotland with its hankering for a rural past.' This would become a recurring theme in Graham's later literary works.

George's 'Single Tax' proposals had many adherents,<sup>126</sup> and it remained a political issue well into the 20th century. The Liberal Government adopted such a scheme in their 1909 People's Budget, as did the Labour government in 1931, but they were never implemented. However, the 'Single Tax' became increasingly challenged, particularly by socialists, who saw it as a distraction from the real causes of

<sup>119</sup> Keir Hardie, in Review of Reviews, June 1906, p. 57. It appears that many others followed the same route.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> George, Social Problems (London: Kegan Paul, 1884), p. 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> George, *Progress and Poverty*, p. 241. My italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 288. These proposals had a predecessor in Thomas Spence's work *Property in Land Every One's Right* (1775). H. M. Hyndman republished it as *The Nationalization of the Land* in 1882. Also, John Morrison Davidson's work, *Concerning Four Precursors of Henry George and the Single Tax* (1902), in which he asserted that Scots such as William Ogilvie, and Patrick Edward Dove, among others, preceded George's proposals in the previous century, and the Englishman, Jerrard Winstanley, in the century before that. In 1904, Graham wrote an *Introduction* to Davidson's book *Scotland For the Scots*, which demonstrated Graham's own nationalist instincts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Such a bill for compulsory purchase was proposed in parliament in 1891 and 1892, by young radical Liberals, aided by the Fabian, Sidney Webb, but was unsuccessful. H. C. G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists: The Ideas and Politics of a Post-Gladstonian Elite*, (Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 10.

<sup>124</sup> William Power, Literature And Oatmeal (London: Routledge, 1935), p. 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> W. Hamish Fraser, Scottish Popular Politics: From Radicalism to Labour (Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Apparently George's ideas had many adherents in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow. Elwood P. Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles* (Michigan State University Press, 1957), p. 117. Hutchison states that for many Liberals the single tax 'became very attractive.' Hutchison, *Scottish Politics*, p. 6.

poverty – Capitalism, and later, Graham himself became a vociferous opponent.<sup>127</sup> George's ideas, however, had been attractive to him in the earlier days, in what would become a common motif in Graham's political life, the search for simple, practical solutions,<sup>128</sup> believing, as he would write much later, that 'all imaginative men are also practical, whereas the men who think that they are practical pass their lives in a dream.'<sup>129</sup>

Graham's election campaign gathered pace during the Autumn of 1885, attracting larger and more enthusiastic audiences, and his statements became more radical. Whereas in his first speech he had emphasised the huge class differences, in his second, for the first time, in what also would be a major theme of his campaigns, he passionately specified the consequences of such a disparity:

[the] Dukes of Westminster with £1000 a day and match makers in the East End of London, who after a hard day's toil, go to bed hungry – if the agricultural labourers of the Midland Counties of England, divorced from all connection with the soil of his native country, starving on 9s or 10s a week, and herded into one room with his male and female relatives of several generations, is a spectacle for much congratulation, then, certainly we are capable of no improvement.  $^{130}$ 

In a more radical departure, but again demonstrating his hatred of injustice, Graham then attacked 'the grasping capitalist class,' and condemned 'the reduction of the great bulk of the population to the position of mere wage slaves.' However, he refused to condemn capital and commerce outright, stating only that capital should be more equally distributed back to the laboring classes, a particularly 'Georgist' philosophy.<sup>131</sup> He proposed the payment of members of parliament, which he would subsequently state would attract working-class members to an institution currently made up of 'landowners, capitalists, and lawyers, and far too few miners and masons,' <sup>132</sup> the first indication of what would become his fundamental political campaign, to place working men in parliament. He also stated that since he advocated the abolition of primogeniture and entail, and the abolition of the House of Lords. Moreover, in an even more radical statement, which separated him from the Georgists and the 'Single-Taxers,' for the first time, he proposed the nationalisation of land, although the newspaper report of his speech did not elucidate. <sup>133</sup> At the time, however, the radical nature of this proposal was by no means unique. R. B. Haldane wrote that 'Nationalisation of land makes its appearance in the list of many a London Working

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> Between 13 October 1906 and 2 February 1907, *Forward* denounced George as a defender of Capitalism, under headlines such as 'False and Misleading Statements,' and 'Popular Fallacies - Henry George Exposed.' In 1912, Graham claimed that Socialism had left George's ideas 'half a century behind.' *Glasgow Herald*, 27 September 1912, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Early in his first election campaign, Graham described himself as 'a practical man.' *Airdrie Advertiser*, 19 September 1885, p. 6.

<sup>129</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Futurism,' *Justice: The Organ of Social Democracy*, 30 April 1914, p. 9.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 19 September 1885, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Coatbridge Express, 11 November 1885, p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

Men's Club. Nationalisation of ordinary capital and State-regulation of wages appear hardly less frequently.'134

At this juncture, prior to entering parliament, Graham's proposals were an assortment of radical influences, some of which had an old pedigree, and the rest were by no means unique. What was unique was that a landowner and landlord, such as Graham, could make such proposals, which were controversial in Liberal circles at this time.<sup>135</sup> It would lead to accusations both at public meetings and in the press, of hypocrisy, and place him in a paradoxical position, of which he was very conscious. In 1887, *The Scotsman* suggested that he should put his faith in his socialist gospel by distributing his property among the poor,<sup>136</sup> and later, in 1892, during his campaign to win Camlachie as a 'Labour' candidate, an elector asked, 'Seeing Mr Graham had stated that he was in favour of land nationalisation without compensation, would he show a good example and throw up his own land?' Graham replied that he would not; he was in favour of land nationalisation – not charity, but justice, 'If he threw up his land he would be shutting his mouth.''137 Herein lies the double paradox in which Graham now found himself. In an era of deference to power and money, particularly 'old' money, it had been his landed pedigree that had propelled him into a position of influence, where he could condemn the very system that had put him there, knowing full well that without his privileged position, and expressing such radical views, he would have been ignored as a crank.<sup>138</sup>

Up until the 1885 general election (held in this constituency on 4 December), the land and Irish home rule questions were Graham's key issues, but growing in importance was the social question, and what he saw as the Liberal party's responsibility:

I should suppose that the ultimate object of every Liberal worth the name is to endeavor to ameliorate the existing social conditions and to strive as far as possible to render the lives of the poor more bearable to them. Then by a wise and carefully considered legislation so to adjust the incidence of taxation that the heaviest burdens may be laid on those fittest to bear them, and lastly to endeavor so to reform our social system as to induce a greater division of wealth.<sup>139</sup>

Graham would find this a misplaced supposition when he eventually entered parliament, leading to increasing criticism and disputes with his party.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> R. B. Haldane, 'The Liberal Party and its Prospects,' Contemporary Review, January 1888, p. 149.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> After 1889, the taxing of land was increasingly taken up by Liberal and radical politicians.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> *Scotsman*, 6 December 1887, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Glasgow Evening News, 25 June 1892, p. 5. My italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> In yet another paradoxical situation, despite his distaste for parliament, it would be parliament that would give Graham a voice, within and without its walls, establish his celebrity, and lead to his recruitment as a writer and social commentator.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Coatbridge Express, 4 November 1885, p. 1.

Graham's chances of success in the seat looked encouraging, but immediately before the election, Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party issued an order to the newly enfranchised Irish voters in Britain, that in seats where a Conservative was opposed by a Liberal or a radical, they were to cast their votes in favour of the Conservative Party, since they now offered the best hope of progress towards Irish Home Rule. This was announced locally in *The Coatbridge Express*, 140 and it would prove a fatal blow to Graham's campaign, as the Irish vote swung solidly behind his opponent, John Baird, 141 himself a Highland landowner, and a nephew of ironmaster Alexander Baird of Lochwood, 142 the founder of Coatbridge's industrial wealth.

# GENERAL ELECTION RESULT, NORTH-WEST LANARKSHIRE. 4 December 1885.

John Baird (Conservative)	4543
R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Liberal)	3442
Majority	1103

Gladstone scraped back into power, with the support of the Irish MPs, on the basis that he would introduce an Irish Home Rule Bill. When this was defeated on the 8 June 1886, he resigned. A second election was called for 9 July 1886, and Graham was again selected as the candidate for North-West Lanarkshire.

The Irish Question would dominate this 'Home Rule election,'143 and formed the exclusive focus of Graham's speeches during the brief election campaign. What also marked out this campaign was his adherence to Gladstone, a deliberate strategy, perhaps following criticism within the Liberal ranks during his previous campaign. However, a week later, Graham obviously felt confident enough, while still appearing to support Gladstone, to openly criticise certain members of his own party, referring to them as 'galvanized corpses,' and 'electroplated Liberals.'145 This was no doubt intended to appeal to the radical elements in his audience, but it was a precursor of much more trenchant criticism once he was elected. Later, Graham would claim that it was the swing in the Irish that won him the seat, and his victory was described in *The Glasgow Herald* as 'both a surprise and a disappointment.'147

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> Ibid., 25 November 1885, p. 1., and 2 December 1885, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Ibid., 2 December 1885, p. 2. Graham and Baird remained on cordial terms, having attended Harrow School together.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> An estate once owned by Graham's great-grandfather, Robert Graham of Gartmore. Cunninghame Graham, *Doughty Deeds*, (London: Heinemann, 1925), p. 162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Hutchison, Political History of Scotland, p. 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 3 July 1886, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> Coatbridge Express, 7 July 1886, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 2 November 1889, p. 5. At least one Irish political activist had been encouraging his compatriots to vote for Graham. On 2 July, 1886, at a 'largely attended meeting' of Irish electors in Whifflet, the speaker [Mr Kierney, National League Organiser] encouraged them to 'vote solid for Mr Cunninghame Graham.' (Cheers.) Airdrie Advertiser, 3 July 1886, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Glasgow Herald, 10 July 1886, p. 4.

# GENERAL ELECTION RESULT, NORTH-WEST LANARKSHIRE. 9 July 1886.

R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Ministerialist)	4032
John Baird (Conservative)	3698
Majority	334

When he eventually entered parliament, Graham's did not take his seat amongst his fellow Liberals, who were now in opposition, but, in what was an obvious statement, he sat between the Irish members and the newly elected M.P.s of The Crofter's Party. Considering his avowed support for Gladstone, which had helped him win the seat, this was an act of open rebellion, and an indication that he had already decided to act independently. The first opportunity for Graham to do this, and to 'lose his political virginity' as he termed it, was his maiden speech delivered in response to 'Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech (Adjourned Debate)' on 1 February 1887, which was regarded by many as a satirical *tour de force*. Most of this speech would deal with international affairs, and Ireland (dealt with below), but, appropriate to this analysis, both aspects reflected on the consequences for the poor, and demonstrated an increasing concern for the pay and conditions of the British working classes, whereby recent events in Ireland might:

prove to have given the first blow to that society in which one man worked and another enjoyed the fruit that society in which capital and luxury makes a Heaven for 30,000, and a Hell for 30,000,000 - that society whose crowning achievement is this dreary waste of mud and stucco - with its misery, its want and destitution, its degradation, its prostitution, and its glaring social inequalities - the society which we call London - that society which, by a refinement of irony, has placed the mainspring of human action, almost the power of life and death, and the absolute power to pay labour and to reward honour, behind the grey tweed veil which enshrouds the greasy pocket-book of the capitalist. (*Langhter*.)<sup>149</sup>

This confident and audacious speech brought Graham to the attention of the political establishment, and he would remain a highly controversial figure during his brief parliamentary career. Watts & Davies, however, raised an important point, which in retrospect we may also discern in his earlier pronouncements, 'There is the voice of the aesthete and wit.' They also commented on another early parliamentary speech by Graham on the Ambleside Railway Bill, which combined 'social and aesthetic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> This is perplexing, since Heyck and Klecka, through their use of the statistical procedure of 'discriminant analysis,' calculated that with the loss of Whig and 'moderate' Liberals over the Irish Home Rule crisis, that by 1886, the Radicals formed the majority of Liberal M.P.s in parliament. Heyck and Klecka, p. 179. However, as early as November 1885 Graham had told prospective constituents at Calderbank that 'no man should follow his party so blindly as to entirely divest himself of his own free will,' <sup>148</sup> demonstrating, if it was not already obvious, an independent spirit. *Airdrie Advertiser*, 21 November 1885, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Transposed into the first person from PP. 'Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Gracious Speech.' Adjourned Debate, Hansard, 1 February 1887, Vol.310, p. 445.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Watts & Davies, p. 58.

themes.'151 Graham had now established himself as a forceful and amusing speaker, but here we can discern for the first time an outspoken freedom and sophistication of expression that would have been inappropriate within the confines of local party hustings, where he was often obliged to dissemble, and where, as we have seen, most of his ideas were not entirely original, or obliged to play to the sympathies of particular interest groups. Here also, his liberal use of quotes and references from many other sources, would become a distinctive feature of his later political journalism, and mark him out as a highly original communicator.

Graham's views and behaviour in parliament was, however, polarizing opinion back in his constituency, as witnessed by a letter to the *Coatbridge Express*, signed 'Gladstonian':

Will no candid friend risk the approbation of Mr Graham's worshippers, by giving the hon. gentleman's coat-tail a figurative pull, in the shape of an outspoken remonstrance when he exceeds the bounds of common-sense in his speeches and general conduct, as he has done lately in a most inordinate degree?'152

These words certainly indicate a divergence in sympathies between the traditional Liberal members (in what we might call the 'Whig' and 'moderate' traditions), and the party's new, perhaps younger supporters, and voters. Although he was instrumental in helping form two political parties, Graham freely admitted that was not a party politician, and in the following year, at a meeting of Liberals in Coatbridge, he asserted that he 'was no real politician.' His increasing frustrations, however, would lead to frenetic interruptions and incendiary language in the House, adversely reported in *The Airdrie Advertiser* as in 1887, under the title 'Mr. Graham's Eccentricities,' 155 and on three occasions he was expelled from the Chamber for unparliamentary behaviour.

A remarkable feature of Graham's early speeches, before and after entering parliament, was his willingness to express increasingly radical and uncompromising opinions. He seemed oblivious to criticism, and even ridicule, which would later be interpreted as a dismissive elitism. As *The Scottish Leader* reported, 'Mr Graham draws criticism upon himself from all sides – and the sternest form of it sometimes from those who are largely in sympathy with him,' 156 indicating not only a growing frustration, but a careless attitude to the views of others, or, as *The Scotsman* put it, 'He has a great

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 59. Graham made this speech a month after meeting William Morris. It may not be a coincidence that Morris, was a disciple of John Ruskin, and in 1876, Ruskin had supported a protest organised by his 'St George's Company,' against the proposed extension of the railway. It may indeed be the case that Graham was giving voice to Morris's own long-held objections.

<sup>152</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to the editor, Coatbridge Express, 3 August 1887, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 21 April 1888, p.5. In 1908, Graham stated that 'he had always held that the party system had been the curse of the country.' Glasgow Herald, 20 October 1908, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Ibid., 25 November 1889, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Ibid., 20 August 1887, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> Reported in *Coatbridge Express*, 6 March 1889, p.2, after Graham was 'pilled' (his membership rescinded) at the Reform Club in London.

contempt for those who differ from him, and a great contempt for matters that stand in the way of the adoption of his principles,'157 and his condemnations became even more strident, 'Take a biscuit, ascend to the upper galleries of the House of Commons, drop it . . . it shall have bounced from the bald head of a millionaire and rolled onto the paunch of a Capitalist, no matter from which side of the House you dispatch it.'158 In 1889, he described 'the odious bourgeois tyranny of the Gladstonian Liberals [who are] just as tyrannical to the working classes, and ten times more hypocritical than the Tories,'159 and in 1890 he considered that the Liberals be treated more severely than the Tories since they professed to be friends of the people, but were 'hypocritical Gladstonian bourgeois capitalists in disguise.'160 Graham's growing frustration and moral outrage with parliamentary politics was succinctly summed up in his article for *The People's Press*:

In the meantime all goes on as usual, the Devil's Dance we know so well, the drinking, drabbing, cheating, praying, stealing, the children crying for bread, the parents working at starvation pay for hideous hours (12 hours the average working day in England), the sweater piling up his wealth, the worker getting leaner and the idler fatter, the hatred growing deeper day by day, Liberals and Tories being leagued, by any means, by force or fraud, or both, to stop the working classes passing any legislation helpful to them, capital and labour being each day more fiercely antagonistic than the day before.<sup>161</sup>

If the land issue had been predominant in trying to win his seat, on entering parliament, it became less so, being quickly overtaken by the labour question, and parliament's inability and unwillingness to tackle social issues.

# **POLITICAL INFLUENCES**

Before moving on to what would be a major crossroads in Graham's political life, it is now worth considering the influence of other political thinkers who would shape and direct Graham's intellectual predispositions. Like his influence on Keir Hardie and many others, including Graham, Henry George's lasting influence seems to have been that of a medium, between the land issue, which had occupied Graham's earlier campaigns, and his later full-blown socialism, a step which George himself did not take. An earlier influence, however, who may have underpinned Graham's early social attitudes, appears to have been the Welsh philanthropist and social reformer, Robert Owen (1771-1858), but the only clue to this was a reference in William Morris's Diary of 27 April 1887, where he recorded a speech he, Morris, had made in Glasgow:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Scotsman, 20 April 1892, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> People's Press, 3 May 1890, p. 18.

<sup>159</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Scotsman, 14 October 1889, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to *People's Press*, 31 May 1890, pp. 4-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Joined to Their Idols,' People's Press, 22 November 1890, p. 7.

Cunninghame Graham M.P. took the chair for me... he declared himself to be not a socialist *because* he agreed with the Owenite doctrine of man being made by circumstances; which seemed strange, & I rather took him up on that point.<sup>162</sup>

It is not entirely clear what Graham meant by this statement, <sup>163</sup> nor if his knowledge of, or interest in Owen, was recent or longer-term, but certainly, there are strong resonances of Owen's ideas in Graham's political outlook. <sup>164</sup>

Owen was another practical idealist, whose ideas Graham may have been drawn to, and another man, like George, who offered readily understood solutions to societal ills, believing that man's character was moulded by his cultural and physical environment. Through his social experiments, Owen had attempted 'to make the workpeople "rational," thus to bring "harmony" to the community, to make it a place where social peace would reign, '165 essentially an aesthetic argument which would have undoubtedly resonated with Graham's search for political enlightenment. This also chimed with Joseph Conrad's assertion that fundamentally, it was human nature that Graham wished to see changed. According to Owen, however, changes to the environment, and thus man's character, could only be instigated by 'those who have influence in the affairs of men. Whether this idea influenced Graham to become a man of affairs himself can only be conjectured, certainly, it carried sub-text with which Graham undoubtedly agreed – elitism. Also, Owen's solution was a rural one, wherein the bulk of the population would labour on the land to secure its sustenance:

a whole population engaged in agriculture, with manufactures *as an appendage*, will, in a given district, support many more, and in a much higher degree of comfort, than the same district could do with its agricultural separate from its manufacturing population.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> William Morris's Socialist Diary, 27 April 1887, ed. by Florence Boos, History Workshop Journal, Issue 13, Spring, 1982, p. 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Was Graham asserting that human nature could not be changed after the formative years, or that all humans had the potential to act positively in more conducive environments?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Owen's influence had not entirely disappeared since his death almost 30 years earlier. The Scottish socialist, Bruce Glasier, recalled that a few of the older attendees at early socialist meetings in Glasgow were 'Owenites,' who had heard Robert Owen, and the Chartist, Henry Hetherington speak, and 'who had not wholly lost the faith and hopes of their younger days.' James Bruce Glasier, *William Morris* (London: Longman's, 1921), p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> V. A. C. Gatrell, Introduction to Robert Owen's A New View of Society: Report to the County of Lanark (London: Penguin, 1969), p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Arthur Koestler postulated that such revelations constituted 'spontaneous illumination,' the perception of a familiar event in a new, significant, light. It also had an emotional aspect, 'The two together - intellectual illumination and emotional catharsis - are the essence of the aesthetic experience.' Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (London: Hutchinson, 1969), p. 328.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> You are misguided by the desire of the impossible - and I envy you. Alas! What you want to reform are not institutions - it is human nature. Your faith will never move that mountain.' *Joseph Conrad's Letters to Cunninghame Graham*, ed. by C. T. Watts (Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 68. Letter dated 'February' 1898.

<sup>168</sup> Gatrell, p. 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Ibid, p. 228. My italics.

This would also have been highly appropriate to the 'Scotland of his dreams,' but by Graham's time, in an increasingly industrialised country, with an expanding imperial market for its manufactured goods, this was an extraordinarily unrealistic proposal, however, it is an idea that finds echoes in Graham's equally unrealistic desire to recapture his idealised rural past, which would constantly recur in his Scottish writings.

Here then, we have two (almost certain) influences on Graham's early political thought. The first (Georgist) was, that since time immemorial, the appropriation and the exclusive property in land, was the direct cause of poverty, both in the countryside and the cities, and since this was a fundamental anomaly, its continuation or progression, would only exacerbate the lot of the poor. Thus, we have Graham's commitment to radically alter the terms of land ownership and distribution. The second (Owenite) was, that from birth, the human mind was a tabula rasa, but from time immemorial, people had been conditioned by circumstances into certain modes of thought and types of behaviour.<sup>170</sup> Thus we will witness Graham's campaigns for a shorter working day (as a starting point for a more extensive improvement in working and living conditions), free education, and a more nebulous attack on class divisions (not yet class politics). According to Owen, however, these reforms, could only be instigated from above, and since 'those who have influence in the affairs of men,' were by and large land-owning or capitalist politicians, as things stood, it was inevitable that any attempt by men like Graham to change society through parliamentary action was doomed to failure, unless parliament itself, controlled by such men, was radically changed. Thus we have Graham's later, but overarching campaign to get working men elected to parliament, however, this could only be instigated by an intelligentsia. For Graham, perhaps, Owen and George's proposals were complimentary, and combining them would mean a return to the land in a more sustainable way than before, for a more self-sufficient population, while manufacturing would be carried out along more rational lines, without dispute, for the benefit of all. Graham's early agenda can be viewed as being idealistic and unrealizable, utopian; it is an aesthetic ideal, but there was unquestionably a logical, practical, but perhaps reductive mind at work.

Graham's behaviour, in and out of parliament, had attracted the attention of prominent socialists and radicals, and apparently helped develop new political and literary contacts. On 26 January 1887, shortly before his maiden speech, Graham sought out his most direct and powerful influence, the English textile designer, poet, author, and socialist, William Morris (1834-1896). Morris was a central figure in the Arts & Crafts movement, but it was not until after Graham's maiden speech that Morris considered it worth recording their meeting in his diary:

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> This of course was a challenge to the concept of class. Gatrell believed that 'the doctrine Owen was playing with was potentially subversive of the social and political hierarchy which at one level of consciousness [as a Tory] he wished to preserve.' Gatrell, p. 29. Gatrell also believed that Owen's thought was 'derived from a strictly paternalistic, anti-democratic, and retrospective social ideal which was ill-attuned to the part it was called upon to play in the history of men, and that is one reason why 'Owenism' was an ideology which did not survive midcentury.' p. 21.

I ought to have noted that on the day that Parliament met, a young and new M.P., Cunninghame Graham by name, called on me by appointment to pump me on the subject of Socialism. A brisk sort of young man; the other day he makes his maiden speech and produced quite an impression by its brilliancy & socialistic hints.<sup>171</sup>

Graham's political and literary career was characterised by fortuitous if unintended consequences, and Morris's biographer A. C. Rickett wrote, 'It was the remarkable maiden speech of Mr Cunninghame Graham in the House of Commons that first drew him [Morris] towards the speaker. He recognised at once a man of rare courage, combined with an eloquence and intellectual power seldom found in the arena of modern politics.' <sup>172</sup>

Of the nine major biographies of Graham, the three scholarly works place Morris as the foremost mentor in his early political and intellectual development. In Watts & Davies *Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography* (1979), two reflective comments stand out. The first was Morris's assertion that he was 'forced by the study of history and the love and practice of art . . . into a hatred of civilisation which, if things were to stop as they are, would turn history into inconsequent nonsense,'173 which they believed might equally have applied to Graham himself.<sup>174</sup> The second is their reference to Graham's 'Morris-like instinct to relate the political to the aesthetic and cultural.'175 However, the authors did not develop this idea, but it may be a highly significant factor in understanding Graham's uniqueness and legacy. Anne Taylor speculated that Graham was attracted to Morris's denunciation of what he called 'the filth of civilisation:'176

whereby the acts of selfish industrialists and greedy tradesmen threaten to destroy everything of beauty and traditional worth. Later it confronted him each time, on returning home from some far distant country as yet untouched by industry, his ship traversed the riverside slums of Liverpool or Glasgow.<sup>177</sup>

James Redmond wrote that 'Morris's socialism had a compassionate rather than ideological basis in no way mitigated the seriousness, even violence of his conviction.' Hyndman's description of Morris might be more pertinent, 'What was inartistic and untrue jarred upon him so acutely that he was driven to try

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Florence Boos, ed., William Morris's Socialist Diary, p. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> A. C. Rickett, William Morris (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1913), p. 246.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> William Morris, *How I Became a Socialist*, (London: The Twentieth Century Press, 1896), p. 12. This view of history's function is particularly 'Hegelian,' but is more likely an echo of Hegel's disciple, Karl Marx.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> Watts & Davies, p. 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> Ibid. p.247. Watts described the 1890s as 'the era of Aestheticism.' Watts, R. B Cunninghame Graham, p.2. In an obituary in Glasgow Herald, the writer believed that the basis of Graham's political faith 'was artistic rather than economic.' Glasgow Herald, 21 March 1936, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> Morris, How I Became a Socialist, p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> Taylor, p. 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> James Redmond, *Introduction* to Morris's *The News from Nowhere* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. xi. Also Glasier, *William Morris and the Early Socialist Movement* (London: Longman's, 1921), p. 32.

and put it right all at once.'179 Both of these analyses, including the element of impulsive vehemency, could equally be applied to Graham.

Graham would refer to Morris as 'a dear friend of mine,'180 but Morris for his part, at least at the beginning of their acquaintance, found Graham an enigma. In a letter to Bruce Glasier, Morris wrote, 'Cunninghame Graham is a very queer creature and I can't easily make him out,' and added, 'I am almost afraid that a man who writes such preposterous illegible scrawl as he does must have a screw loose in him.'181 It appears however, that Graham and his wife Gabrielle were regular attendees at talks in Morris's house in Hammersmith'182 where they would have mixed with the leading socialists and anarchists of the day.

Morris, in turn, had been deeply influenced by the writings and philosophy of two 'Scots,' 183 Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, 184 but 'Ruskin more so than Carlyle.' 185 Ernest Barker wrote that 'Ruskin combined the artist's longing for beauty with the moralist's passion for social justice. Like Morris, he came to the study of social problems by the way of art.' 186 Morris was thus a direct inheritor of Ruskin's aesthetic vision, particularly of what Ruskin described as 'Vital Beauty, [the] felicitous fulfillment of function in living things, more especially the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man.' 187 Williams wrote that in Ruskin's thinking, the transition from artistic criticism to social criticism was quite natural, 188 and Redmond affirmed that it was 'very common in nineteenth century, to consider ethical and social problems in aesthetic terms, and to see aesthetic questions as being inseparable from moral and political considerations.' 189 To Morris, who was the central figure in the Aesthetic Movement, this was not the intellectualised concept that it later became in literary theory, but simply, to quote Stephen Regan, 'the

179 H. M. Hyndman, Introduction to William Morris's How I Became A Socialist, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Graham, letter to *The Glasgow Herald*, 23 May 1908, p. 12. Graham had broken down, 'and was unable to continue,' while addressing a memorial meeting a week after Morris's funeral. E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic and Revolutionary*, (London: Pantheon Books, 1976), p. 636.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> The Collected Works of William Morris, Vol. II, ed. by May Morris (London: Longmans, 1910), p. 210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> Chiswick Gazette, 15 September 1906, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> Clive Wilmer wrote, 'like so many of those who sought to explain the laws of economics, he [Ruskin] was of Scottish descent.' 'Introduction' to John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, ed. by Clive Wilmer (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> Ernest Barker, *Political Thought in England From Herbert Spencer the Present Day* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915), p. 190. Barker also described Ruskin as 'a foster-father of many English Socialists.' p. 196. Joan Abse added 'not a parent of direct lineage, be it noted, but a supportive inspiration along the way.' Joan Abse, *John Ruskin: The Passionate Moralist* (London: Quartet Books, 1980), p. 238. Kenneth Morgan wrote that 'Ruskin's essays entitled *Unto This Last*, with their passionate critique of self-interest and the values of commercial society, provided something of a moral framework for [Keir] Hardie's shadowy political philosophy.' Morgan, *Keir Hardie*, p. 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> Peter Stansky, William Morris (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 190. Ruskin also wrote on the morality (or otherwise) of empire. John Ruskin, "Traffic,' lecture delivered in Bradford Town Hall on 21 April 1864. Published in *Unto This Last and Other Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 243-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>187</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol.II (London: George Allen, 1906), p. 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>188</sup> Williams, p. 138.

<sup>189</sup> Redmond, p. xvii.

aesthetic came to represent the idealised form of value,<sup>190</sup> beyond the actual values of competitiveness, exploitation, and possessiveness - a realm of order and harmony.'<sup>191</sup> It was the world's dis-harmony, which Morris described as 'this sordid, aimless, ugly confusion,'<sup>192</sup> particularly the huge social and economic inequalities, and what they saw as the consequent perversion of 'values' (hypocrisy) that angered and frustrated him, and for which socialism appeared to provide both logical and practical solutions. Morris's defined his own political faith as 'Socialism seen through the eye of an artist,'<sup>193</sup> and later he expanded on this idea:

Socialism is an all-embracing theory of life, and that as it has an ethic and a religion of its own, so also it has an aesthetic: so that to every one who wishes to study Socialism duly it is necessary to look on it from the aesthetic point of view. And, secondly, I assert that inequality of condition, whatever may have been the case in former ages of the world, has now become incompatible with the existence of a healthy art.<sup>194</sup>

In his 'Introduction' to Ruskin's most influential treatise on the 'disorderly habits' of labour, *Unto This Last*, <sup>195</sup> Wilmer described Ruskin's objections to the principles set out by the contemporary economists that dominated Victorian society, 'Ruskin's *Unto This Last* is first and foremost a cry of anger against injustice and inhumanity; the theories of the Political Economists had outraged his strongest moral convictions.' Williams believed, however, that Ruskin's aesthetic ideas of 'design and function, as he expressed them, did not support a socialist idea of society, but rather an authoritarian one, which included a very emphatic hierarchy of classes.' This may be supported by Ruskin's own thoughts on the position of the workers, which again found resonances in Graham's Owenite social attitudes:

It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves . . . It is not that men are ill fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure. It is not that men are pained by the scorn

<sup>191</sup> 'The Return of the Aesthetic,' in *The Politics of Pleasure*, ed. by Stephen Regan (Open University Press: 1992), p. 3. The concept of 'harmony' of course also pervaded Robert Owen's works.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> A distinctly 'Owenite' philosophy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> Morris, *How I Became a Socialist*, p. 12. Graham's wife Gabrielle was a frequent visitor to Morris's London home, Kelmscott House, and spoke at political meetings there, *People's Press*, 26 April 1890, p.3. She also wrote on political/aesthetic matters such as 'Family Portraits' in *Outlook*, 7 January 1899, p. 724, and 'Art & Commercialism,' in *To-day*, June 1889, pp. 42-7.

<sup>193</sup> The Letters of William Morris to His Family and Friends, ed. by Philip Henderson (London: Longman's, 1950), p. 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> Morris, New Review, January 1891, p. 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> According to J. W. Mackail, it was this book that directly influenced Morris to embrace socialism. J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris* (1899) (New York: Dover Books, 1995), Vol.II, p. 201.
<sup>196</sup> Wilmer, p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> Williams, p. 140. Robert Hewison confirmed that despite his move towards social radicalism in the mid 1850s, Ruskin 'continued to deny the possibility of equality, and never abandoned his authoritarianism.' Robert Hewison, *Ruskin and His Contemporaries* (London: Pallas Athene, 2018), p. 88.

of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labor to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men.<sup>198</sup>

However, whereas Ruskin advocated individual rather than public effort to achieve what he termed 'true felicity,'199 Morris, according to Williams, sought to attach Ruskin's values 'to an actual and growing social force: that of the organized working class. This was the most remarkable attempt that had so far been made to break the general deadlock.'200 Since there is no documentary evidence, it can only be surmised whether Morris inspired Graham to consider the formation of such a mass working class political movement.

Watts and Davies wrote that prior to meeting Morris, Graham 'was still looking for his political bearings,' 201 and Taylor believed that it was Morris who consolidated 'Cunninghame Graham's metamorphosis into a socialist,' 202 or as Watts recorded it:

[Morris] helped to convert into socialism his freelance radicalism and to divert into political channels his aristocratic contempt for the bourgeoisie, his chivalrous sympathy for the underdog, and his aesthetic revulsion against the grime and squalor of industrial Victorian Britain.<sup>203</sup>

Graham himself never acknowledged any direct influence by Morris, for instance, in his *Introduction* to Ricketts's biography of Morris (1913), he made no acknowledgment of Morris as a political mentor. It is a poetic, piece, but it is emotionally and intellectually detached. Graham's early, non-critical biographers, West and Tschiffely, made several references to Morris, but not as a political influence, nor did Graham join Morris's Socialist League.<sup>204</sup> There may have been several reasons for this. The first was that Graham still believed, at this early stage, that it was possible to change the Liberal Party from within by the election of working class members to parliament. The second was that he still believed that parliament was the most practical means by which change could be enacted, and neither the Socialist League nor H. M Hyndman's SDF believed in parliamentary representation.<sup>205</sup> Graham may also have wished to avoid the internecine warfare that existed between the SDF, the SL, and the Fabians, or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> John Ruskin, 'On the Nature of the Gothic' in *The Stones of Venice* (1853) (New York: The National Library Association, 2009), p. 163.

<sup>199</sup> John Ruskin, Unto This Last (1860) (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 226.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> Williams, p. 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> Watts & Davies, Critical Biography, p. 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> Taylor, p. 197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> Watts, Joseph Conrad's Letters, pp. 10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> Tschiffely claimed (undoubtedly from Graham's own words) that he was 'unaffected by the herd instinct.' Tschiffely, p. 182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> According to Shaw, the real business of Morris's Socialist League was 'that of making Socialists.' G. B. Shaw, *Morris As I Knew Him* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1936), p. 18. In 1885 Morris had written Fred Pickles, a pioneer of the Bradford Branch of The Socialist League, 'If you send members to parliament they must be sent with the express purpose of overthrowing it as it exists at present; for it exists for the definite purpose of continuing the present evil state of things.' Morris, letter to Fred Pickles, 2 October 1885, *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, Vol.II, ed. by Norman Kelvin (Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 462.

simply, as a man of honour, since he was elected as a Liberal, and since he still had support in his constituency, that he should fulfill his duty to them.

Morris may also have influenced Graham's future literary output, which, although quite distinctive from Morris's, until the end of his life resounded with echoes of the older man's disdain for civilisation, and so-called progress. Morris may indeed have exerted an even wider influence on Graham's thought, and it is worth noting that Morris had come under the influence of The Oxford Movement in his youth, and although, like Graham, he was an atheist, he had developed what he called 'anti-Puritanism and anti-Protestantism,' which he associated with a rigid and hypocritical morality.<sup>206</sup> This is also apparent in Graham's later literary works, in his aversion to Calvinism, for similar reasons. To escape these strictures, Morris had embraced late-Victorian Romanticism, and Medievalism, while Graham would look to a pre-Reformation Scottish past, and the pre-industrial societies that he had experienced overseas. What also distinguished Graham from Morris, and against the received wisdom that Graham was a romantic idealist and a Utopian, was his distaste for speculation or fantasy, or, as he called it, 'invention,'207 showing much more interest in practical means, than romantic ends. Morris had tried to represent a higher civilisation in his futuristic novel News From Nowhere, but that was not something that Graham tried to emulate. Graham, it appears, agreed with his friend, the naturalist, W. H. Hudson, Nothing was more intolerable to Hudson than a Utopia, as it must ever be to all artistic minds. Better the freedom of the wilds than a society where there is no folly, sorrow, or no crime.<sup>208</sup> It is likely that Morris was simply a catalyst for ideas that had already been formulating in Graham's mind, stimulated by Owen, George, and perhaps Ruskin (whom Graham made no reference to), but unlike many other Scottish proto-socialists, Graham had direct contact and dialogue with Ruskin's protégé, Morris.

Neither Morris nor Graham were political philosophers or dogmatists *per se*, Morris, admitting that he 'suffered agonies of confusion of the brain' trying to understand Marx's economic theories,<sup>209</sup> and that 'Political economy is not my line, and much of it appears to me to be dreary rubbish.'<sup>210</sup> Graham wrote 'I am a believer in the theories of Karl Marx to a great extent, but, both as regards Christianity

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> May Morris, p. 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> Cunninghame Graham, *Faith* (London: Duckworth, 1909), pp. xi-xii. Graham would have been described in the philosophy of T. E. Hulme as 'a romantic,' repudiating 'fancy' for 'imagination.' T. E. Hulme, 'Romanticism and Classicism' in *The Collected Writings of T. E. Hulme*, ed. by Karen Csengeri (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 59. <sup>208</sup> Curle, p. 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> Morris, *How I Became a Socialist*, p. 10. Morris had described himself as a Communist, and according to Shaw, Morris 'knew that the essential term, etymologically, historically, and artistically, was Communist; and it was the only word he was comfortable with. Going straight to the root of Communism he held that people who do not do their fair share of social work are 'damned thieves,' and that neither a stable society, a happy life, nor a healthy art can come from honoring such thieving as the mainspring of industrial activity.' Shaw, *Morris As I Knew Him*, p. 11. These sentiments can be also found in Ruskin, 'First, it ['old' Communism] means that everyone must work in common, and do common or simple work for his dinner; and that if any man will not do it, he must not have his dinner.' Ruskin, *Unto This Last*, p. 295.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> Glasier, William Morris and the Early Socialist Movement, p. 32.

and Socialism, I care more for works than faith.'211 Friedrich Engels had initially believed Graham to be 'a Communist, Marxian, advocating the nationalisation of all means of production,'212 but later changed his mind, describing him to Marx's daughter 'Tussy' as 'an English Blanquist.'213 This was another hallmark of Graham's political activities, for although a renowned speech-maker and literary polemicist, he was fundamentally a man of action, who despised, and became frustrated by endless discussions and debates with no action or, as he saw it, any practical outcome, a situation that dogged the early socialist factions. There is no question, however, that Graham was attracted to Marx's ideas, as they too offered what seemed like practical solutions to intractable social problems, becoming the fourth major influence on Graham's thought, and it is likely that Morris helped Graham along that path. Certainly, by 1889, Graham would describe himself as 'a follower of Marx,'214 although, perceptively, Malcolm Muggeridge wrote, 'Marx was as antipathetic to him [Graham] as Samuel Smiles,<sup>215</sup> and as boring.'216

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Graham's discussions with Morris immediately after his maiden speech, was timing, and we now come to the next pivotal moment in Graham's political development, where social theory encountered social reality, which had the combined effect of galvanising Graham into a dogmatic socialistic crusader.

## SUBSEQUENT PARLIAMENTARY CAREER

On 4 February 1887, immediately after his first meeting with Morris, Graham was back in his constituency following disturbances and arrests in the Lanarkshire coalfields, and the looting of food shops in Blantyre and Coatbridge by striking miners.<sup>217</sup> From his own words, this was the first time he had come into contact with the unemployed,<sup>218</sup> and here he had his first experience of the miners' working and living conditions. This was also when he probably first met, and established a working relationship with Keir Hardie,<sup>219</sup> a miner and journalist, who had come to prominence during the previous year. Graham spent much of February 1887 attending and addressing miners' meetings, of which he claimed he addressed '63 or 64' (where he could hardly have failed to meet Hardie), and

<sup>211</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to *Christian Socialist*, 6 January 1888, p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels*, ed. by George Eckert, (Mouton: The Hague, 1963), p. 304.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> Friedrich Engels: Correspondence Vol.II, ed. by Émile Bottogelli (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1959), p. 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to *Star*, 25 May 1889, p.4. Graham's artist friend, Will Rothenstein, wrote that, '[Joseph] Conrad knew that Cunninghame Graham was more cynic than idealist and was by nature an aristocrat, whose socialism was a symbol of his contempt for a feeble aristocracy and a blatant plutocracy.' William Rothenstein, *Men and Memories* 1900-1922, (London: Faber & Faber, 1932), p. 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Samuel Smiles (1812-1904). Scottish author and reformer. His book *Self Help*, published in 1859, sold an estimated quarter of a million copies, which were widely circulated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> Muggeridge, p. 440.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 12 February 1887, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> Graham, 'Aspects of the Social Question' English Review, December 1908, p. 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> Morgan, *Keir Hardie*, p.18. When they met is disputed. David Lowe contradicted himself, saying that they both descended a mine at New Cumnock together, in early 1887, *The Evening Times*, 4 February 1938, p. 3, but met for the first time during Hardie's election campaign in Mid-Lanark in 1888, *The Evening Times*, 29 October, 1937, p. 3. Graham himself was equally uncertain, stating that it was 'about the year 1887 or 1888.' William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie* (London: Cassell, 1921), p. 51.

encouraged them to unite, and to put pressure on their M.P.s.<sup>220</sup> However, with the miners and their families in deep distress, a motion to resume work was passed at a meeting of the Scottish Miners Federation on 21 February, but Graham promised to champion their cause in parliament.<sup>221</sup> It was reported soon afterwards that Graham had addressed fellow Liberals at Coatbridge:

When I bought my ticket at Euston and came here, I knew I was leaving behind me every chance of rising in political life. What had I, a landlord, to gain by championing the working class? I had everything to lose, but I found the miners in a worse position than I could have believed. Would you have me say to those poor starving fellows that I could do nothing for them?<sup>222</sup>

It is apparent, that from early 1887, when he first encountered the work and living conditions of the miners, that we are witnessing, if not exactly class politics in Graham's utterances, then the emergence of a more direct and visceral awareness of class divisions and their consequences.

By the middle of 1887, the land issue had all but disappeared from Graham's speeches, although Irish Home Rule was still occasionally mentioned.<sup>223</sup> His focus now became the plight of the miners, but increasingly, the idea of labour representation, in parliament. The first opportunity we have to witness any consolidation of Graham's views came on 15 August 1887, during the marathon Coal Mines, Regulation Bill, which contained over fifty clauses dealing with their general working conditions. This was a bill introduced by the Liberals (who were now in opposition), supported by Irish M.P.s. Graham now pursued his promise to the miners and was active throughout the long hours of the debates, speaking nineteen times in support of various clauses.<sup>224</sup> His own amendment was tabled on 3 September. It proposed the restriction of miners' working hours to eight hours, which would eventually form the basis of a much wider agenda, during his time in parliament and after. This proposal had apparently been prompted, not only by Morris's influence, but by a dramatic transformation while walking through Trafalgar Square in the summer of 1887,<sup>225</sup> where Graham had witnessed large groups of destitute people camped there. As he later recalled, 'It immediately struck me that the most tangible commonsense reform that could be applied was one that would induce the capitalist to employ more labour, and absorb the unemployed into the ranks of the employed.'<sup>226</sup> This, he believed, could be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> Coatbridge Express, 8 June 1887, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 26th February 1887, p. 5.

<sup>222</sup> Thid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> Coatbridge Express, 2 March 1887, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> In reply to accusations that Graham was acting on his own authority, Hardie wrote to *The Scotsman* to say that Graham 'has acted not only with the consent, but under the direct instructions of the miners' representatives.' *Scotsman*, 20 August 1887, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> The summer of 1887 was unusually hot, and hundreds of unemployed people were camped in Trafalgar Square, where the fountains offered some relief from the heat, and it became a focus for protest. Fear of a socialist revolution led to the outlawing of public meetings in the Square, which precipitated the 'Bloody Sunday' riot (see below).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 8 June 1889, p. 4.

accomplished by shortening working hours, thus work could be more equally shared to prevent the accumulation of large fortunes, and the fruits more equally distributed.<sup>227</sup>

This then, to Graham, would cease to be simply a means of alleviating unemployment, and the harshness of the miners' working conditions, it would become 'the first step on the road to the final emancipation of Labour.'228 Moreover he added, 'the battle ground on which the first real skirmish of Capital and Labour (in our time) will be fought.'229 In the meantime, this proposal had already been incorporated into his amendment to the Bill:

I wish Parliament to step in and give them that protection by giving them an eight hours' day. It has been said that we would be opening the gate to other questions of a vastly wider scope by accepting this Amendment. If we did so, I for one would be glad, because I wish to see this principle applied to every trade in the country.<sup>230</sup>

Aware that his words were falling on deaf or hostile ears, Graham concluded with the words, 'I can tell [the Home Secretary] the miners look forward to the time when the Government will take over the mines and machinery and work them for the benefit of the people and not for the selfish ends of a few capitalists.' His amendment was doomed from the outset, and it was greeted with jeers and laughter from both sides of the House, although Taylor wrote, 'in all probability [this] was the first time nationalisation of the coal mining industry was taken seriously by anyone in the House of Commons.'231 Greater disappointment and anger were to follow when the amended Bill came back from the Lords on 12 September, minus several of the clauses that Graham had campaigned for. He interrupted proceedings several times, concluding with the words, 'it does seem a curious thing that an Assembly which is not elected by popular vote should dare to dictate to us, who are elected,'232 and was asked by the Speaker to withdraw.

It should be noted, at this point, that campaigns for a shorter working day had a long history. Sidney Webb and Harold Cox, in their book *The Eight Hours Day* called it 'the legitimate descendent of the agitation which resulted in the Ten Hours Bill of 1847,'233 and they believed that it would be 'the most important industrial movement of the close of the century.'234 Calls for such a reduction had been a fundamental demand at The International Working Men's Association in Geneva in August 1866, repeated by Marx in *Das Kapital* in 1867, and it was a founding principle of Hyndman's SDF from its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>227</sup> Labour Elector, 8 February 1890, p. 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> Ibid., 3 August 1889, p. 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> Ibid., 8 February 1890, p. 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>230</sup> PP. Coal Mines Regulation Bill, Consideration, 3 September 1887, Hansard Vol.320 cc1088.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>231</sup> Taylor, p. 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> PP. Coal Mines Regulation Bill: Consideration of Lords Amendments, 12 September 1887, Hansard Vol.321, cc435.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> Sidney Webb & Harold Cox, The Eight Hours Day (London: W. Scott, 1891), p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> Ibid. Preface (no page number)

inception in 1884. In Scotland, Fraser wrote that the demand for shorter hours was first raised in 1858 at the Glasgow Trades Council, but nothing was done.<sup>235</sup>

By now, the Lords' dismissal of the miner's grievances seems to have triggered a more militant response in Graham, who continued speaking at miner's meetings throughout Central Scotland. At Broxburn on 7 October 1887, following the forced eviction of miners' families, The Scotsman reported that Graham had guardedly advised the use of intimidation against 'black-nebs,'236 but he was careful to urge them not to be so foolish as to break the law, adding, 'Short of this, anything might be done.'237 This, however, would not be the last time that Graham hinted at, or took direct action to further political goals, and on 26 June 1889, The Coatbridge Express reported the threat of prosecution over an inflammatory speech at Leith.<sup>238</sup> Indeed, in June 1891, Graham was arrested and expelled from France for 'the violent character of his speech.'239 The most egregious event in Graham's political career, however, took place on 13 November 1887 when he took part in a violent confrontation in Trafalgar Square, and was badly beaten and arrested by the police.<sup>240</sup> This elicited support from Morris who wrote His conduct will long be remembered, one would hope, by lovers of freedom; but he must expect for some time to come to be a pariah among M.P.s. To do him justice he is not likely to care much about that.'241 By 7 December, a London correspondent for *The Coatbridge Express* noted that 'One of the most popular men in London at the present hour is Mr Cunninghame Graham. Any one who doubted it would have done well to go to the Clerkenwell meeting of the unemployed. He was cheered to the echo by the landless and labourless.'242 There were also profiles of him in the press, including in a new populist newspaper called The Star, which The Coathridge Express reprinted under the title 'Romantic Career of Mr Graham M.P.<sup>243</sup> The Conservative press however, was less flattering, *The Spectator*, for example, described him as a 'political mountebank.'244 This view was shared by many in the Liberal establishment, witnessed by a letter to The Coatbridge Express from an unnamed 'Chairman of a Liberal Association' opposing a resolution at the Scottish Liberal Conference which protested Graham's imprisonment, The above individual is not a political martyr, he has been imprisoned like any disorderly

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> W. Hamish Fraser, 'Trades Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland,' in *Essays in Scottish Labour History*, ed. by Ian MacDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1978), p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> A working class reference to strikebreakers, although this was not the original meaning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> Scotsman, 8 October 1887, p. 8. The report continued, 'He expects everybody to walk on the edge of the precipice as skillfully as he does; and while they are making the experiment he retires to the shelter of his hotel.' <sup>238</sup> Coatbridge Express, 26 June 1889, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> Ibid., 13 May, 1891, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> Graham was subsequently sentenced to six weeks in prison, but released after four and a half weeks on the 18 February 1888. The Trafalgar Square incident and the police action would be Graham's cause célèbre for several months, which he pursued through parliament, and the press, proclaiming his innocence and victimhood. This, however, was disingenuous, for it was not as unplanned as he stated. Immediately prior to the riot, at a meeting in Broxburn, Graham said that he intended to 'test' the authorities in Trafalgar Square. *The Airdrie Advertiser*, 12 November 1887, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> Commonweal, 26 November 1887, p. 377.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> Coatbridge Express, 7 December 1887, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> Ibid., 25 January 1888, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> Spectator, 28 January 1888, p. 8.

person, and like many sound Liberals, I regret his locks have not been cut, as it might help to cool his ardour.'245

Throughout his election campaigns, Graham, while critical of the British political institutions, had still paid occasional lip-service to the Liberal leader, Gladstone, of whom his biographer Tschiffely informed us, Graham despised 'with all his heart and soul.'246 The reasons for this antipathy are clear. At a time when allegiance to old authorities was breaking down, Gladstone's power within the Liberals remained unassailable, particularly in Scotland, and whereas Graham believed that the instigation of legislation on conditions and hours of work, and the improvement of the lot of the poor, were entirely within any government's purview, Gladstone did not. During his Midlothian Campaign of 1879, Gladstone had stated that the government's role was not to lead, but to 'soothe and tranquilise . . . to produce and maintain a temper so calm and so deliberate in the public opinion of the country that none shall be able to disturb it.'247 Such a policy, in the face of what he perceived as glaring poverty, inequalities and abuses, would be anathema to an increasingly impatient man of action like Graham, who was now enjoying some celebrity.<sup>248</sup> Graham's distancing from the Liberals was further increased by the publication from prison in February 1888, of an article entitled 'Has the Liberal Party a Future?' for The Contemporary Review, in which he questioned the very raison d'etre of his party, and was an angry riposte to the placatory article in the same journal of the previous month, by the M.P. for Haddingtonshire, R. B. Haldane.<sup>249</sup> The Liberals, in Graham's opinion, were concerned only with achieving and retaining power, and he concluded that it was only Gladstone's skill and personality that held the party together:

His very shortcomings they condone, but nothing but the deepest scorn is manifest for those timorous, miserable, invertebrate animals who, whilst posing as Liberal leaders, are really Tories at heart; who have seen the poor bludgeoned and outraged in London, the crofters driven to desperation, the Welsh farmers infuriated, and have said not a word; too timorous to risk a newspaper reviling, too utterly empty to be able to face the pin-prick of public opinion, so that an immediate collapse brings about one thing only - at any price and at any

<sup>245</sup> Coatbridge Express, 22 February 1888, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>246</sup> Tschiffely, *Don Roberto*, p.195. Graham also reputedly said, 'I sometimes wish I could believe in religion, for if I did I could be sure that Gladstone was in hell.' Quoted in David Daiches, *A Companion to Scottish Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>247</sup> Times, 26 November 1879, p. 6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> Graham's return to Scotland directly after his trial was greeted by an estimated 8,000 supporters in Glasgow, 'the scene was one of the wildest enthusiasm.' *Airdrie Advertiser*, 26 November 1887, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>249</sup> R. B. Haldane, 'The Liberal Party and its Prospects,' *Contemporary Review*, January 1888, pp. 145-160. Around this time, Haldane had been lecturing in working men's clubs against the theories of Karl Marx, Henry George, and against Graham himself. In a letter to his mother, dated 25 October 1887, Haldane wrote that Graham's speeches were 'doing a great deal of mischief all over Scotland.' NLS, Haldane of Cloan Papers, MSS 5940, f.101. Graham, however, referred to Haldane as 'a personal friend,' *Scotsman*, 13 October 1887, p. 6. Haldane for his part had stood bail for Graham following Graham's arrest in Trafalgar Square, and had given evidence in Graham's favour at the subsequent trial, which putatively set back his own legal career.

cost return to Downing Street, and a fat salary - incompetent leaders, as useful to a democracy as a blind dog to a blind beggar. No, if the Liberal party has a future, it must get rid of these nobodies, and show that it has no fear of modern thought; it must pledge itself to an Eight Hours Bill, institute a municipality for London, nationalise the land, and commence public works for the unemployed; and then, if it has good luck, it may regain the confidence of the democracy that is to say, *if some other party has not been beforehand in the field.*<sup>250</sup>

Hutchison concurred that the Liberals had been preoccupied with 'faddist' issues and were indifferent to economic and social questions:

typified by the general hostility to the demand for an eight-hour day in the coalfields – resulted in the growing alienation of the working class voters [which gave] an impression of circumstances being highly propitious for the movement towards independent working class representation.<sup>251</sup>

According to Heyck and Klecka, after 1886, there was a gradual abandonment of the Liberal Party by the working class. They blamed this on the fact that with the Radicals in control, they could no longer blame their shortcomings on Whigs and moderates:

Working men could see that Radicalism, by the late Victorian years, was essentially a middle-class Nonconformist movement, and after nearly 150 years of tenuous cooperation with middle-class radicals their interests would not be adequately served by the Radical elite.<sup>252</sup>

If this was indeed the case, then Graham's ambition for a party of labour was extremely prescient, and by September 1887 we can witness the first signs of his desire to see 'labour' candidates stand under the Liberal banner. In a somewhat disingenuous speech at a mass meeting of Ayrshire miners in support of Hardie, Graham said:

When they talked about labour candidates they simply meant to add a battalion to the Liberal army, a battalion of light skirmishers, who, when the main army went a little slow, were always in the lead. If they had some of these men who were real democrats in Parliament they would strengthen the Grand Old Man's hands, and set him where he ought to be, at the head of the Government. (*Applause*)<sup>253</sup>

However, in what appears to be a major development of his ideas, this speech was followed by another, to miners in Tranent, reported by *The Scotsman*, 'Mr Graham then related to the meeting a dream which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>250</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Has the Liberal Party a Future?' *The Contemporary Review*, February 1888, p. 300. My italics. By this stage, Graham had obviously been contemplating a socialist alternative.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 179.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>252</sup> Heyck and Klecka, p. 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> Coatbridge Express, 21 September 1887, p. 2.

he had recently. He dreamed that all the working classes of Scotland, England, and Wales, being united together and running their own candidates for Parliament.'254 At almost exactly the same time, J. L. Mahon,<sup>255</sup> who was often in Graham's company at this time, wrote in Morris's *The Commonweal*, 'As appearances go at present, there may soon be a Scottish Labour Party of which Mr. Cunninghame Graham will be the chief.'256 Mahon obviously looked to Graham to lead such an enterprise, but despite his enthusiastic predictions, it is apparent that as an upper class landowner, it was not a role that Graham saw himself filling; this new movement, in Graham's mind, had to come from the grass-roots to have any credibility. In August 1888, Graham had written, 'No man like myself, however much he may sympathise can ever properly represent them,'257 and he again made it perfectly plain that he had no ambitions in that direction in a speech to the Liberals in Coatbridge in November 1889. It had been put to him that he wished to see a Labour party with himself as leader as 'a sort of Parnell (*langhter*), but what he really wanted was to see working men like [John] Burns, Hardie, and [Tom] Mann' enter parliament to demand reforms, 'and he would be content to retire to a quiet country life at Gartmore.'258

Graham seemed content to take a back seat, but determined to push a working class leader forward, and it was Hardie whom Graham saw as the ideal candidate. However, Hardie, who up to this point had been a committed Liberal, was reluctant to make a break with them, so it appears that a compromise was reached, whereby they would create a labour pressure group within the Liberal fold.<sup>259</sup> However, sending men to parliament of a particular class was entirely in opposition to mainstream Liberal thought,<sup>260</sup> and Hardie was rejected by the Liberals in Mid-Lanark, and stood as a 'Labour' candidate. *The Scotsman* reported:

Mr Cunninghame Graham thinks Mr Hardie a fit candidate for Mid Lanark, and Mr Hardie himself comes forward, he is snubbed and flouted and has injurious accusations brought against him . . . Men whose mouths are filled with declarations of the greatness of the masses as against the classes will have nothing to do with Mr Hardie. They set up a sort of political hierarchy, and, under cover of the so-called Liberal Association, look down with contempt on

<sup>254</sup> Scotsman, 24 October 1887, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> E. P. Thompson described Mahon as 'a floating agitator.' E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996), p. 351. Fred Reid described Mahon as 'a Socialist freebooter.' Fred Reid, 'Keir Hardie's Conversion to Socialism,' *Essays in Labour History 1886-1923*, ed. by Asa Briggs and John Saville (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> Commonweal, 22 October 1887, p. 87

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> Miner, August 1888, p. 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>258</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 3 November 1889, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> The idea of a party within a party was by no means unique among the Liberals, the most significant precedent being Joseph Chamberlain's National Liberal Federation, formed in 1877, plus, the many divisions in the Liberal ranks, including double candidatures over church disestablishment, and Irish Home Rule at the 1885 and 1886 General Elections. Hardie apparently still felt a strong affinity with the Liberals, and clung to the forlorn hope of working within the Liberal party for much longer than Graham. In his election manifesto in 1892 he stated, 'Generally I am in agreement with the present programme of the Liberal Party.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>260</sup> Manchester Guardian, 24 March 1888, p. 5.

#### Mr Hardie and labour candidates.<sup>261</sup>

This report confirmed that Graham was seen as actively promoting Hardie within the Liberal Party caucus, and to Hardie's biographers, this rejection was the beginning of his disillusionment with the Liberals. However, not untypically, Hardie eulogists have subsequently diminished or omitted Graham's role. In his essay, 'Keir Hardie's Conversion to Socialism,'<sup>262</sup> Fred Reid suggested that his candidature was on Hardie's initiative alone, disingenuously suggesting that Hardie had planned for his own defeat:

the Mid-Lanark by-election should be seen as the test of a strategy fully worked out in Hardie's mind by the middle of 1887, rather than a spontaneous gesture of stubborn independence against the 'unexpected' resistance of the local Liberal Association to Hardie's nomination.<sup>263</sup>

On 27 April 1888, against concerted Liberal and Irish nationalist opposition,<sup>264</sup> and only half-hearted support, Hardie was badly defeated, garnering a mere 8.4% of the votes cast.<sup>265</sup>

## BY-ELECTION RESULT, MID-WEST LANARKSHIRE. 27 April 1888.

John Philips (Liberal) 3847 William Bousfield Graham (Conservative) 2017 James Keir Hardie (Independent Labour) 617

It has long been maintained that Graham was a 'founder' of the Labour Party, but his exact role and significance has been difficult to establish, most likely because its formation had been tentative, involving many unrecorded discussions, doubts, disputes, and compromises. Lowe, who was directly involved in its formation, wrote of it, 'The origins of an unpopular movement are not easily collected. Early events of importance passed unrecorded, and successes which gave heart to the pioneers were received in silence by the newspapers press.' Robert Smillie, 267 the secretary of the Larkhall Miners' Association, and a close colleague of Hardie's, was the only member present at what appears to have been the party's inception who wrote a first-hand account, and he recorded the mood of the meeting, which contradicted Reid's slanted analysis that it was anything other than a bitter disappointment, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> Scotsman, 18 April 1888, p. 6. Although not yet officially founded, the name of 'The Labour Party' was already in common use.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> Fred Reid. Derived from his doctoral thesis 'The Early Life and Political Development of James Keir Hardie, 1856-92,' (Oxford University, 1969).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>263</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>264</sup> Labour Elector, 22 June 1889, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>265</sup> Glasgow Evening News described Hardie's campaign as 'well organised,' supported by 'that Goliath of politics – Mr Cunninghame Graham,' but concluded that 'the Labour Party' was not as strong in Scotland 'as its voice is loud.' Quoted in Labour Tribune, 12 May 1888, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>266</sup> Lowe, *Souvenirs of Scottish Labour* (1919), p. v. Much of this work was reprinted from Lowe's writings for Tom Johnston's *Forward* newspaper, published ten years earlier.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>267</sup> Robert Smillie (1857-1940). Later, President of the Lanarkshire Miners' Federation, President of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and M.P. for Morpeth, among many other positions.

## of Graham's inspiration:

On the day after this historic election [Hardie's defeat at Mid-Lanark] a number of Keir Hardie's supporters met in Hamilton to mingle their tears together. It could not be said that the gathering was a joyful one - although, looking back on it after all these years, I do not think that we were absolutely downhearted. In fact, my opinion is that the result of this election acted as a stimulus to many of us to go forward. Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham was present at this meeting, but he was not downcast. Instead he took the view that we should go on with the forming of a new and independent party. The meeting adopted this view, and it was decided that we should start out on a new line independent of the other two political parties.<sup>268</sup>

Having displayed unaccustomed forbearance in the face of Hardie's reticence, with this defeat, it appears that Graham had seized his opportunity, and their party within a party, which would be known as The Scottish Parliamentary Labour Party (SPLP) first convened on 19 May, but it was not constituted until 25 August. *The Scotsman* reported:

On Glasgow Green, Mr Cunninghame Graham and Mr Keir Hardie appeared as the apostles of Labour – with a big L. There is no evidence that labour with a small initial has any greater fascination for them or their handful of followers than it has for ordinary mortals.<sup>269</sup>

Another man who was at the centre of developments at this time was Robert Smillie's close colleague, Alexander 'Sandy' Haddow. Haddow insisted that it was only after his defeat at Mid-Lanark that Hardie 'came over to the Socialist side. He and Cunninghame Graham formed the Scottish Labour Party.'270

Despite his apparent role in the formation of the SPLP, Graham remains on the fringes of subsequent Labour history in Britain, although Reid grudgingly acknowledged Graham's role:

One final contact arising out of the London visits needs to be noted. This was R. B. Cunninghame Graham. Graham's even-handed attacks upon both the Conservative government and the Liberal front bench for ignoring the condition of the working class attracted Hardie's admiration. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that Graham offered Hardie a model for parliamentary agitation.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>268</sup> Robert Smillie, My Life For Labour (London: Mills & Boon, 1924), p. 293. In Smillie's autobiography Labour of Love (1940), which catalogued in detail the trials and tribulations of the miners and the early Labour movement, Graham's name was not mentioned. Labour of Love: The Story of Robert Smillie, ed. by Torquil Cowan (Glasgow: Neil Wilson Publishing, 2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>269</sup> Scotsman, 28 August 1888, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>270</sup> Alexander Haddow, 'Reminiscences of the Early Socialist Movement in Scotland,' Forward, 8 May 1909, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>271</sup> Fred Reid, 'Political Development of James Keir Hardie.' Thesis, University of Oxford, 1969, p. 45. Hardie's formative experience of parliament, under Graham's direction, is discussed at greater length in Emrys Hughes, *Keir Hardie* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), p. 34.

As a Hardie eulogist, Reid's statement was not untypical, dismissing Graham as one of Hardie's 'contacts,' and failing to acknowledge their close partnership. Glasier, for instance, wrote that Hardie and Graham were close companions for six years, and that they 'went about in harness.'272 Caroline Benn, in contrast to other Hardie biographers, wrote that Hardie needed a mentor, 'to help him make the transition from regional to national stage,'273 and while Hardie offered Graham an understanding of working class life and needs, Graham offered Hardie 'an inside knowledge of how the governing classes really worked, and the courage to stand up to them.'274 Thus, Graham had guided Hardie in his way of thinking and acting, and was certainly, if Robert Smillie's account is correct, an instrumental facilitator in the creation of the SPLP, which, even though it remained a small pressure group, rather than an effective political force, was the precursor and test-bed for the far more successful ILP. Once Hardie was fully engaged, however, Graham then seems to have welcomed the mixed role of midwife and patron in the party's early development, and he took the honorary position as president, as he had done in the SHRA, and would do much later in the NPS and the SNP.

Pelling insisted that the new party was not committed to socialism, but 'was composed of men who recognised the necessity of building a labour party first and making it Socialist at a later stage in its development.' At their first conference, however, they passed resolutions on full adult suffrage; triennial parliaments; payment of M.P.s and expenses; home rule all round; abolition of the House of Lords; state insurance; opposition to state control of the hours of labour; the abolition of primogeniture and entail, and the Georgist programme of taxing land. All of these were policies on which Graham and others had campaigned (except he wished to nationalise land), but we can only conjecture to what extent Graham's influence directed these initial proposals. Henry Champion, the Honorary Secretary of the SDF, and editor of *The Labour Elector*, although happy that at last a party of labour had been formed, was in no doubt about what lay ahead:

Although I am in some degree an outsider, and my opinions can have no binding force upon you, I venture to claim that I speak not altogether without some experience of the difficulties you will have to encounter, and the opposition you will have to face.<sup>276</sup>

The extent of the new party's support is also difficult to unearth. It was rumoured, however (probably humourously), that the executive was careful not to appear together in case they were photographed as representing the party's full strength.<sup>277</sup> According to the political activist and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>272</sup> Bruce Glasier, *James Keir Hardie: A Memorial* (Manchester: The National Labour Press, 1919), p. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>273</sup> Caroline Benn, Keir Hardie (London: Hutchinson, 1992), p. 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>274</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>275</sup> Henry Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900. (Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>276</sup> Labour Elector, 21 September 1888, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>277</sup> William Martin Haddow, *My Seventy Years* (Glasgow: Robert Gibson & Sons, 1943), p. 34. According to Alexander 'Sandy' Haddow, the first socialist meeting that Hardie addressed was at Parkhead Hall (no date), and after posting 200 bills, attracted an audience of thirteen. Sandy Haddow, *Forward*, 8 May 1909, p. 6.

publisher, James Leatham, who knew both Graham and Hardie, Hardie was unknown to the public nationally,<sup>278</sup> but Graham's nation-wide celebrity and popularity among the working classes sustained a higher profile for the party than it would otherwise have received, or perhaps warranted. A reporter from The Daily News was certain that Graham's role in the SPLP's formation was significant. In an interview two months after Graham's release from prison, and a week before Hardie's defeat, the newspaper reported, 'The subject of conversation was the position and prospects of the Labour Party which Mr Cunninghame Graham is a large part."<sup>279</sup> Graham then spoke of the formation of the party, which he did not envisage being exclusively composed of working men, believing that many of them were not men of affairs and could not take a statesman-like view of any subject, but enough members should be elected to hold the balance of power, and hold the other parties to account.<sup>280</sup> This seems to confirm that Graham's thoughts on the new party were advanced before its inception and it would also apparently hold true for the next stage of the party's development. However, it also demonstrated Graham's belief that, 'The middle classes are, as a rule, far better political manipulators than are the working classes." Here we begin to witness a demonstration (if so far, somewhat weakly) of another feature of Graham's personality, which would have longer-term repercussions - elitism. This might appear contradictory, that Graham could at once fight for the interests of the working class and the poor, while simultaneously despising many of them, but he was motivated by a moral hatred of injustice, and his overwhelming need to defend the underdog. Injustice clashed with harmony, and stirred oftenviolent anger, conjuring the much used adjective about Graham, 'Quixotic,' in its fullest sense. In 1916, a critic remarked that despite his 'airy panache,' at the first sign of abuse and arrogance 'his air of disengagement and supercilious dash vanishes, and, sword out, he leaps before the victim, fixing an implacable gimlet eye on the offender.'282

Graham's elitism was not based on his own class background, nor was it simply class snobbery as claimed by Glasier.<sup>283</sup> In 1909, during an interview with Robert Birkmyer, Graham said:

A soulless and material barbarian, although he is conveyed from London to Paris in a well-upholstered Pullman car, and can receive on the way the latest football and divorce news, still remains a barbarian. The progress that most interests me is *ethical*. Whilst being fully alive to the great advances made by applied science, I deplore that in ethics we seem to be absolutely stationary since the time of Plato.'284

<sup>278</sup> James Leatham, 60 Years of World Mending (1940) (Turriff: The Deveron Press, 2016), p. 154. Leatham published several references to Graham, and reprinted three of his sketches in his literary publication *The Gateway*, and he could be counted as one of Graham's 'eager champions.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>279</sup> 'Mr Cunninghame Graham Interviewed,' reprinted in Airdrie Advertiser, 21 April 1888, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>280</sup> Ibid. My italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>281</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Forward, 1 May 1909, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>282</sup> New Statesman, 11 November 1916, p. 134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>283</sup> Glasier described Graham as 'a species of inverted dilettantism.' Glasier, Keir Hardie, p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>284</sup> Robert Birkmyre, 'An Appreciation of Cunninghame Graham,' *Idler*, February 1909, p. 480. My italics. Plato's

Graham admired the heroic virtues he found in whatever class, perhaps again, drawn from his experiences abroad, among people who led rough, dangerous, uncompromising, natural, 'harmonious' lives, unlike what he was now witnessing in the slums, sweat-shops, and gentlemen's clubs at home. This may perhaps be termed 'heroic-elitism,' where Graham's admiration was reserved for the courageous individual, who was independent, self-sufficient, and self-realising. This type of person, whether from the higher or lower orders of society, would be the focus of his later writings; however, for Graham, particularly in the Scottish context, these heroic virtues were mostly confined to the past. Watts described this as 'The primitivist's sense that the healthy life must be an unsophisticated one . . . and that if there be a golden age its location is far more likely to be in the past than in the future. 285 This is a particularly Nietzschean viewpoint, and although Graham never mentioned Nietzsche directly, it is clear that there were, throughout his later career, strong links to Nietzsche's philosophy. We may also perceive that at a more universal level, Graham's attitude mirrored Nietzsche's view of humanity, as expressed by H. L. Mencken, 'Thousands bowed down to men and ideas that they despised and denounced things that every sane man knew was necessary and inevitable. The result was a flavour of dishonesty and hypocrisy in all human affairs. 286 This fundamental world-view set Graham apart from, and in direct conflict with, the large majority of humanity, and polarised contemporary, and even current opinion, that he was either a hero, or a dangerous eccentric.

By June 1889 Champion wrote that Graham was 'speaking out clearly and persistently in favour of the formation of a distinct, and *independent* Labour Party.'287 Progress for the new party, however, remained slow. As Lowe intimated, the press boycotted their meetings,<sup>288</sup> and:

despite great efforts . . . being put forth by the Scottish promoters of what is called the Labour Party to secure adhesion to their ranks . . . the idea of Labour representation has not taken any firm hold of the public mind . . . the objects of the Labour Party, as put forth by Mr Cunninghame Graham and his friends, have rather alarmed than pleased the public.'289

Nor had the idea taken a firm hold among labour propagandists. For example, as late as March 1892, John Trevor,<sup>290</sup> the Editor of *The Labour Prophet* wrote, under the heading 'An Independent Labour Party?':

Republic was the earliest and most influential discourse on ethics, justice, oligarchies, and the abuse of state power, and this statement suggests that it might have been another codifier of Graham's political philosophy, perhaps a fundamental one.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>285</sup> Watts, Cunninghame Graham, p. 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>286</sup> H. L. Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1907) (Tuscon: See Sharp Press, 2003), p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>287</sup> Labour Elector, 22 June 1889, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>288</sup> Labour Prophet: The Organ of the Labour Church, March 1892, p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>289</sup> Scotsman, 6 June 1889 p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>290</sup> John Trevor (1855–1930). A Unitarian minister who founded The Labour Church in Manchester in 1891.

I have weighed the matter well. The cause of Labour is to me a sacred cause . . . I have, however, come to the conclusion that the formation of an independent Labour party is the most impractical of proposals and the forlornest of hopes. To begin with, the men who must compose such a party must be taken to be such men as could only be properly described as Socialists.<sup>291</sup>

The formation of the SPLP, and the possibility of a nationwide successor, was also not welcomed by the working class establishment. Graham and Hardie not only faced apathy from the workers themselves, but outright antagonism from large sections of the trade union movement. Fraser devoted considerable space to describing to reluctance of the trade unions in Scotland to support them,<sup>292</sup> and the Fabian, Joseph Clayton, wrote:

The well-established Trade Unions of skilled workmen regarded the preaching of Socialism in the 'eighties with cold indifference; their elected officials were mildly contemptuous of the new gospel; in many cases frankly hostile. No political faith was required of the members of these Unions, but the leading spirits were Liberals; in religion Methodists or freethinkers.<sup>293</sup>

At the Trades Union Congress in Dundee in September 1889, Hardie, Graham, and their new party, were roundly abused by many delegates, who regarded them as upstarts and ingrates who were disrupting what had already been established, one delegate stating, 'We have by slow means built up a position for the working classes; and it is by such proper means that we mean to work in the future,'<sup>294</sup> and their Eight Hours proposal was defeated by almost two to one. <sup>295</sup> Graham was accused of associating with 'questionable politicians,' and one delegate reminded his comrades that 'able as Mr Graham might be, there were men in the Labour movement before Mr Cunninghame Graham was heard of.'<sup>296</sup> There is no doubt, however, that Hardie recognized Graham's contribution, and said so at the Congress:

If you went out on the streets and asked the first hundred men you met who was the leader of the Labour party in Parliament what name would be mentioned in answer? (*Voices, "Broadhurst"* and "Keir Hardie," and laughter) – not Keir Hardie – (laughter) – but a man who was in that hall, and not even honoured with a place on the platform – Mr Cunninghame Graham.<sup>297</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>291</sup> Labour Prophet, March 1892, p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>292</sup> Fraser, Scottish Popular Politics, pp. 125-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>293</sup> Joseph Clayton, *The Rise & Decline of Socialism in Great Britain 1884-1924*, (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1925), p. 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>294</sup> Scotsman, 5 September 1889, p.6. With the influx of new societies, by 1891, the TUC voted in favour of an eight hours legislation. W. H. Fraser, 'Trades Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland,' in Essays in Scottish Labour History, ed. by Ian MacDougall (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1978), p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>297</sup> Ibid.

The Fabian Beatrice Webb, who was present at the Congress noted the antagonism, almost hatred, among the TUC leadership who were trying to keep out 'wolves in sheep's clothing.'298 Even the Labour Electoral Conference, whose aim was to get working men elected to parliament, was antipathetic to Graham and Hardie on the basis that they were Socialists.299 This also applied to the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC (a wing of the Liberals). In their drafting of a Local Option Eight Hours Bill, it was stated 'This only is certain, the committee will have nothing more to do with Mr Cunninghame Graham, and the opponents of state intervention on the committee felt that this year [1891] they are free of a great incubus,'300 confirming that Graham was regarded by many as an inconvenient nuisance, and that he would not be re-elected. Graham lost no time in publishing his own views on the Congress, stating that the workers should 'repudiate the reactionary doctrines advanced in the antediluvian Congress of respectables at Dundee. The reason for the enslavement of men, whose leaders are Shipton<sup>301</sup> and Broadhurst,<sup>302</sup> and whose god is broadcloth, is not far to seek.'<sup>303</sup>

Graham's 'labour' activities were also causing problems in parts of his constituency, where some believed he was not representing them or their opinions. For example, correspondence between Graham and the Tollcross Liberal Association, which had criticised his conduct, appeared in *The Glasgow Herald* in early November 1889:

We, the members of Tollcross Liberal Association, at our annual general meeting, herby condemn the conduct of Cunninghame Graham, M.P., as pursued by him at the recent by-election in Dundee and in the previous elections for Mid-Lanark and Govan; we consider he was entirely out of place as a Liberal representative in trying to stir up strife amongst the Liberals of these constituencies, and thereby endangering the seat to the Liberal party; we rejoice that the Liberal electors of these constituencies put a true value on the utterances of our M.P. by ignoring them and proving true to the Liberal party and its great leader, Mr Gladstone; we would recommend that Mr Graham in future, if unable to support the candidate of the Liberal Association of any constituency where an election may take place, that he at least refrain from opposing him, leaving that work to be performed by the Tories, to whom it properly belongs.<sup>304</sup>

Graham's reply was typically robust and dismissive; he supported the nationalisation of capital and land, the disestablishment of the English and Scottish national churches; *adult* ('not manhood') suffrage, that he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>298</sup> The Letters of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, ed. by Norman Mackenzie (Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 69-70. Beatrice Webb converted to socialism in 1890.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>299</sup> Scotsman, 9 April 1890, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>300</sup> Ibid., 15 October 1891, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>301</sup> George Shipton (1839-1911) was a prominent trade unionist.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>302</sup> Henry Broadhurst (1840-1911) was a leading early trade unionist, and a Lib-Lab M.P.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>303</sup> Labour Elector, 7 September 1889, p. 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>304</sup> Glasgow Herald, 7 November 1889, p. 10.

was a Republican, and that he had endeavoured to get men into parliament, from impoverished backgrounds, who would help these aims. He continued:

What I will not do is act against what I believe to be right, either for Mr Gladstone or any other man. Now what I believe to be wrong is a state of society in which the vast bulk of the people are very poor, work long hours, and have no property, and in which two political parties pass their time in quarrelling with one another, and not in seeking to remedy the above mentioned state of matters.<sup>305</sup>

Here was Graham in full-blown, uncompromisingly moralistic mode. The antipathy of the Tollcross Liberals, however, was in stark contrast to packed meetings held throughout his constituency in the previous month, where at Coatbridge for example, Graham was cheered throughout.<sup>306</sup> At a meeting in Shettleston a week later, a vote of confidence was carried by acclamation.<sup>307</sup> What we appear to be witnessing is Graham's recurring ability to divide opinion, garnering popular support among certain sections of the working class electorate, to whom he was a hero, but the reverse among the Liberal members and officials, to whom he was a threat.

Rumours began to circulate that Graham did not intend to stand for re-election.<sup>308</sup> On 8 March 1889, *The Scotsman's* political correspondent reported 'I am informed on very good authority Mr Cunninghame Graham has in contemplation his early retirement from Parliament, and a complete withdrawal from politics.<sup>2309</sup> At a special meeting in February 1889 the North-West Lanarkshire Liberals pressed Graham to give them a definite answer about his future, but he requested a delay until Easter.<sup>310</sup> On 23 April, a letter from Graham appeared in *The Evening Citizen* refuting the charge from the Liberals that he had been evasive in his answers, and that 'one should wash one's linen in private,' but, despite this assertion, he was extremely frank about his financial position:

I have repeatedly stated my great penury and the sacrifice I was making to obtain the money to fight the seat again. On top of this, and at a period when an election is still remote, I am now asked to say whether my means are such as in three years I am again to undertake a very expensive campaign. After having been severely restricted in order to enter Parliament, I would have thought it hardly necessary [words illegible] force from me the avowal of the only crime that is never pardoned in this country, that of being poor.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>306</sup> Scotsman, 25 October 1889, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>307</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 2 November 1889, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>308</sup> Coatbridge Express, 20 February 1889, p. 2.

<sup>309</sup> Scotsman, 8 March 1889, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>310</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 23 February 1889, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>311</sup> Evening Citizen, 23 April 1889, p. 5. Graham had inherited over £100,000 worth of debts from his father. At the end of July that year, *The Coatbridge Express* published news that Graham's estate at Ardoch had been put up for

Eleven months later, on 1 March 1890, *The Airdrie Advertiser* announced that Graham planned to contest Greenock (another constituency with a large Irish and Highland population) as a Labour candidate,<sup>312</sup> and on 14 March, he wrote to the North-West Lanarkshire Liberal Association, severing his connection, and thanking them for their support as 'one whose views were not always in accord with theirs.'<sup>313</sup>

It is apparent that severing ties with the Liberals, who still enjoyed a large support in Scotland, was proving difficult, and Graham and Hardie attempted to find a compromise, or perhaps change Liberal policy by the introduction of working-class candidates into the Liberal ranks. On 20 Dec 1894, Andrew Provand, M.P. for Glasgow Blackfriars, wrote to Lord Roseberry discussing a meeting held the previous summer between the Liberal Chief Whip, Edward Marjoribanks, and the Labour Party, to discuss an accommodation over parliamentary seats, and that a similar meeting had taken place three or four years earlier (presumably 1890), between Graham, Hardie and Marjoribanks. As a reflection of the attitudes within the Liberal party, Andrew Provand considered that any deal with the 'socialists' would be deeply unpopular among most Glasgow Liberals, and that 'It would create a split in the Party as pronounced as the [Irish] Home Rule Bill did." Graham, however, seems to have believed that at this meeting, an accord had been reached, that if the SPLP demurred from fighting the Partick Division of Glasgow, and supported the Liberal candidate, he, Marjoribanks, would concede them Greenock and two other constituencies on the understanding that 'the Labour candidates gave adhesion to the political programmes of the Liberal party on other than labour questions." This was undoubtedly seen as a great opportunity for the new party (or in reality, faction), for, simultaneous with Graham's letter of resignation, Hardie and James Shaw Maxwell M.P. approached the North-West Lanarkshire Liberal Association with a resolution that they should put forward a Labour candidate, 'This, it seems to us, would be putting into practice the spirit of the agreement recently come to by Mr Marjoribanks M.P., the Liberal Whip, on the one hand, and the representatives of the Scottish Labour party on the other, and a means whereby unnecessary friction could be avoided.'316 With two years still to run in this parliament, it appeared that Graham and the SPLP were trying to force the issue by striking while the iron was hot, and giving them enough time to campaign under a new banner. However, the Association rejected the right of any other organisation to interfere with their choice,<sup>317</sup> and it was reported in The

sale in lots, totaling over £50,000, but, 'At the sale, no offers were made, and the proceedings were adjourned.' *Coatbridge Express*, 31 July 1889, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>312</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 1 March 1890, p. 3.

<sup>313</sup> Coatbridge Express, 19 March 1890, p. 2.

<sup>314</sup> Andrew Provand M.P., letter from to Lord Roseberry, 20 December 1894. Roseberry Papers, NLS, MS10100. Thank you to Dr. Catriona M. M. MacDonald for sharing this information.

<sup>315</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 1 March 1890, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>316</sup> Coatbridge Express, 19 March 1890, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>317</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

Coatbridge Express that they had invited two mainstream Liberals to seek selection.<sup>318</sup> The Greenock Association also rejected any such arrangement, and *The Scotsman* reported:

It was only the other day that the Greenock seat was placed in a curiously unique position among all the seats in Scotland. Mr Marjoribanks sold it under the ingenious reservations, to The Scottish Labour Party for the price they could give in the shape of votes for Sir Charles Tennant<sup>319</sup> in Partick. Before the election took place it became evident that he had sold what was not his, and that he had attempted to traffic the Greenock seat without even the leave of the Greenock Gladstonians. The latter at once began to look for a candidate for themselves.<sup>320</sup>

The editorial went on to conjecture that Marjoribanks ('the sagacious whip') 'had arranged a pretty little plot and as was likely - there would be the great consolation that one of the most troublesome of Mr Marjoribanks thorns in the flesh would be removed.'321 *The Labour Elector* announced that Marjoribanks had denied ever making such an agreement with Graham or anyone else. Its editor, Champion, could hardly conceal his elation when writing:

We hope Mr. Graham still retains his original high opinion of the character of Liberal Whips, and that they will not seriously think of breaking finally with the Liberal Party. It is *such* an honourable Party, and *so* devoted to the cause of Labour that Mr. Graham really mustn't, he mustn't indeed.<sup>322</sup>

This apparent duplicitousness (or self-delusion) must have been a great disappointment to Graham, who, having indicated his intention not to stand again in North West Lanark, had now burnt his boats, but there is no obvious demonstration of this in Graham's letters to the press or in his journalism, but as usual, he continued to lambast 'Liberal sham' and 'Tory cheat.'323

Despite this setback, Graham continued to campaign in parliament, and toured the country, speaking in support of various groups of striking workers, continuing his involvement with the Scottish Home Rule movement,<sup>324</sup> and trying to organise Labour in Ireland.<sup>325</sup> In August 1890, he restated his policies in *The Star*:

No kings but a republic. A president with a modest salary. No rampant race of princes and princesses to be provided for out of the hedger's toil, the miner's sweat. An eight hour day;

<sup>319</sup> Sir Charles Tennant, 1st Baronet (1823-1906). Scottish industrialist, Liberal politician, and father-in-law to future Prime Minister H. H. Asquith. Asquith had been Graham's defence lawyer at his trial, after the 'Bloody Sunday' riot.

322 Labour Elector, 22 March 1890, p. 185.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>320</sup> Scotsman, 28 February 1890, p. 4

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to The Star, 25 August 1890, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>324</sup> Scotsman, 31 March 1890, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>325</sup> Ibid., 15 September 1890, p. 8.

overwork for none, continuous employment for the entire population; few or none unemployed. State control of land and mines. Free access to the soil and mineral wealth for all. Railways and tramways owned by the state. A minimum wage. Five shillings at least for all who do an honest days work.<sup>326</sup>

Lastly, in accordance with what has been argued was an underlying aesthetic sense, national aid to art 'Art and culture brought home in manufacture and in every phase of life to the poorest.'327 His split with the Liberals had, however, left him politically exposed. In a letter to John Burns<sup>328</sup> he wrote 'The House is beginning to find out that there is nothing and nobody behind me. Anyone but the idiots in Parliament would have seen this long ago.'329 Prior to this, by April 1890, the trade unionist Tom Mann was convinced of his political impotence.<sup>330</sup>

According to Taylor, 'At some time in the summer of 1891 an offer from a friend to pay his election expenses determined Graham to accept an invitation from the Liberals of Camlachie to be their candidate at the 1892 general election.'331 At his first address, on 11 November 1891, he received the sort of reception he had been used to from the mainly appreciative audience, and his nomination was accepted, which, considering his extreme views, previous attacks on the Liberals, and the formation of a new party, is rather extraordinary. However, as soon as his campaign started in the following year, Graham dropped any pretence of supporting the Liberals, and again openly attacked them, and was dropped as their candidate. An editorial in *The Scotsman* opined:

in the exercise of his independent judgment [Graham] thought the right thing to do was to attack in the most bitter way the leaders of the Liberal party, and to dissociate himself practically from the main body of the party on various points. Under such circumstances, it was not surprising that the Association should have come to the conclusion that Mr Cunninghame Graham had failed to satisfy the first conditions of a Liberal candidate, that they should have settled on Mr McCulloch [Gladstonian] and chosen him.<sup>2332</sup>

On 4 June 1892, a public meeting was held in the constituency at Bridgeton, and Graham put himself forward as an Independent Labour Party candidate for Camlachie,<sup>333</sup> and the Eight Hours Bill, and land nationalisation were his main priorities. The meeting was constantly disrupted by rival

328 With whom Graham had charged the police cordon in Trafalgar Square.

<sup>326</sup> Star, 25 August 1890, p. 4.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>329</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to John Burns, 24 October 1891. John Burns's Library, University of Warwick, MSS.259.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>330</sup> Tom Mann, letter to John Burns 30 April 1890. Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Taylor, p. 222.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>332</sup> Scotsman, 2 July 1892 p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>333</sup> Taylor wrote that Graham had 'popped up with a new label – that of the Independent Labour Party.' The ILP was not formally inaugurated until 1893. Taylor, p. 223. It is possible that Graham, rather than jumping the gun, was forcing the issue, that a nation wide organisation was needed.

supporters, and could not begin until two of the audience were ejected, and the motion was carried to have him stand as the 'Labour' candidate, as it was next day at a meeting of The Irish National League at Gallowgate.<sup>334</sup> Further disturbances occurred at a meeting of John McCulloch, and *The Glasgow Observer* believed that Graham was behind the disruptive behaviour, adding, 'He fostered treason to Liberalism wherever he found opportunity and then cried out like an injured innocent when the Liberals . . . turned on him and rent him . . . refusing all approach to amicable arrangement.<sup>2335</sup>

Graham had campaigned vigorously in Camlachie, although he was not in the constituency during the last week of the campaign, choosing instead to help Hardie's candidature in West Ham, and had enlisted his wife Gabrielle. She made an inflammatory speech in his absence, in which she described the Liberals as 'miserable piddling party hacks, dull heavy beery-brained dullards who would sell their souls if they had any.'336 *The Glasgow Herald* wrote of her, 'Mrs. Cunninghame Graham is an exceptional woman, and it may be as well that her performance of last Sunday should remain exceptional.'337 With little help from his supporters, and with the Irish vote cleaving to the official Liberal candidate, after Parnell's disgrace over his divorce proceedings, on 6 July, Graham lost badly, polling only 11.9% of the vote.

## GENERAL ELECTION RESULT, CAMLACHIE. 6 July 1892.

Alexander Cross (Liberal Unionist)	3455
John McCulloch (Liberal)	3084
Cunninghame Graham (Scottish Labour)	906
Hugh Watt (Independent Liberal)	179

The news of Graham's defeat was received by the Labour supporters in London 'with a good deal of regret,' and there were hopes expressed that he would re-enter Parliament.<sup>338</sup> At a meeting in Newcastle soon afterwards, Hardie proposed that Graham 'as the most brilliant man in the Labour party out of Parliament,' should stand there in the future, <sup>339</sup> but his defeat signaled the end of Graham's parliamentary career. Despite 'the drift of the tide towards Unionism' in Scotland, <sup>340</sup> Gladstone now led a minority Liberal Government, but three independent labour MPs had been elected, including Hardie. Writing of Graham's defeat, Watts and Davies commented, 'Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx wrote that the labour representation movement had lost 'something more than a head - their heart. It was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>334</sup> Scotsman, 6 June 1892, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>335</sup> Glasgow Observer, 9 July 1892, p. 5. The newspaper was a strong supporter of Gladstonian Liberalism, which they believed offered the best chance of Irish home rule.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>337</sup> Glasgow Herald, 7 July 1892, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>338</sup> Ibid., 10 July 1892, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>339</sup> Scotsman, 16 July 1892, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>340</sup> Ibid., 13 July, 1892, p. 6.

meant as a tribute, but it raises a question - was the political Graham all heart and no head?'341 Taylor wrote of the event:

In the circumstances prevailing at the time - his low state of health, his urgent need for money, the damaged prospects for the Scottish Labour Party - his first reaction to his dismissal probably was relief; now he had time to rest, to reflect; time to decide whether he was pleased or sorry.<sup>342</sup>

Ironically, on 2 October 1892, three months after Graham's defeat, at The National Liberal Federation's annual meeting at Newcastle, a report was issued (known as 'The Newcastle Programme'343) which, according to Peter Weller, was a response to the loss of middle-class support, and the enlarged working-class franchise, which 'made it clear that some gesture had to be made to labour.'344 The programme endorsed many of the issues that Graham had begun campaigning for five years earlier, including, giving compulsory powers to local authorities to acquire lands for allotments, small holdings, and labourers' dwellings, which was a policy to turn agricultural workers into small-scale tenants. It also sought Home Rule, church disestablishment in Scotland and Wales, triennial parliaments, fair taxation of land values and ground rents, repeal of the laws of primogeniture and entail, and freedom for tenants to sell or transfer their interest. Employers' liability insurance was also proposed, and there was reference to the reduction of the hours of labour, and recognition of the principle of the payment of M.P.s. Weller added, that, 'the Newcastle Programme mainly represented the radicalism of the previous decade, not a new departure in Liberal policy.'345 However, it was indicative that at last, significant elements within the Liberal party were aware that progressive policies were required to counter increasing calls for change. The question might then justifiably be asked, that if Graham had not resigned his seat, and behaved more consensually within the Liberal caucus, could he have achieved some measure of change, which, during his time in parliament, he had not? Inevitably, however, to avoid alienating middle-class supporters, a major stumbling block remained the Liberal's position on the adoption of working class candidates in working-class districts, and it is difficult to envisage Graham accepting this. At the Newcastle meeting, Gladstone apparently created the impression that the programme would be binding on the party, but this was not the case, and Peter Stansky concluded, 'In short, whatever else may be said about the Newcastle Programme, it proved of no value to the Liberal

<sup>341</sup> Watts & Davies, p. 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>342</sup> Taylor, p. 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>343</sup> Spectator described it as 'a document which, though bearing traces of having been concocted in the offices of a clique of political wire-pullers, is nevertheless the official pronouncement of the attitude of the party in regard to the various items of the Liberal programme.' The Spectator, 3 October 1891, p.8. Hutchison described it as a reiteration of an 'assorted collection of sectional demands.' Hutchison, Political History of Scotland, p. 179.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>344</sup> Peter Weller, *The New Liberalism: Liberal Social Theory in Great Britain, 1889-1914* (1982) (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>345</sup> Weller, p. 61.

party as a cohesive force.'346 Furthermore, according to Hutchison, 'In the administration of 1892, Gladstone readily acceded to Marjoribank's recommendation that the institution of a Scottish Grand Committee was sufficient to meet the needs of Scottish legislation. Scottish Home Rule was thus effectively shunted aside.'347 All this gives justifiable credence to Graham's disillusionment with the Liberal party in general, and Gladstone in particular.

# POLITICAL JOURNALISM.

Graham had long harboured ambitions to become a writer, 348 but in 1887, he had written to a friend, I am at last forced back on Justice again, 349 as no paper will take anything from me. Fancy the Yellow Book refusing a thing of mine on the grounds that it was immoral. Cretins, liars, etc.'350 However, after Trafalgar Square, this changed. His article 'Has the Liberal Party a Future?' (1888), had displayed passion and style, but in a busy political year, in which he continued his campaigns against the government and the police within and without parliament, and attempts to bring the conditions of Britain's poor to the attention of his parliamentary colleagues,<sup>351</sup> Graham was slow to take up his pen again. It was, however, the working conditions of the nail and chain-makers of Cradley Heath in the Black Country, and particularly for the women workers, that spurred Graham to write in their defence, and in early in December 1888, he contributed an Introduction to a pamphlet entitled The Nail & Chainmakers. Here, for the first time, while still polemical, is an eloquent and absorbing piece of descriptive prose, foreshadowing the 'sketch' style that would be the hallmark of his later literary output, and a new career as a social commentator. Its often short, stabbing sentences painted a vivid and disturbing picture of Dickensian squalor and degradation, 'Mud, dirt, desolation, unpaved street, filthy courts, narrow reeking alleys, thin unkempt women, listless men with open shirts showing their hairy chests. Mud, dirt; dirt and more mud."352 This was a festering sore of exploitation and profiteering, recognized, but ignored. The essay is an indictment on the use of sweated labour, on the failures at every level of capitalist society, and the social system.

An almost contemporaneous piece was Graham's 'Introduction' to a booklet entitled *A Labour Programme*,<sup>353</sup> by Mahon, in which Mahon set out his theories, and potentially incendiary proposals for the reorganisation of society. However, what marked out Graham's Introduction was its restrained style

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>346</sup> Peter Stansky, Ambitions and Strategies: The Struggle For the Leadership of the Liberal Party in the 1890s (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. xii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>347</sup> Hutchison, *Political History of Scotland*, p. 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>348</sup> 'His main interest is, however, in literature.' 'Mr Cunninghame Graham Interviewed,' *The Airdrie Advertiser*, 21 April, 1888, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>349</sup> *Justice: The Organ of Social-Democracy*, published by the SDF.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>350</sup> Tschiffely, p. 264.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>351</sup> PP. Motions and Question, 11 August 1888, Hansard, Vol.330, cc416-19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>352</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Plea For the Chainmakers,' in *The Nail and Chainmakers*, The Labour Platform Series, No.2, 1888, p. 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>353</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Introduction' to 'A Labour Programme,' by J. L. Mahon, The Labour Platform Series, No.1, 1888, pp. 1-7

in comparison to the *Plea For the Chainmakers*. Also, for the first time in print, Graham attempted something altogether more literary and reflective, incorporating what would become a hallmark of his political journalism, his frequent literary references, particularly from Shakespeare. Champion criticised the programme for being impractical, but of Graham he wrote 'In his half dozen pages Mr. Graham contrives to write some true and pointed sentences but, as is his wont . . . to wrap them up in sayings which, to adopt his own trick of Shakespearian quotation will be 'caviar to the general.'254 Since this work was presumably aimed at ordinary working people, Graham had made no concessions in his writing to the uneducated, and the reader might be forgiven for believing that here, and in his upcoming works for socialist journals, that he was flexing his literary muscles, and playing to his strengths as a well-read, urbane, gentleman, or, as Champion hinted, his tendency to show-off. It should be noted that after 1895, when Graham began his long career writing for literary publications, read by a more educated public, these affectations all but disappeared.

To date, Graham's journalistic contributions had been to the work of others, but from early September 1888, until August 1891, while still an M.P., he embraced political journalism as a vehicle for his campaigns for social justice. The first of these publications was Champion's *The Labour Elector* (which Graham partly owned), and whose campaigns chimed with his own, particularly its exposure of inhuman work practices, its support of New Unionism, and the eight-hour working day. Both the biographies of Watt & Davies, and Taylor, emphasise the importance of *The Labour Elector*, and Taylor confirmed that it was Graham's 'first taste of regular campaigning journalism.' In addition, his speeches in and out of parliament were frequently featured as news items. Henceforth, in his work for *The Labour Elector*, *The People's Press*, and others, to which he contributed almost one article per week, his themes would fall into five main categories – *reportage*; the impotence, indifference, and corruption of parliament; workers' rights and the eight-hour day; the evils of capitalism and the plight of the poor; and public versus private morality, only some of which will be addressed here.

Stirring the working classes into concerted action would be *the* common theme that united all of Graham's writing during this early period. In his essay, 'Working Class Politics,' Hutchison described the early difficulties of establishing a thriving socialist presence in Glasgow (and by inference, Scotland) prior to the establishment of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1893, stating 'There was, in truth, no great interest among the existing political groupings in Glasgow towards socialism.' The Irish nationalists for example, pursued their own agenda, while the land-reformers, mostly of Highland origin, remained within the Liberal fold. <sup>356</sup> This lack of cohesion and militancy within the working class prevailed to a lesser or greater extent throughout Britain; thus, all of Graham's journalism during the

354 Labour Elector, 12 January 1889, p. 8.

<sup>355</sup> Taylor, p. 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>356</sup> Hutchison in *The Working Class in Glasgow, 1750-1914*, ed. by R. A. Cage (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 113-4.

period was political propaganda in some form, encouraging the workers to assume their rights. His *reportage* is however the most obvious means of encouraging working class support, by reporting on strikes and conferences, "The Marxist Congress;" The Dundee Congress; or 'Our View of the Strike, "559 being early examples. These were attempts to 'talk up' the labour cause, demonstrating where possible, workers' solidarity, the effectiveness of militancy, and at times exaggerating the movement's strength and momentum. His confident assertions were however belied by the indifference, passivity, and often, downright hostility he found among the workers themselves, and his frustration over their inability to look after what he considered to be their own best interests. At a meeting in Dundee in September 1889, for example, Graham stormed out after telling those assembled that they were only fit to be represented by capitalists, and offering a few epigrams on the stupidity of the working classes. The journalist and publisher Frank Harris, who would later hire Graham to work on his *Saturday Review*, wrote that Graham was on the side of the poor and the workers through his sense of justice and disdain for riches, but had 'an artist's contempt for their lack of vision, an adventurer's scorn for their slow blood, '361 consolidating his elitist, dismissive attitude which would later cause problems with his Labour colleagues.

Political apathy was something that many political thinkers, before and after Graham, had considered problematic, if not intractable. In the year Graham was born, John Stuart Mill had written of 'the extreme unfitness (of) the laboring classes . . . for any order of things which make any considerable demand on either their intellect of their virtue,'362 while Ruskin, as we have seen, saw the workers as having been degraded into a confused and hopeless passivity. Hyndman was convinced that 'the slave-class cannot be freed by the slaves themselves. The leadership, the initiative, the teaching, the organisation, must come from those who were born into a different position.'363 Despite his impatient outbursts, however, Graham, at this period at least, seemed to understand the huge cultural and generational shift required to counteract the years of passivity and obedience, believing, as he wrote in A Labour Programme, that the working classes would in time seize the day. In his piece entitled 'If Cock Robin is Dead – Who Will Kill King Capital?' Graham criticised an article by Sidney Webb, believing that Webb took a patronising view, and had too low an opinion of the capabilities of the working classes. Graham blamed religion and commerce ('chapel and till') for these passive attitudes, and their misplaced belief in the Liberal Party as the only vehicle for change. But equally, he did not wish to see the workers corrupted by their advancement. For Graham, the only solution was purely 'labour' politics

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>357</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The Marxist Congress,' Labour Elector, 27 July 1889, pp. 54-5.

<sup>358</sup> Cunninghame Graham, "The Dundee Congress," Ibid., 7 September 1889, pp. 152-3.

<sup>359</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Our View of the Strike,' Ibid., 21 September 1889, p. 181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>360</sup> Lowe, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour, p. 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>361</sup> Frank Harris, Contemporary Portraits. Third Series (privately printed, 1920), p. 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>362</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, Preface to 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (London: John W. Parker, 1852), p. 9. Hardie wrote much later that 'it is the slum vote which the socialist candidate fears most.' Keir Hardie, *From Serfdom to Socialism*, (London: G. Allen, 1907), p. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>363</sup> H. M. Hyndman, The Record of An Adventurous Life (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 397.

to avoid the mistakes of the past, and with no collaboration with the middle classes, 'Better by far the workman in his club, caring for naught (as Webb says) but his beer and skittles, than transmutated [sic] to a smug, cheating bourgeois, or led by him and deserted on the post as heretofore.'<sup>364</sup>

Graham was all-too aware that once a working man had improved his position, he was just as liable to turn on his fellows, and betray his class, stepping on his comrades instead of helping raise them up. In a piece entitled 'China Dogs,' Graham humorously put the blame for these misplaced aspirations on the cosy symbols of Victorian domesticity that ornamented the mantle-shelves of many working class homes, the 'wally-dugs' which to him were a sign of growing bourgeois attitudes - 'Then the black coat appears and all that implies. The men who worked with him declare that Jack or Jim has become a toff, the fact being really that he is a mixture of a skunk and fool.' This was another particularly elitist and idealistic perspective; his fundamental hope being that human nature could be changed, so that material considerations, among a population who has hitherto suffered deprivation, could be made subordinate to a desire for independence, and the sort of non-materialistic self-improvement, promulgated by Smiles and others. Graham, however, was not above using working-class material aspirations as a counterargument when it suited him, and we occasionally witness Graham the 'contrarian.' In his 'An Open Letter to Prince Kropotkin,' he wrote about the abolition of property:

It would not be from the propertied class, believe me, that the outcry against Communism would come . . . No, but the poor, who, never having enjoyed property, a present in the main look at all social reforms as merely an opportunity to acquire, and would resent bitterly when they found they were to call nothing their own.<sup>365</sup>

Generally, however, both of these sentiments reflected Graham's disdain for bourgeois attitudes and his own 'heroic-elitism' - 'Respectability is England's curse, and Scotland's bane,'366 or again, 'Respectability! I hate respectability . . . What did respectability mean? Why, when respectability shut the door of its snug villa it showed humanity out.'367 As stated previously, these counter-intuitive views were undoubtedly developed from Graham's colonial, or at least foreign experiences, and they were by no means unique. Although diametrically opposed to Graham's political stance, and his views on empire, in his 1915 novel, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, John Buchan had his hero Richard Hannay say the following:

A man of my sort, who has travelled about the world in rough places, gets on perfectly well with two classes, what you may call the upper and the lower. He understands them and they understand him. I was at home with herds and tramps and roadmen, and I was sufficiently at ease with Sir Walter. I can't explain why, but it is a fact. But what fellows like me don't

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>364</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'If Cock Robin is Dead - Who Will Kill King Capital?' People's Press, 5 July 1890, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>365</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'An Open Letter to Prince Kropotkin,' Labour Elector, 8 February 1890, p. 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>366</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Ca Canny,' People's Press, 29 November 1890, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>367</sup> Edinburgh Evening News, 18 March 1887, p. 3.

understand is the great comfortable, satisfied middleclass world, the folk that live in villas in suburbs.<sup>368</sup>

This was undoubtedly Buchan's experience derived from his own colonial days in South Africa, where class structures were less rigid, but perhaps more polarised, where both upper and lower classes shared the same deprivations and existential challenges, and where strength of character, and strength of arm were as important as social status. In their own way, these attitudes too were elitist, or at least exclusive, exclusive of the bourgeoisie, and may characterise a certain type of Scot. This indeed may be the clue to Graham's whole political philosophy, and eventual literary output, missed by his biographers, that poor working people had authenticity and individual, intrinsic worth because they had not (yet) been corrupted by materialism. This worth, however, rather than being developed for their own betterment, and the betterment of society as a whole, had been exploited and abused for the profit of the base and the greedy, who were themselves less worthy in every way. Certainly, it is obvious that his political campaigns were on behalf of the working class, but his later Scottish 'portraits' deal only with these the upper and lower classes, the bourgeoisie being entirely absent.

The theme of parliamentary corruption and indifference would become a regular one in both his work for *The Labour Elector*, and later *The People's Press*, under the ironic title "The People's Parliament." At the beginning, these purported to be reportage, but soon, they reverted to polemic, with the common theme, 'Nothing will change until we have real Labour Members to discuss Labour and Domestic matters, from the standpoint of the working classes." The second regular feature in both *The Labour Elector* and *The People's Press* was written under the heading 'Foreign Notes,' in which Graham reported on labour disputes abroad, but almost exclusively in parts of the Hispanic-speaking world. Many were from direct experience of his continuing travels, but these are the first examples of what, in later life, would distinguish his 'aesthetic' in the public eye, depictions of exotic locales, curious customs, freedoms, and dangers. It was in one of these foreign notes entitled 'Lisbon Revisited'<sup>370</sup> where Taylor, discerned the birth of a new form of expression that would dominate Graham's later career. Although she believed that the article lacked his customary verve:

Here, suddenly, after years of arid polemic, was a brief glimpse of a new kind of writing that was beginning to come more often and more easily to him: to say what he saw; to describe what he, and others, did, he discovered was intensely satisfying.<sup>371</sup>

It was hardly 'years,' Graham's journalism proper had begun exactly eight months previously, and to describe his early political work for these journals as 'arid polemic' is misleading. Graham's work stood

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>368</sup> John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915) (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1994), p. 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>369</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The People's Parliament,' Labour Elector, 13 July 1889, p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>370</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Lisbon Revisited,' Labour Elector, 21 December 1889, p. 396.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>371</sup> Taylor, p. 218.

out from the standard reports in socialist journals as highly individual, expressive declarations, which dealt with social problems and deprivation at a very human level, and attacked the institutions and attitudes that caused and sustained them. This, as we have seen, included attacks on the attitudes of the working class themselves which, perhaps, only a man of Graham's background, in an age where deference to class still pertained, could write with confidence and impunity. However, although aimed at this readership, a typical piece might wander off in any direction, crossing continents if necessary to make his point, and decorated with his beloved literary allusions. We might be forgiven for suspecting that Graham, during this period, was engaged in learning a different trade, or releasing pent-up literary urges. Certainly, with 'Lisbon Revisited,' this was the first time he had let some 'sunshine' into his work, and this was quickly followed up with 'Life in Tangiers,' which was a much freer, imaginative, and revelatory, expression. This is a very marked departure from what had gone before, and it may not be a coincidence that it was in writing about exotic, warm locations, that freed the reflective, abstract dreaming, hitherto concealed. Tangiers for example, despite its barbaric laws and corruption, offered a more egalitarian, 'harmonious' lifestyle:

and if they do occasionally cut off a man's head, they do not crush out his life with hard work and stupid hypocrisy, as in England. Is not a country in which each man cultivates his own little plot, sits in his own little shop, works at his own loom, wields his own hammer in his own forge, nearer to Socialism than in England. There is no great machine industry; no public opinion; no roads; no railways; no standing army; and little or no education. Are men, therefore the happier? Yes, I think so.<sup>372</sup>

This was also the first appearance of what would become another common theme in many of Graham's subsequent writings, that so-called less developed or undeveloped societies represented a less oppressive, more natural and harmonious existence than that enjoyed by advanced societies (ie., the Georgist concept that progress was the creator of poverty). This was not socialism as we understand it, it was commonality based on individualism and respect, rather than collectivism, community rather than central planning, a pre-industrial society which did not need regulation nor (more importantly) strict conformity, or even much government. It was, however, a particularly Manichaean world-view; Britain was dark, unnatural, mechanistic, and materialistic, 'this bleak grey town, with its cold winds, its electric light, and all the concomitant horrors of civilization.' This was a classless spontaneity due to a common lack of material possessions, and this too would develop into a recurring theme. Graham was aware of the many negative aspects of such less-developed societies but these were offset by equality, self-reliance, and other personal freedoms, as expressed in many of his later works:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>372</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Life in Tangiers,' Labour Elector, 11 January 1890, p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>373</sup> Ibid.

They esteem a man by virtue of his being, and no one sinks himself in his profession or forgets for an instant that God created firstly men, and that the state of politician, soldier, pimp, king, priest and tide-waiter is secondary, and can be laid aside or altered, if fortune changes or the occasion serves.<sup>374</sup>

Watts called this Graham's 'anti-rational primitivism (I mean a form of nostalgia for a relatively primitive state of being)'<sup>375</sup> which would be illustrated in his travel book *Mogreb-el-Acksa* (1898), where Graham asked whether, if people were democratically governed and 'tamed,' they would really be 'happier than the unregenerate Moors, who lie and steal, fight, fornicate, and generally behave themselves as if blood circulated in their veins and not sour whey?'<sup>376</sup> Watts also used this term to describe Conrad's works, 'the view that a limitation of the individual's consciousness or reflective and ratiocinative abilities may best equip him for life.'<sup>377</sup> This primitivism certainly threads through Graham's works, including his earliest semi-tale, *Evolution of a Village*, and would be a recurring motif in his sketches of lowborn Scottish characters.

Here then, in these early 'political' works, we can distinguish not only a means by which he could express himself artistically, but equally important, in his works set overseas, his future preoccupations with personal freedoms under attack from encroaching 'progress,' and as such they are a direct linkage between his early polemics, and his later career as an impressionistic sketch writer.

Another revelatory piece from this period, but in an entirely different way, was his 'An Open Letter to Prince Kropotkin,'378 in which Graham humourously (but not mockingly) attacked the idea of anarchism, except:

Anch'io son pittore [I also am a painter]: I mean, I too am an Anarchist, as I fancy most thinking men are in their detestation of Governments. I want, though to render men fit for Anarchy by giving them time to think, time to become Anarchists. It is for that reason – the reason that I wish men to be able eventually to do without it – that I now try to accustom men to Government . . . Tell me, you who have seen Glasgow, is it wrong to try to elevate the Trongate, or shall I rather preach the Millennium to it? I am not much of a believer in the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Nor, I hear, are you.<sup>379</sup>

The word 'detestation' is worthy of note as an expression of Graham's attitudes at this time, but there were several ironies here, not to say contradictions. Not the least of these was, that at a time when

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>374</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Introduction' to *Companions in the Sierra* by Charles Ruddy (London: John Lane, 1907), p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>375</sup> Watts, Cunninghame Graham, p. 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>376</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Mogreb-el-Acksa (1898) (London: Century, 1988), p. 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>377</sup> Watts, Conrad's Letters, p. 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>378</sup> A Russian émigré, and co-founder and regular contributor to the anarchist newspaper Freedom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>379</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'An Open Letter to Prince Kropotkin,' p. 108.

Graham was constantly frustrated by working-class passivity over combining at the most basic level to become a political force, and who might betray their class at the first opportunity, he apparently hoped in this piece that they would, in very short order, develop into conscientious, self-regulating citizens. The second irony was that the kind of society that Kropotkin preached was a decentralized economic system, based on mutual aid and cooperation, similar to the undeveloped societies that Graham so admired. The next significant revelation was that Graham appeared to disdain intellectuals and intellectualism, I think you will grant that he who makes a pair of shoes or digs a good ditch does more real good for humanity than he who paints a picture or writes a poem. I hear you detest aristocracy of intellect as much as I do. He may, however, simply have been making a distinction between the thinkers and talkers, and men of action. Finally, he asserted that he and Kropotkin were working towards the same goal, but that Graham and his colleagues have taken on the task of preparing the poor for a non-materialistic life, and with a final rhetorical flourish, a type of expressiveness which is beginning to emerge in his writing (complete with Hispanic references):

preparing so that your Pegasus, when he descends to earth, shall find provender ready for him, and not like the horse CORTES left with the Indians on his expedition to Guatemala, die in hunger among wreaths and flowers.

Again, Graham made no concessions in his writing to the uneducated, and this would have been an obscure reference to most readers, and not a little pretentious, but it also could be read as a criticism of what he considered to be Kropotkin's lofty and unrealistic aspirations.

Graham's articles were quite unique in early socialist literature, such as Hardie's *The Miner*, or much later, Thomas Johnston's *Forward*, which usually confined themselves to news of disputes and strikes, and increasingly with the finer points of socialist doctrine. Even though roughly half of his pieces reported on industrial action and agitation (and small unattributed news items which betrayed his style), half were reflective, attacking the institutions that opposed change, and from his perspective, held the working classes in their place, of which his 'The People's Parliament' 'Public Opinion,' 'The Bloody City,' and 'The Reptile Press' were good examples. His style became more fluid and conversational, as if he was liberating his sometimes nostalgic, and sometimes febrile imagination, although, the less regimented, and less stenographic style of *The People's Press* might also have been a factor, turning him into what would be termed today, a feature-writer in pieces such as 'If Cock Robin is Dead – Who Will Kill King Capital?' 'Utopia,' and 'China Dogs' (discussed above). It may be said, from reading these, that Graham's political ideas, up to this point, were now fully developed; ie., he had adopted and adapted the ideas and ideals of others, combining them with his life experiences, predispositions, and education into a personal philosophy, which he believed was the antidote to a deformed society, the inequalities of which he found offensive, but had now found a satisfying medium in which to express them. Also, from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>380</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

the outset of his journalistic career, we find a wry, or ironic humour. It had already been reported that his jokes from the platform had helped attract large audiences, but the page offered more scope to develop a mocking style, particularly when he wrote about the House of Commons and fellow politicians.

With the closure of *The Labour Elector*, Graham immediately started contributing to the new publication, *The People's Press*, a weekly journal 'devoted to the interests of labour,' writing thirty-seven pieces in the publication's year-long existence. However, ten days prior to his first article, a short piece by Graham, entitled 'Parable of the Paitans'<sup>381</sup> appeared in the American publication of *The Knights of Labor*. Here, for the first time, we can witness an attempt at storytelling to make a political point (although what the point is, is not easily descried), and in what would become typical of much of his work, his parable was set in southern America. Slowly then, despite his continuing campaigns, we can witness his development as a writer, in which, more and more, his earlier life experiences, his wide reading, and his natural gifts of humour would play an increasingly important role, often suffused among serious political points. Again, his readership's educational attainments were ignored, as a wide knowledge of history, political economy, literature (particularly the classics) was displayed, decorated with his beloved literary allusions, all tumbled together with panache and a carefree showmanship, as if pent up for many years.

What also distinguished Graham's early journalism was much more fundamental. Whereas, under these present circumstances, he was obliged to encourage the workers to unite and fight for better wages and conditions, both from the platform and on the page, what placed him apart from his left-wing contemporaries in the nascent labour movement, was an aesthetic sensibility which obliged him to disdain industrialism as a whole, as a corrupting and evil influence, of which exploitation, poverty, and social ills were merely symptoms. This placed him firmly in the tradition of men like Carlyle, Ruskin, and D. H. Lawrence.

With the closure of *The People's Press* in February 1891, Graham lost a major platform for his opinions, and literary ambitions, and his unique literary output was considerably curtailed, just before he was obliged to leave parliament, with only an occasional article for *The Worker's Cry*, Hardie's *The Labour Leader*, *The Labour Prophet*, and *The Workman's Times*, up until March 1894. It would not be until 1895, that Graham's literary career would be reinvigorated, but this time, in a new direction.

## **EMPIRE**

As we have seen, Graham's time in parliament was preoccupied by what he saw, fundamentally, as the chronic results of industrialisation at home. However, he would stand out from most of his political contemporaries as a man who had first-hand experience of the deleterious effects of capitalism and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>381</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Parable of the Paitans,' Knights of Labor, 13 March 1890, p. 4.

empire in developing countries. He would also stand out among the vast bulk of the British population, at a time of imperial expansion and pride, as an imperial sceptic,<sup>382</sup> and later, as a vociferous anti-imperialist. The following chapters considers Graham's early moral concerns over the acquisition and expansion of this empire, before moving on to the effects of empire and capitalism on indigenous peoples, but his anti-imperial and anti-racist writings would not reach a vitriolic crescendo until 1896 and 1897, described in Chapter 2.

Britain's imperial pride and hubris could perhaps find no better expression than John Robert Seeley's book of 1883 *The Expansion of England*, in which the author set out the equivalent of a 'manifest destiny' for Britain, justifying imperialism as a benefit to the world with the words 'The English State then, in what direction and towards what goal has that been advancing? The words which jump to our lips are Liberty, Democracy.'383 Duncan Bell reminded us that Seeley's book was an instant success, 'helping to set the terms of late Victorian debate about empire and remaining a standard reference point for decades to come . . . It remained in print until 1956, the year of Suez.'384 It was the ideas expressed by Seeley, that typified much of late nineteenth century thinking on empire, so that the radical Liberal, and arch-imperialist, Joseph Chamberlain could say in 1897, 'we feel now that our rule over their territories can only be justified if we can show that it adds to the happiness and prospects of the people.'385 Bell commented, however, 'the professed principles and the grubby reality were very different,'386 and it was through his extensive travels that Graham had encountered, from his own experiences, the results of this reality.

The Liberal Party, of which Graham was still a member and an M.P. did not fully accept itself as 'the so-called Liberal Imperialist Party' until 1892, the year Graham left parliament, under the guidance of an influential faction of young Liberal politicians, among whom the Scots, R. B. Haldane, Lord Roseberry, and Ronald Munro Ferguson were the most prominent.<sup>387</sup> There had, however, been many voices of dissent, which said that the British Empire as nothing more than a reckless land-grab, and three years after Seeley's book was published, the Marxist, Belfort Bax wrote the following:

We seem at the present time to have arrived at the acute stage of colonial fever which during the last three or four years has afflicted the various powers of Europe. Germany is vying with France, England with both, in the haste to seize upon "unoccupied" countries, and to establish "protectorates" – the cant diplomatic for incomplete annexation – over uncivilized

<sup>382</sup> Gregory Claeys, Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850-1920 (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>383</sup> John Robert Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (1883) (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 7. In this book, Seeley made the famous comment that the empire had been 'acquired in a fit of absence of mind.' p. 8. He also omitted any reference to Scotland, and throughout, referred to 'The English Empire.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>384</sup> Bell, p. 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>385</sup> Joseph Chamberlain, 'True Conception of Empire' (1897) in *Mr Chamberlain's Speeches*, ed. by C. W. Boyd (London: Constable, 1914), p. 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>386</sup> Bell, p. 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>387</sup> Matthew, p. 3.

peoples.'388

In his early speeches, any extreme sentiments that Graham may have held against the empire were necessarily mitigated by the prevailing national mood and his desire to become a member of parliament. His reluctance notwithstanding, in his first speech at Coatbridge, as a visiting speaker, Graham suggested to his audience that 'I would call on you to resist the glare and tinsel of a *meretricions* Imperialism.'389 More radically, a month later, at Shettleston, he moved on to the Empire as a whole, and questioned whether the tens of thousands of British citizens employed abroad to administer the empire might not be better employed at home, and asserting that imperial conquest was merely an opportunity for rich merchants to dispose of their merchandise. He also questioned whether the possession of enormous wealth 'conduces much to love of country,' but that finer patriotic virtues were more commonly found among the poorer classes. More controversially, he continued, in what would be a very significant trope in his later writings on empire and colonisation:

There is also a question to be asked – and it is a very serious one, involving far greater interests than mere national ones - Does British rule always conduce to the wellbeing and comfort of the nations of the absorbed territories? Very often it does not. It is very doubtful whether, on the contrary, it does not very often tend to their speedy degradation, misery, and final extinction.<sup>390</sup>

Graham then referred to 'useless wars,' particularly in South Africa, which had 'a most effectual preventative check has been put to the increase of population in that country,' adding, 'We have tried to win the affections of the natives of Afghanistan by advancing into their country and killing large quantities of them.'391 Also controversially, coming from a newly selected Liberal candidate, he believed that this would be the case whatever Government was in power, the first evidence of his cynicism towards his own party. It also indicated, that at the very start of his political career, Graham had already formed his attitude towards matters imperial, and Britain's place in the world, although Watts & Davies remind us that his father, Major Bontine, had also campaigned against overseas military adventures.<sup>392</sup>

Graham's election address expressed a more balanced view of his stance on foreign affairs in the first edition of a new local newspaper:

I am opposed to an aggressive foreign policy, and am of the opinion that the interest as well as the dignity of the country will be better secured by exhibiting a consistent regard to the just rights of other nations than by any assertion of lordly domination. I do not favour the idea of

<sup>388</sup> Ernest Belfort Bax, The Religion of Socialism (1886) (Books for Libraries Press, 1972), p. 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>389</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 15 August 1885, p. 6. My italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>390</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 12 September 1885. p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>392</sup> Watts and Davies, p. 50.

a large military class, or excessive expenditure in National defences, believing that the true defence of a country is to be found in its inhabitants.<sup>393</sup>

It was thus at his maiden speech in parliament, away from the necessity to circumscribe his statements to satisfy local sectarian interests, and populist sentiments (although it was fully reported in the local press), that Graham began to express himself more trenchantly on imperial matters:

It is not to be expected that Her Majesty's Government would vouchsafe to the House any idea of when the British troops might be withdrawn from Egypt. That is expecting far too much. But, surely, it would be wise to let the House know when it was intended to withdraw those troops from their inactivity in that pestilential region, and from playing the ungrateful role of oppressors of an already down-trodden nationality. (*Radical cheers*) But no. The bondholders must have their pound of flesh. We must also protect the so-called high road to India by the Suez Canal, in order that the very last straw might be laid on the unfortunate fellaheen.<sup>394</sup>

He then moved onto the subject of British involvement in Burma, where, '[the] misguided people, who, in their pig-headed way, were endeavouring to defend their own country. Surely, it can be no great matter of self-congratulation for Britons with arms of precision to shoot down naked savages.' Then, after criticising the spending of public money to find places for the younger sons of our plutocrats and autocrats, he moved on to the world stage 'I deprecate spending the money of this country to forward the ambition of soldiers and diplomats who made the name of Britain execrated in the four corners of the globe. (*Irish cheers.*)'<sup>395</sup>

Undoubtedly, the fundamental objections he had to the Empire were again moral, and that it was wrong to take possession of the land and the person of others, with the concomitant threat of coercion, exploitation and corruption of the natives, and the exportation of the ugliness he increasingly saw around him. Also, that the perceived 'glory' of the Empire stood in sharp contrast, and was a standing insult, to the poverty and deprivation he encountered at home, stating 'I contrast the boasted greatness of the Empire with the fact that last evening I attended a meeting of Glasgow tramway men to protest against a working day of sixteen or seventeen hours and ask for the boon of a twelve hour day!'396 The need to sustain such an empire, and to exploit its markets was simply sucking more of the British population into sweatshops, and was a distraction from what he considered to be more pressing and immediate concerns, as set out in a speech he made to miners in Tranent on 22 October 1887:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>393</sup> Coatbridge Express, 14 October 1885, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>394</sup> PP. 'Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech (Adjourned Debate)' 1 February 1887, Hansard, Vol.310, cc.444-45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>396</sup> Scotsman, 11 June 1889, p. 6.

If we had forty, or fifty, or even thirty candidates pledged to represent Labour in Parliament, and the when Government came in with its bill for armies and navies and foreign politics and all that sort of humbug, these men would put down their feet and say. 'The men we represent are not interested in foreign politics one atom. They don't care a farthing whether the French, the Germans, or the Japanese occupy Egypt. Let them manage their affairs, as we want to manage ours.'<sup>397</sup>

Graham seemed, indeed, to draw little distinction between the poor of Britain, and the poor of Britain's colonies:

The condition of the great residuum of unskilled labour in London, in Glasgow, and in the Black Country, as well as the condition of the crofters in the Highlands, and of the large proportion of the whole population of British India, calls for our earnest attention, because this condition does no credit to our civilisation.<sup>398</sup>

India, he believed, was run on the basis of 'a vast system of extortion and tyranny... which is crushing the life out of millions of our fellow-subjects in that country, in order to provide salaries for a body of European officials, whose places could just as well be filled at a quarter of the expense by men of the various Indian races.' <sup>399</sup> It would not be until he left parliament, however, that Graham's most outspoken criticism of imperialism and racism would be expressed.

As we have seen, from the very start of his political career, Graham had attacked the class system as being no better than feudalism,<sup>400</sup> and as he grew to believe that parliament was a sham, an institution that maintained a corrupt *status quo*, there only to 'bolster up their kings and queens,' he made a direct attack on the very symbols of Empire:

How can the veriest Tory get up any enthusiasm about a set of beings who have nothing Royal about them either in appearance, habits, or in reality. The fact is, they are not real kings or queens, but merely official puppets, and created by Parliament. Who but a fool could excite himself at the spectacle of that stout, bald-headed German gentleman, the Prince of Wales? Excellent, if you like, performing all the offices an unconscious automaton would perform as well, but oh, how uninteresting. Can anyone contemplate the hideous Hanoverian tribe of foreign princes without being moved to disgust at the creatures themselves, and to pity for the nation that tamely submitted to be ruled by them?<sup>401</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>397</sup> *Scotsman*, 24 October 1887, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>398</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 2 November 1889, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>399</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The People's Parliament,' Labour Elector, 24 August 1889, p. 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>400</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 15 August 1885, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>401</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The People's Parliament,' Labour Elector, 10 August 1889, p. 92.

And again, in his essay entitled 'Notions,' 'A king for instance is a notion, and a very foolish one.'402 He had publicly declared that he believed in a Republic, 403 but this attack on the monarchy was extraordinary for its outspokenness, particularly a mere two years after Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, ongoing imperial conflicts, and expansion of empire in southern Africa. There would be more subtle criticisms of monarchy, albeit in more prestigious and wider circulated publications, particularly his poignantly mocking sketch of Victoria's funeral procession in 'Might Majesty & Dominion,' published in 1901'404

## COLONIALISM.

Capitalism, to Graham, was inexorably tied to imperialism, but the more substantial, demonstrable, cause-and-effect, was imperialism's impact on indigenous peoples through colonisation and economic exploitation. During his early political career, Graham looked overseas only occasionally, but this would radically change after his electoral defeat in 1892 where he would increasingly take up the cause of indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, his first reference to the encroachment of 'civilisation,' and its deleterious effects, appeared in *The Labour Elector* in January, 1890, where he wrote about emigration scandals and corruption in Argentina, deeply regretting the change in that country over the previous twenty years:

I, for one, would rather have seen the country in the possession of the *gauchos*, and the Spanish provinces now depopulated inhabited by the poor creatures who, to escape taxes and sweaters in Spain, have been made the unwilling instruments both of their own ruin and the destruction of both Indians and *gauchos*.<sup>405</sup>

Between leaving *The Labour Elector*, and just prior to contributing to *The People's Press*, Graham had a story published in a short-lived journal called *Time* (London), edited by Belfort Bax, entitled 'Horses of the Pampas' (1890), which would be reprinted in his first anthology, *Father Archangel of Scotland* (1896). In his own words, these 'rambling and incoherent reminiscences' were apparently prompted by a letter from a friend in Argentina, which caused his thoughts on the Eight Hours Bill to become 'vaguer and dimmer.' Here, is the first occasion where he wrote nostalgically of his earlier life in South America, which could hardly be more different than his current circumstances. This piece was described by his biographers Watts & Davies as:

an essay which, while recalling affectionately the way of life that Graham had seen in South America, lamented its inevitable demise. Perhaps his attack on the ugliness of industrial civilization does have a tenuous connection with the Eight Hour Bill needed to mitigate that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>402</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Notions,' People's Press, 15 November 1890, p. 7.

<sup>403</sup> Glasgow Herald, 7 November 1889, p. 10.

<sup>404</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Might Majesty & Dominion,' Saturday Review, 2 February 1901, p. 168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>405</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Foreign Notes,' Labour Elector, 25 January 1890, p. 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>406</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Horses of the Pampas,' Time (London), 1 April 1890, p. 378.

civilisation's rigour, but it is clear that for the first but certainly not the last time, Graham's memories have taken control. His career as a writer, indeed, is the story of an irrepressible rememberer trying to discipline his reminiscences without sacrificing their subversive power.<sup>407</sup>

It was however another of Graham's 'aesthetic' arguments. Nostalgia, sharpened by the tedium and apparent futility of his present circumstances, had exorcised the tedium and dangers of the pampas, which was now threatened by the hand of man, and the uniformity of shoddiness, at a time when Argentina already had 2,700 miles of railway, and was experiencing a huge influx of poor European immigrants, who were being confined in ever-expanding cities.<sup>408</sup>

We can contrast this march of 'progress,' which was inexorably destroying natural habitat, and traditional lifestyles, with what he regarded as deliberate ethnic cleansing of Native Americans. Reacting to reports coming from the United States, of what George Tindall and David Shi called 'the Ghost Dance craze,'409 at the end of 1890, and the beginning of 1891, Graham published three pieces in *The Daily Graphic*, described by John Walker as 'an anguished cry from the heart against the cruel treatment of the American Indian.'410 All three pieces could be read as one, as they followed the same argument. The Indians were more sinned against than sinning, that they had been robbed, cheated, killed, and those who survived, could stand it no longer. Graham blamed those who were in pursuit of money, whisky sellers, Bible peddlers, and land speculators. He also blamed the press for deluding their readers.<sup>411</sup>

Nearer home, a notable work, which summed up graphically his hatred of capitalism and encroaching industry, written a year before Graham left the House of Common, was an anti-capitalist, dystopian fable. It first appeared as a booklet entitled *Economic Evolution*, published in 1891 by the socialist James Leatham's Deveron Press, then in June of that year in *The Albemarle*, as 'Evolution of a Village,' and later published by the Socialist Party of Ireland, as 'An Irish Economic Revival' (no date), and collected in Graham's anthology *Success*, in 1902. Although it could be included in his anti-capitalist oeuvre, it could also be seen as a bridge between capitalism at home, and its impact of on indigenous

<sup>407</sup> Watts & Davies, p. 155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>408</sup> Edwin Williamson, 'Argentina: The Long Decline,' in *The Penguin History of Latin America* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 459.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>409</sup> George Tindall and David Shi, *America: A Narrative History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999), p. 870. These events culminated in 'The Battle of Wounded Knee' on 29 December 1890.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>410</sup> The North American Sketches of R. B. Cunninghame Graham, ed. by John Walker (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986), p. 25.

<sup>411</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The American Indians: Ghost Dancing,' Daily Graphic, 29 November 1890, p. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>412</sup> It was not entirely fanciful. Through a reference to a famous greyhound, Graham deliberately placed it in the vicinity of Lurgan, near the shores of Lough Neagh. This was an indication, perhaps, of his aversion to pure invention. The location, however, was irrelevant to the purpose of the story. According to Leatham, Graham had got the facts from the Glasgow-based Irish socialist, John Ferguson. Leatham, 'The Passing of 'Don Roberto,' *Gateway* No. 277, March 1936, p. 13.

peoples, and their environment. It also fits into Graham's preoccupation with the rural past (even in this case, the recent past) rather than speculating on the future. This moral tale concerned a village in Northern Ireland, 'A pretty, semi-ruinous, semi-thriving place.' Life was unhurried, and although starvation is never far away, the people enjoyed a contented, natural life. It was by no means ideal (in his own words, 'Arcadian') but, 'Prostitution, Respectability, Morality and Immorality, and all the other curses of progressive life, with them had little place.'413 Then, a mill was built in the village,<sup>414</sup> and capitalism entered upon the lives of the unsuspecting inhabitants. Here of course, we have returned to Graham's respect for undeveloped societies, as in his 'Life in Tangiers,' not an ideal existence, but one unsullied by commerce, greed, and moral debasement. Very soon the simple virtues of this rural life disappeared, but he also made direct connection between capitalism and Empire:

Capital had come [. . .] It banished idleness, peace, beauty, and content; it made the people slaves. No more they breathed the scent of the fields and lanes, but stifled in the mill. There was a gain, for savages who did not need them purchased, at the bayonet's point, the goods the people made.

What distinguished this work was that it concerned an 'indigenous' population in the British Isles, and the impact of capitalism on the rural economy. As early as 1888, a reviewer wrote of Graham 'He labours under the settled conviction that civilisation is a failure,'415 which is undoubtedly correct, in that, for Graham, ideal societies were more likely to be found in the past, or in contemporary countries which, relative to modern industrialised nations, still lived in the past.

### **IRELAND & SCOTLAND**

With a large Irish constituency, one which, as we have seen, greatly influenced the outcome of the three early elections he fought, it was Ireland, and the Home Rule question that dominated his pronouncements on the political situation in the 'home' nations, prior to entering parliament, but this would give way during his writing career to damning critiques of Britain's overseas empire. His first major statement on the subject of Ireland was given at Shettleston on 7 September 1885, where he insisted that its inhabitants:

were the same clay as ourselves (*hear, hear.*) . . . We should at once endeavour to remove all distinction of treatment between English, Irish, and Scottish men. Justice should be made absolutely impartial, without reference to race, creed, or locality, local self-government in its fullest sense should at once be accorded to Ireland, and the rule of the Castle swept away.<sup>416</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>413</sup> Here again we see echoes of 'China Dogs,' where Graham despised bourgeois attitudes, particularly 'respectability' as being unnatural and anti-social.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>414</sup> The theme of a mill destroying a community, this time an Arab one, appeared in another tale entitled 'El Babor,' published in *Father Archangel of Scotland* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1896), pp. 131-145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>415</sup> Vanity Fair, 25 August 1888, p. 145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>416</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 12 September 1885, p. 3.

It was at Graham's first speech in Coatbridge (11 August 1885), as a visiting speaker, that he had made his first public utterances on land issues and Scottish Home Rule. Here, however, he presented them as a matter of equality:

Being all part and parcel of one kingdom, I can see no reason why English and Scottish men should enjoy privileges that Irishmen do not, nor, on the other hand, do I perceive the reason why Irishmen should have privileges that are denied to the English and Scotch. Therefore, I may begin by stating that I can see no valid reason why Home Rule should be extended to Ireland unless at the same time it is extended to England and Scotland.<sup>417</sup>

At his next speech, given on 17 September in Coatbridge, while conceding that Ireland was 'difficult to touch on, and so kittle when touched,' he stated that the history of Ireland had been 'a history of oppression, misconception, tyranny, and folly, such as the world has hardly ever seen, and such as may well make us blush for the Anglo-Saxon race, and exclaim 'They manage things far better in France.'418 If the land question was paramount throughout Britain, in Ireland it had been intensified by the evil of absenteeism, whereby the greater portion of the revenue of the kingdom has always been spent outside by a small, privileged class. His solution was to abolish what he referred to as 'the puerile vice-regal system,' to stop treating the population of Ireland as children, but to treat them as we would treat ourselves, to impartially accord them their rights and justice, and grant full powers to manage all their internal affairs. Any form of independence for Ireland was not yet part of Graham's agenda, and he again felt obliged to mitigate his remedies as being a means of 'maintaining the integrity of the empire.' Despite this, he maintained an implicit critical position, although expressed only to contrast the Britain's wealth and poverty:

in this Christian land, whilst the four corners of the world are ransacked to furnish one repast for the palates of the rich, others are battling with starvation, and that, with shops full of food, granaries full of corn, and markets full of beef within their view.<sup>419</sup>

Since Graham believed that the swing in the Irish vote had been significant in losing him the election of 1885, for the short 'Home Rule Election' of 1886, the political situation in Ireland moved to the top of his agenda, and he took a more strident stance. At his first speech back at Coatbridge, he asked if Britain had been wrong, and that an Irish parliament should be restored, the 'withdrawal of which formed so black and so base a page in our national history,' and created a state of anarchy, agrarian outrage and disturbance, with the prohibition of public meetings, censorship of the press, 'and a thousand and one fictitious annoyances which were incidental to governing Ireland according to English

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>417</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 15 August 1885, p. 6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>418</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 19 September 1885, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>419</sup> Ibid.

ideas. (*Cheers.*)' He continued, 'Had these annoyances been imposed upon Scotland, they would have resulted in civil war - aye, and would have deluged the country in blood from John o' Groats to the Solway. (*Cheers.*).<sup>420</sup> However, still conscious that the prospect of Irish Home Rule was seen by many as a threat to the integrity of the Union and the Empire, at his next meeting, at Calderbank, Graham tried to put the minds of his audience at ease by saying that any devolved powers would deal only with purely Irish affairs, and that Westminster would retain the power of veto.<sup>421</sup>

In Graham's maiden speech, recent events in Ireland were also a recurring theme, particularly the evictions at Glenbeigh in County Kerry. After rent increases of 50%, for 70 families on the estate of Rowland Winn (later, Lord Headley), who could not pay, were ruthlessly evicted in January 1887, and their houses levelled or burned (which had already been brought before the House of Commons on 28 January 1887). It was also a situation that gave Graham the opportunity to exercise his ironic wit.<sup>422</sup>

Consequent to this, although he still campaigned vigourously for Irish home rule, Graham rarely mentioned Ireland in parliament, as there were 'many more able speakers than myself to deal exclusively with that question and were returned exclusively by Irish electors for that purpose.'423 In fact, he increasingly believed that filibustering by Irish M.P.s, under Parnell's direction, designed to grind parliament to a halt, was holding back legislation on labour and social issues, and that Ireland had become a convenient political football for both the Tories and the Liberals to slow down change, and 'a Dutch auction' in the purchase of Irish votes.<sup>424</sup> At a St Patrick's Day rally in Glasgow, Graham stated:

The Irish question was a godsend to the present Government. They did not want it settled; they wanted to have it hanging on for ever, because they knew when it was settled the attention of the democracy of this country would be directed to much more pressing social questions. They knew that the separation with which they were always charging the Liberals was their trump card.<sup>425</sup>

And again, as he wrote in *The People's Press* in 1890, 'It was convenient, very to be able to close the mouths of those who asked for labour legislation, with the Home Rule plug,'<sup>426</sup> and that all that was currently going on in Ireland under the Conservative Government was abetted by the secret connivance of the Liberals' <sup>427</sup> However, for the first time in the report in *The Edinburgh Evening* News, he made a connection between Home Rule and the Land Question:

<sup>420</sup> Coatbridge Express, 30 June 1886, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>421</sup> Coatbridge Express, 7 July 1886, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Airdrie Express, 25 November 1889, p. 5.

<sup>424</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Reports, Labour Elector, 22 June 1889, p. 4.

<sup>425</sup> Edinburgh Evening News, 1 March 1887, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>426</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Home Rule,' *People's Press*, 20 December 1890, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>427</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to *People's Press*, 31 May 1890, pp. 4-5.

It seemed to him that that what their aristocratic and plutocratic friends were afraid of was that should Home Rule be carried it would be but one step towards the taking of the fortress of property; because the experience of modern thought pointed conclusively to the argument that the soil should be owned by the cultivator.<sup>428</sup>

This is an interesting assertion, that to the landowner it was not a question of national integrity, but simply a question of self-interest.

It might also be safe to assume that these sentiments applied equally to Scotland, as Graham believed 'their interests were identical.'429 He believed further that the Irish electors themselves, particularly in Britain, should be fighting for social justice as well as Home Rule. At the St Patrick's Day gathering in in Glasgow City Hall in March 1888, he reminded his audience that there was not one labour representative in Scotland, and appealed to them to send to parliament, a man from the working class (at this time, Hardie). 430 Like his pronouncements on Scotland, Home Rule by itself, without fundamental changes in the social order, was not enough, 'Home Rule in Ireland will make no difference to the people unless they themselves took the reins of Government:'431

If the Irish nation want political rather than social freedom, if they want the Pope to rule their country, if they want to protect their industries, to set up a Republic, if they want all or none of these things, they should have to power to choose them. At present they may be said to be a race apart, caring for naught but national affairs. It may be, when they have weighed their "patriots" up and found them merely bourgeois after all, they will tire of them, and try something better.<sup>432</sup>

This statement from 1890, however, did indicate a shift in his views, that greater independence was indeed a possibility if it was so desired, but it should be read in the context of his earlier statements which often yielded contradictory results, if not always in fact, then in tone. At a St Patrick's Day rally of the Irish National League in Glasgow in March 1887, the tone was indeed bellicose, and following his attack on respectability (see above), he added, 'Respectability meant a Viceroy, a Grand jury, a Protestant ascendancy, 300,000 English bayonets. It meant all those sweet boons that English supremacy had bestowed on Ireland for the last 500 years.'433 This, however, stood in contrast with a speech he gave to miners at Irvine Moor a few months later, 'He would have nothing to do with any settlement of the question which, in his opinion, threatened or impaired, or did not conduce and tend to

<sup>428</sup> Edinburgh Evening News, 1 March 1887, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>429</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 15 October 1887), p. 5.

<sup>430</sup> Coatbridge Express, 21 March 1888, p. 2.

<sup>431</sup> Labour Elector, 23 February 1889, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>432</sup> Cunninghame Graham 'Home Rule,' *People's Press*, 20 December 1890, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>433</sup> Edinburgh Evening News, 18 March 1887, p. 3.

consolidate the unity of the Empire.'434 This oscillation in his views may be accounted for by the sectarian makeup of his audiences. Campbell tells us that 80% of Irish immigration into the Central Belt came from Ulster<sup>435</sup> (Hutchison specified 82.3%),<sup>436</sup> and the majority were neither nationalists nor Roman Catholics, but many were Orangemen. Graham, then, was continuing to tailor his views, and to tread a delicate line between two communities on a subject which he considered subordinate to social reform, one on which he did not equivocate.

Graham's utterances on Scottish Home Rule were in keeping with a growing national mood in some areas of Scottish society. In the opinion of the historian of empire, Sir Reginald Coupland, modern Scottish Nationalism made its first appearance in 1853, not as an offshoot of the revolutions of 1848, nor as a result of the Disestablishment question, 437 but simply the growing feeling that 'the operation of the political system, established by the Union, was unfair and inefficient,' resulting in the creation of the short-lived National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights. 438 By 1879, Gladstone had come round to the idea of some form of devolution of local issues to overcome the Irish *impasse*, as long as the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament was maintained. 439 His only concession in Scotland, however, was the establishment of a Scottish Office in 1885, but any further concessions on home rule for Scotland, were inevitably subservient to his objective of home rule for Ireland, and were to suffer the same fate. Kellas wrote that:

The impotence of Scottish Liberalism within the British party system contributed to the emergence of a Scottish Home Rule movement at this time, which was as much an expression of dissatisfaction with the place of the Scottish Liberal Party in the Liberal Party as a whole, as with the place of Scotland in the United Kingdom. Most Scottish nationalists were strong Liberals.'440

Scottish home rule was in consequence a topic of discussion in political and cultural circles in Scotland, and, according to Hutchison, 'it was extremely and spontaneously popular, generating real enthusiasm.'441 This was also true in North West Lanarkshire, witnessed in *The Airdrie Advertiser*, which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>434</sup> Coatbridge Express, 20 July 1887, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>435</sup> Alan B. Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners. A Social History of their Trade Unions, 1775-1874* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979), p. 182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>436</sup> Hutchison, The Working Class in Glasgow, p. 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>437</sup> Although he did not believe that the church Disruption of 1843 had a direct effect on 'national' sentiment, Hanham asserted that the new Free Church of Scotland had produced outspoken critics of the relationship between Scotland and England, 'The first clear statement of the Scottish national case was made by a Free Church minister, the brilliant, flamboyant and erratic James Begg, in January 1850.' Hanham, pp. 53-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>438</sup> Coupland, p. 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>439</sup> Times, 27 November 1879. p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>440</sup> Kellas, 'The Liberal Party in Scotland 1876-1895,' The Scottish Historical Review, Vol. XLIV No.37, April 1965, p. 15.

<sup>441</sup> Hutchinson, Political History of Scotland, p. 171.

reprinted an extensive manifesto from *The Scottish* Review, outlining in detail how a Scottish parliament might be organised, and what powers it might have.<sup>442</sup> This was published shortly after Graham's first speech in the constituency. In the same edition was the latest report on the recent disturbances among the crofters in Tiree, which would have been of interest to the Highland electors in the area, and these might have influenced Graham's future choice of subjects. However, to Graham, Home Rule was not simply a matter of equality of political representation, but increasingly, a 'national' question, whereby the peasantry, through their lifestyle and culture, were the foundations of the nation. It is thus impossible to disassociate land from Graham's early engagements with issues of Scottish identity and heritage, and his desire for Scottish Home Rule, and, from the beginning, his parliamentary campaigns contained an emotive patriotic element:

As a politician, and a Scotchman, and a practical man, I cannot but look with regret on the falsely so-called principle that has tended to depopulate the most picturesque, patriarchal, curious, and old-world district of our native country. Therefore, it is to the new electors that I turn in behalf of the Highland crofters, and to ask them to make an absolute stand against further evictions, and against the further extension of the deer forests, and to protest against all the Highlands being turned into a sort of new forest [sic] for the delectation of the London stockbroker and the Hebrew financier. (*Loud applause*.)<sup>443</sup>

This 'blood and soil' animus was further reinforced in his mind by history. At an election address at Coatbridge during his 1886 election campaign, he recalled (rather fancifully) that in the Highlands there had been no absolute property in land, the land had belonged to the clan (presumably in some form of tribal communism in the pattern of Morris's Germanic tribes),<sup>444</sup> and the chieftain and clansman had equal rights, 'And thus they found, owing to this patriarchal system, a freer, a nobler, and a more manly ['heroic'] style of manners and customs prevailed . . . than there did among the Normans in England.' He wished that this state of affairs still existed, and that 'the soil of the country be used for the cultivation of food, not the cultivation of rents.'<sup>445</sup> A month later, back in Coatbridge, he made a particularly 'nationalistic' speech; this independent Scottish spirit did not just exist in the Highlands, and among workers of the soil, it also existed among the working poor, 'Though the upper classes had become Anglified, yet he was glad to know that the working men had remained intensely Scottish, and he knew that this name would be received with joy by them, and that they would not see the name of Scotland merged with England (*Cheers*).'<sup>446</sup> This patriotic statement followed closely on the formation of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>442</sup> Airdrie Advertiser (Supplement), 22 August 1885, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>443</sup> Ibid., 19 September 1885 p. 6.

<sup>444</sup> Morris, *Commonweal*, 26 July 1890, p. 7.

<sup>445</sup> Coatbridge Express, 30 June 1886, p. 2.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., 28 July 1886, p. 2.

the first Scottish Home Rule Association (SHRA),<sup>447</sup> in May 1886, and Graham appears to be playing to the gallery, and displaying for the first time a growing strain of 'identity nationalism,' as he continued:

we have to bear in mind that we want no Englishman to represent Scottish seats. (Cheers.) We want none of their fine fellows coming down in the Pullman car from London (Laughter and cheers.) – giving a club address and talking in their fine English, and then, like swallows, flying away and leaving us and never coming near until the next election. We want good hard-headed Scotchmen to represent us. (Cheers.) I will never believe for a moment that there was any necessity for Liberal Associations writing up to London and saying "Send us a candidate as per invoice." (Laughter.) Surely it is an insult to the Scottish people to have a candidate sent down bottled, preserved, and labeled in that way. (Cheers, and a voice – "That's a good yin," and laughter.) Scotchmen should never elect an Englishman, no matter of what party or how well qualified he was for an English seat. I think we should again take a lesson from the Irish, who would rather elect an Irish lamp-post than an English duke. (Laughter.)<sup>448</sup>

This rhetoric reflects an unspoken, or at least an unspecified belief, that Scotland, as a stateless nation, was in fact a marginalised internal colony of England,<sup>449</sup> but it is an underlying theme that ran through political utterances on Scotland, particularly, at the beginning, on land-ownership issues, but which will not find full voice until his overtly nationalist speeches of the late 1920s.<sup>450</sup>

At Graham's second public meeting, at Shettleston on 7 September 1885, after having been selected as the prospective M.P., a new issue appeared on his agenda, that of local self government, particularly in the rural districts, which he believed everyone favoured. The main thrust of this was that revenues raised in these areas could be better spent there. The idealised past again provided an example of more local self-government, a government closer to the people:

among the ancient Celts, every district, however small, enjoyed the most complete autonomy. One of the first things that every district should have the power of inquiring into is as to how the revenue raised in that district is spent – (*applause*) – and to completely convince itself that the revenue raised (in Shettleston for example) is not expended, so to speak, in keeping up the railings in Hyde Park.<sup>451</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>447</sup> This was the first substantive 'nationalist' movement since the demise of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Right's in 1856.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>448</sup> Coatbridge Express, 28 July 1886, p. 2. Harvie specified that 'By 1906 over half of Scots MPs were English; most lived in the south.' Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>449</sup> This political situation is discussed at length in Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonisation: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>450</sup> Any early reticence to spell this out, may have been based on the fact, that, as someone who was born in London, educated at Harrow School, and who maintained a residence in the most fashionable areas of London's West End, where, in later years he spent about half of his time, might again stand accused of hypocrisy.

<sup>451</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 12 September 1885, p. 3.

This localism, was apparently based on an unsentimental accountability, but he saw the more pressing demands in Ireland taking precedence, 'As Scotchmen, they should help the Irish with all their heart to gain Home Rule. (*Hear, hear.*) They should never forget that the idea of Home Rule originated with the Irish, and they should never lose sight of it till they see a Parliament legislating for matters in purely Scottish in Edinburgh or Linlithgow. (*Loud cheers.*)'452 Again, while asserting his support for Gladstone at a meeting of The Glasgow Central Liberal Association, and declaring in favour of a parliament in Dublin, he believed that the time had now come for when Scotland should have a parliament of her own. 453 This belief was being expressed elsewhere in his constituency, and during the miners' strike, which had been occupying Graham's time, William Small, the miners' organiser, and a founder member of the SPLP and ILP told the striking miners (among mentions of dynamite and revolution), 'They needed Home Rule in Scotland, and the sooner they had it, the better for all concerned,'454 which indicates that it was seen by others as a means of dealing more directly with economic and social problems.

Taylor wrote that Graham, along with Keir Hardie was 'the principal begetter' of the Scottish Home Rule Association, 455 but offered no proof of this, and if it was so, it was just prior to his reselection as candidate for North-West Lanarkshire in June 1886, and prior to his close association with Hardie, which almost certainly occurred a year later, in 1887. Coupland stated that it was its president, Dr. Gavin Clark, M.P. for Caithness who became 'a leading Scottish Home Ruler, and presently the cause began to spread among the people at large, '456 although he later added that 'in Scotland, ardent nationalists were a small minority. 457 This opinion, however, runs contrary to Hutchison's view of its popularity expressed above, and it seems that this enthusiasm was relatively brief, and Christopher Harvie believed that 'it became part of the repertory of party 'faddists' and socialists. '458 Harvie added that there could never be a 'Scottish Parnell,' since the Liberals 'massively endorsed the Union,' and that 'by 1906 over half the Scots MPs were English.' 459

In his essay 'The First Home Rule Movement in Scotland, 1886-1918),' Graham Morton wrote at some length on lack of parliamentary time given to Scottish legislation and the perceived financial loss suffered by Scotland, which were the main concerns of the SHRA and others, but he made no mention of Graham or Hardie,<sup>460</sup> nor did Naomi Lloyd Jones.<sup>461</sup> R. E. Muirhead wrote to Graham in 1927, 'In

452 Coatbridge Express, 28 July 1886, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>453</sup> Ibid., 2 March 1887, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>454</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 19 February 1887, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>455</sup> Taylor, p. 317.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>456</sup> Coupland, p. 298.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>457</sup> Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>458</sup> Harvie, p. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>459</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>460</sup> Graham Morton, 'The First Home Rule Movement in Scotland, 1886-1918,' in *The Challenge to Westminster*, ed. by H. T. Dickinson and Michael Lynch (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 113-122.

view of the fact that you were a Vice-President in the old Home Rule Association which was established by the late Mr. Charles Waddie in 1886, it is quite in keeping that you should now occupy the position of President of the present Scottish Home Rule Association.'462 The SHRA itself claimed that its driving force was Waddie, an Edinburgh printer, 463 who remained a relentless campaigner and lobbyist on the home rule issue until his death in 1912, by which time the first SHRA had ceased to function. 464 Watts & Davies also made no mention of Graham's founding role, only that he and Hardie were 'original members, '465 nor do his early biographers, Faulkner West or Tschiffely. West (who, like Tschiffely, was a confidante of Graham) wrote only that 'He always believed in the autonomy of states and has always been a foe of English Imperialism.'466 Certainly, Graham was in attendance at a meeting of the SHRA on Tuesday 5 June 1888, in Fleet Street, London, where he and various speakers, including Charles Waddie, and Professor John Stuart Blackie, addressed the audience. 467 Divisions in policy were illustrated by a range of disparate views, including Waddie's desire for a form of federalism, while Blackie's stated aim was that 'Edinburgh should be the seat and centre of a separate and independent government,' while Graham himself wanted a Scottish parliament that 'would do justice to their crofters and keep them at home, to pass an Eight Hours Bill for the miners, to settle the liquor laws, and to nationalise the land.'468 The leading figures were, however, agreed that a Convention should be held in Scotland at the earliest date. This meeting was the SHRA's first annual conference in Glasgow on 18 September 1888, but there is no record of Graham's attendance; however, Hardie was there, questioning why the Association had regretted supporting his candidature in Mid-Lanark. 469 There is a distinct lack of evidence for Taylor's assertion that Graham's was 'the principal begetter' of the SHRA, nor that he was deeply involved in its development. In 1952, Roland Muirhead, founder and sponsor of the second SHRA, wrote:

Although Graham had been a member of the earlier Scottish Home Rule Association which had been established in 1886, it was not until he joined the second Scottish Home Rule Association that he took an active interest in the movement for Scottish self-government.<sup>470</sup>

It is worth noting that the SHRA's policies were, that although Scotland's voice should be heard in the national parliament, that a legislature should be established in Scotland to have full control of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>461</sup> Naomi Lloyd Jones, 'Liberalism, Scottish Nationalism and the Home Rule Crisis, c.1886–93,' *English Historical Review*, Volume 129, Issue 539, 1 August 2014, pp. 862-887.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>462</sup> R. E. Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 2 May 1927. R. E. Muirhead, Papers, NLS, Acc.3721. Box 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>463</sup> W. Mitchell, Is Scotland to Be Sold Again? (Edinburgh: The Scottish Home Rule Association, 1892), p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>464</sup> Morton, p. 114.

<sup>465</sup> Watts & Davies, p. 249.

<sup>466</sup> Faulkner West, p. 58.

<sup>467 &#</sup>x27;Home Rule For Scotland,' South London Chronicle, 9 June 1888, p. 7.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>469</sup> Freeman's Journal, 19 September 1888, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>470</sup> R. E. Muirhead, Foreword to Hugh MacDiarmid's Centenary Study, p. 5.

Scottish affairs, including civil servants and judges, but the integrity of the Empire was to be maintained.<sup>471</sup> On the land issue, its policy was identical to Graham's, as reported in *The New York Tribune* on 5 September 1888:

They [the SHRA] want to abolish the Law of primogeniture and entail; they want to secure the land for the poor people, who do all the work upon it, they want to abolish the system of royalties, whereby the man who owns the land gets for every ton of coal mined as much as the poor fellow who digs it out of the ground; they want to put a stop to the practice of turning large tracts of country into deer farms.<sup>472</sup>

Counter-intuitively, however, the SHRA leadership, at least, was hostile to Irish home rule, which Morton believed was based on constitutional grounds (in an early fore-runner to The West Lothian Question), but also derived from racism and religious bigotry. <sup>473</sup> Lloyd Jones, however, noted Waddie's objection as expressed in *The Scotsman*, that without the Irish members present at Westminster, Scotland's 72 representatives would be left 'face to face with England's 465,' and that 'the 'voice of Scotland' would stand little chance; this would mean 'nothing less . . . than national assimilation.' <sup>474</sup> Graham, the supporter of Irish Home Rule, appears to have expressed no opinion on this apparent divergence of opinion.

Graham's first opportunity to make a practical contribution to the Scottish Home Rule debate was when he spoke in the House of Commons in support of the first Scottish Home Rule Bill on 9 April 1889, presented by Dr. Clark, and William Hunter, M.P. for Aberdeen North. 475 Clark's speech began by emphasising that the Bill would in no way endanger the Union, but although it was presented for 'practical considerations, there is a sentimental basis for the growing Home Rule movement in Scotland,' and that in parliament, and elsewhere, Scottish nationality was deliberately ignored, and the use of 'English' in place of 'British' was widespread. His main argument, however, was that Scottish business in the House was neglected, or blocked by English members, and he cited several examples. He also recited a list of other grievances such as unfair taxes, lower pay rates to officials, and other financial irregularities. His solution was to introduce 'devolution upon lines of nationality,' but the Imperial Parliament would still remain the High Court of Final Appeal. 476 However, speaking in support of the motion, Graham said that he did so on very different grounds from either Clark or Hunter. Although Graham agreed that there had been a growing feeling in favour of Home Rule in Scotland, in his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>471</sup> W. Mitchell, pp. 8-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>472</sup> Coatbridge Express, 19 September 1888, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>473</sup> Morton, p. 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>474</sup> Lloyd Jones, p. 870.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>475</sup>PP. Motions: Home Rule For Scotland, 9 April 1889, Hansard, Vol.335. cc 68-124. These were fundamentally a restatement of the complaints of the short-lived National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights (1853-56).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>476</sup> Ibid. cc 68-74.

opinion, it was not on sentimental grounds, but from the extreme misery of a certain section of the Scottish population, who demanded legislation that would relieve that misery. Members from Scotland were fond of representing Scotland as a sort of Arcadia, but:

in face of the misery existing in the Highlands and Islands, that we have women in Aberdeen today toiling for 6s. or 7s. a week; that we have 30,000 people in Glasgow who herd together in one room; and in face of the fact that we have a Socialistic agitation on foot in the East and West of Scotland, I must say I do not think the condition of the poor in that country is one very much to be envied.

Despite this, Graham believed that democratic ideas were much further advanced in Scotland than in England, especially on the eight hours debate, free education, and on other matters, and he also believed that parliament would soon be called on to face the demand for a legislature for Scotland. He finished his speech with a recapitulation that there must be working-class representation in any such body:

It has been said that in the event of the institution of a Scottish Legislature we should largely be represented by the merchants of the country. To that statement I say, God forbid! I believe I speak the feelings of a large section of the Scotch people when I emphatically state that, were such a Legislature ever created, we should find the working classes much more represented than is the case here.

After further speakers, including Gladstone himself, the House divided: Ayes 79; Noes 200. Hardie wrote:

Dr. Clark deserves credit for pushing on his Scottish Home Rule resolution to a division in Parliament. True, the only member who showed any true appreciation of what Home Rule would ultimately lead to was Cunninghame Graham. Dr. Hunter's nice picture of a Scottish Parliament composed of smug, bald, pot-bellied shopkeepers is too laughable to be taken seriously. With Mr. Graham we say in all seriousness, 'God Forbid.' Of course the G.O.M. [The Grand Old Man] was cautious, and threw the onus on the people of Scotland. In this he is perfectly right. I believe the people of Scotland desire a Parliament of their own, and it will be for them to send to the next House of Commons a body of men pledged to obtain it.<sup>477</sup>

Hardie made the point, with some justification, that although in some quarters there had been a growing enthusiasm for Home Rule in Scotland, there had been no groundswell of public opinion in favour of it, and, unlike Ireland, there was no political bloc of MPs dedicated to its achievement. Certainly, there was no political leader (including Graham, who did not pick up this gauntlet) around whom such a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>477</sup> Labour Leader, April 1889, p. 3.

movement could cohere, of the status or fiery determination of a Parnell, whose purposefulness was described in Graham's subsequent memoir of him.<sup>478</sup>

As we have witnessed from the beginning of Graham's entry into parliament, land ownership, despite his rhetoric, historical precedents, demands for local democracy, and his 'identity nationalism,' had been entirely subsumed into the wider social question. His position was in fact more clearly stated a month after his Home Rule speech in parliament, when he addressed the London Branch of the SHRA:

Mr Cunninghame Graham, M.P., said he was for Home Rule for Scotland because of the neglect of certain social questions by the Imperial Parliament – the bread and butter questions: the question whether the crofters and cottars should be sent to Canada or remain at home: whether the miners should work ten or twelve hours a day in the pits, to pile up wealth for greedy capitalists, while they themselves remained poor; and above all, the question whether the poor in the East End of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dundee should be allowed to remain in the degraded and neglected condition that he, speaking as a Scottish member of Parliament, undoubtedly would say they were at present. These were the questions which induced him personally to be in favour of Home Rule for Scotland.<sup>479</sup>

This was reinforced at a speech in Edinburgh in the following month:

One of these questions is the institution of a Scottish Parliament, because without it we should experience the very greatest difficulty in introducing labour legislation for Scotland. Owing to this question not having been put foreword at election times, members of the present House of Commons can turn round and say that they had no mandate from their constituents to advance labour legislation.<sup>480</sup>

The twin barriers to Scottish Home Rule, Graham believed, were the same as the barriers to social change, the greed of the middle and upper classes, and the apathy or intransigence of the workers. Among the higher echelons in Scotland, there were, what he called 'the English factions' who knew that 'hopes of social advancement, of connection with rich men, and all the rest of it, lay for him in a Parliament in London, not in Parliament in Edinburgh.'481 However, like the workers whom he had attempted to stir into action on their own behalf, there was little sign of a proud and independent peasantry rising to meet his aspirations. In an article for *The People's Press*, Graham lamented their passivity, this lack of 'heroic virtue,' and this foreshadowed a common theme in his later writings, that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>478</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'An Tighearna: A Memory of Parnell' (Dublin: *Dana*, November, 1904). Reprinted in Graham's *His People* (London: Duckworth, 1906) pp. 274-87.

<sup>479</sup> Coatbridge Express, 8 May 1889, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>480</sup> Scotsman, 11 May 1889, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>481</sup> Ibid., 28 January 1890, p. 7.

Scotland has been diminished, made meek and compliant by the twin curses of Calvinism, and capitalism, a process that Graham wished to stem, and reverse:

Where is the Scot who as Froissart said is so "cunning on his horse?" Where is he of adventure and devilment? It looked as if Knox and all his whey-faced chiels had set it at rest for ever . . . He has his minister, his fear of hell, his wish to be respectable, all of these things that the capitalist can play. What wonder, therefore, that in Scotland, where all these causes operate in a way incredible to a stranger, where men are still "religious," where strong bearded fellows, who have been deceived for years with parties, still go on drinking in the same old lies, what wonder that the modern Scottish workman should have become, by force of circumstances, an exceeding slave. Slave of the hopeless sort, who thinks he is free, and hugs his party chains, and chains of kirk, and of respectability, and says "look at me and see how free I am." 482

#### CONCLUSION

At the beginning of his political career, Graham behaved like a late-Victorian evangelical, visionary preacher and crusader, with the religion missing. However, with this omission, certain consequences followed. The first was that Graham's Promised Land had to be fulfilled on earth, and clearly, as yet, it had not. In fact, in Graham's eyes, it had become more like Hell, and this evoked strong emotions of anger and a desire for social reform, principally by eradicating 'a great primary wrong,' which was the unfair distribution of wealth. This was a simple, common, but profound moral emotion, which in his case, eschewed utopianism for practical solutions, which directly attacked privilege. At an early stage, Graham's political philosophy was an undefined philanthropy, which was combined with a powerful moral indignation, and a careless spontaneity. Like many others, he had been attracted to Henry George's ideas on land distribution as the cause of poverty, and like many others, this had led to a 'spontaneous illumination,' that there were easily understood, practical solutions to what had previously been considered intractable social problems. George's solutions, however, were long term, and what set the impatient Graham apart from the other 'Georgists' was his outspoken fervour in seeking more immediate remedies, and after entering parliament, Graham soon moved his focus against capitalism in general, and its perceived offspring, imperial exploitation.

In early 1887, several things quickly combined to change the direction of Graham's life. The first was his remarkable maiden speech in which land, poverty, and empire predominated, which brought him to the attention of the political classes, including Morris, another idealistic but practical man, who would become his key mentor. At exactly the same time, Graham witnessed poverty and the effects of unemployment at first hand, which initiated a desire for more fundamental and universal changes, which, via Morris, developed into an adherence to socialism, including Marxism, and to accept its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>482</sup> Cunninghame Graham 'The Scotch Strike,' People's Press, 17 January 1891, p. 7.

precepts as articles of faith.<sup>483</sup> Morris, who had been inspired in his turn by Ruskin, proposed, rather vaguely, mass class action, but Graham, as an M.P., took Morris's ideas to another stage, the creation of a party of labour, to change legislation and thus society at its source. It would not be an exaggeration, then, to claim that there is a direct philosophical lineage from Ruskin, through Morris, to Graham himself, although Graham, as a man of action, ultimately failed to demonstrate or codify a singular political vision, other than working-class empowerment, which was in itself visionary, but he has subsequently failed to be regarded as a significant political thinker.

On taking his seat, Graham had quickly come to believe that parliament was an oligarchy in which M.P.s habitually put their party first, claiming to have the good of the nation and its people at heart, while striving for political control, and his frustrations became more acute, resulting in what looks like an irrational suicidal act of defiance. However, this too would lead to unexpected (and probably undeserved) consequences, by propelling him into the public eye, whereby he became a political celebrity overnight, who was lauded and derided in equal measure, but it had established a revolutionary reputation among the chattering socialist elites. This in turn led to an unexpected parallel career as a political commentator for small socialist journals. What differentiated Graham's essays, from the run-of-the-mill political journalism was, however, their eloquence, their chaotic, quirky humour, and their wide-ranging expressiveness, but they also demonstrated an understanding of human weaknesses, something that other socialist writers rarely dwelt on, and a strong empathy with his fellow men and women.

The creation of a party of labour would prove difficult in the face of concerted opposition from all sides, including the working-class establishment, and especially for a man like Graham, who had the vision, but who lacked the personal ambition and the class credibility to lead such a party. Again, fortuitously, he found these skills in Keir Hardie, and set about unselfishly encouraging him to take on the leadership role, although the reluctant Hardie initially still cleaved to the Liberals. Thus, both men attempted to push forward their agenda within the Liberal party itself, by the selection of working-class candidates, and to find a political accommodation. It was in the Liberal's rejection of this proposal, an apparently insignificant act, that we can see the earliest seeds of the Liberal party's eventual decline, as Hardie and Graham felt obliged to form an independent party, which would eventually displace the Liberals as the main opposition in the House of Commons, which none of Graham's biographers has discussed.

Graham's early relationship with Hardie was one of mutual validation, whereby Graham, now with some experience, initiated Hardie into the esoteric rituals of parliament, and with a high political

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>483</sup> How closely Graham adhered to its various precepts is disputed. MacDiarmid wrote that Graham's socialism was not based on an adequate theory of social causation. MacDiarmid, *Centenary Study*, p. 9. Nor did Graham's nostalgic longings for an heroic past fit with Marx's materialism, nor his promulgation of revolution.

visibility, raised Hardie's profile in the eyes of the public and the press. This validation was reciprocal as Hardie had experience of grass-roots politics, and the working conditions and demands of the workers, which validated Graham in the eyes of those he wished to inspire, and allowed him to speak on their behalf with confidence. In an age of deference, as a gentleman and a member of parliament, Graham, from the beginning, had also helped validate radical opinions, opinions that hitherto had been the preserve of mainly working-class firebrands, and undoubtedly he also leant legitimacy in the eyes of many to the very speculative formation of the new party. First-hand accounts of the SPLP's foundation are, however, rare and fragmentary, but there is no doubt that along with Hardie, Graham was the key figure. His influence, however, somewhat dissipated when he lost his seat.

In the early part of his parliamentary career, Graham had expressed support for Irish Home Rule and been attracted to a growing Scottish national consciousness, which had developed through patriotic individuals and groups, and he had allied himself with the growing number of those who believed that Scotland, like Ireland, was poorly governed, its wishes ignored, its culture debased, and its land exploited, in consequence of which Scotland's unique place in the world was being eroded. Taylor described Graham as 'the principal begetter' of SHRA in May 1886,<sup>484</sup> along with Hardie, but Graham, who still saw working-class empowerment as his primary cause, had taken only a supportive role as its Honorary President, and there is no evidence that he was a driving force in its development.

Making an assessment of Graham's contribution to social change through his campaigns and parliamentary activities has proved difficult for his biographers. Taylor made no attempt to sum up any impact, and according to Watts and Davies 'with someone in his solitary position, the question is one of influence and example rather than direct political effect.'485 His first biographer, Faulkner West, wrote, 'It would be stupid, no doubt, to claim for Cunninghame Graham any great success in Parliament as a member for Lanarkshire,'486 but this is to miss the point. Graham's lasting legacy was predicated on the effect parliament had on him, not the effect that he had on it. His hopeless attempts to get labour legislation enacted had convinced him that any change could only come with the election of working-class members of parliament, and greater autonomy for both Ireland and Scotland, and he was quick to realise, through his experiences, that this was impossible within the Liberal fold. It was thus, as Watts and Davies proposed, his influence on others to act decisively where his real contribution lay, recognising Hardie as the best equipped to carry his dreams to fruition, and doing his best to equip him.

The timing of such a new party was also particularly fortuitous, as many newly enfranchised workers began to recognise the divided Liberals' inability to serve their interests. It was Graham who seems to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>484</sup> Taylor, p. 317.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>485</sup> Watts and Davies, p. 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>486</sup> Faulkner West, p. 96.

have had the earliest and clearest vision of an independent party of labour within parliament, but he held back until a reluctant Hardie had finally been convinced of the futility of trying to change the Liberal Party from within, after his defeat at Mid-Lanark. If we seek Graham's early contribution to the political life of Scotland, then it remains his role in promoting and encouraging the formation of SPLP. However, there is little hard evidence to substantiate the extent of his involvement, only reminiscences, and assumptions by the press. In all probability, the foundation of the SPLP was not considered particularly significant at the time, and although little more than a pressure group, its significance was considered important only when it was seen as the first step in launching something more lasting, which extended to the whole of Britain, although, as it transpired, this was a long-term project.

What was apparent, at this early stage, was something that would become a recurring theme in his later political involvement, including his future participation in the Scottish independence movement, that despite his courage and inspirational qualities, the impatient and restless Graham never evinced any interest in leadership, which, indeed, he might have considered vulgar. Nor did he posses the patience or the application to perform the role of a party functionary, involved with day-to-day political business, essential in the development of any new political entity, nor did he seem over concerned about what others thought of him. He felt above these considerations, preferring to oversee, agitate, inspire and promote, a stance repeated throughout his life, the 'insider outsider.' This distance, his lack of personal ambition, and an aristocratic demeanour, would soon create misunderstandings among his labour colleagues, and strains within the organisation he was instrumental in founding, but also a misunderstanding by many labour historians of Graham's role as an early midwife of profound social and political change.

Graham's uniqueness to the world of Scottish politics at this stage was the clarity of vision of the outsider, unhampered by the prejudices and conformities of the local habitué, developed from an oversimplified admiration of the primal virtues, perhaps derived from his overseas experiences. His views were not based on class snobbery, but on his own aesthetic and moral sense of value, which few in working-class circles would have appreciated. His was an uncompromising semi-intellectual and semi-moralistic snobbery, inasmuch as he believed he possessed a clear vision of the root causes of the society's ills and their practical cures, and anyone who did not concur, was either bourgeois, corrupt, or a fool, and it was his inability to compromise and seek consensus in the broad church of Liberalism, or in the highly competitive, but negotiable world of the House of Commons, that terminated Graham's parliamentary career. However, it was also this impatient single-mindedness that was largely responsible for creating a political entity that would eventually achieve some of his aims. Joseph Conrad's biographer, Jocelyn Baines, claimed that 'Cunninghame Graham championed causes because he was roused to do so, not because he expected them to triumph (if he had he probably would not have

bothered).'487 This, however, was an over-romantic view which failed to appreciate that the causes Graham chose were perhaps premature of fruition (as all causes must be), but he *did* expect them to eventually triumph, and his career was replete with examples of crusades and campaigns, which in time, came to some sort of fruition, albeit by the hands of others. That, perhaps, did not 'bother' Graham, but the reality of these successes rarely lived up to his moral vision, which would lead to disillusionment and disappointment.

<sup>487</sup> Jocelyn Baines, Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1960), p. 198.

### 04. CHAPTER 2, 1893 - 1913.

INTRODUCTION

LAND and LABOUR

EMPIRE

The Sketches

COLONIALISM

IRELAND and SCOTLAND

CONCLUSION

# **INTRODUCTION**

With his failure to be elected as an 'Independent Labour' candidate<sup>488</sup> at Camlachie in 1892, the cuckoo had fallen out of the nest, and Graham was now faced with the potential demise of his political and journalistic careers, and the continuing burden of huge debts. In an obituary, V. S. Pritchett wrote that Graham had been squeezed out of politics by overwhelming, dull conformity, and had been labeled 'an aristocratic minority, a nuisance who, in due process of English tolerance, would shortly graduate and become legend, as a pelted [sic] crank gets a knighthood or ascends to the Lords.'489 It might have been expected that for someone, who, through temperament and experience, was disillusioned with parliament, frustrated by the working classes and their representatives, and continually berated by the press and fellow politicians, that retirement from politics would have been an attractive option. Indeed, the large majority of historians have written that Graham now retired from active politics for the next thirty-five years, and this became the general impression and consensus. However, Graham quickly became re-engaged politically. In fact, he would also re-emerge as an even more outspoken and extreme political activist, agitator, social commentator, and critic, but outwith mainstream party politics, and he would develop into a respected literary artist. This period of his life would thus be the most challenging in his political and journalistic careers, as his earlier experiences and preoccupations were now obliged to find new outlets for expression, away from the frenetic life of a member of parliament and a party agitator.

Almost immediately after performing so poorly at Camlachie, Graham went abroad. *The Aberdeen Evening Express* reported that he was leaving for Spain *en route* to Morocco, with the caveat 'If he carries out a notion which he has been thinking over, his absence from us may take a somewhat permanent form,'490 which sounds like pique, or as Watts and Davies, described him, 'a zealot disillusioned.'491 This was followed by a period of adjustment, during which time his foreign travels increased, but he was also

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>488</sup> Despite the fact that the ILP was not founded until the following year, but Graham, apparently, already had the idea in his mind.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>489</sup> V. S. Pritchett, 'New Literature,' London Mercury XXXVII, January 1938, p. 339.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>490</sup> Aberdeen Evening Express, 16 September 1892, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>491</sup> Watts and Davies, p. 118. In 1893, Graham again visited Spain and Morocco, this time with the naturalist W. H. Hudson to research a book, and in 1894, he was back in Spain, prospecting for gold.

forced to confront his debts, and the real danger of losing his property. James Leatham, who had first published Graham's 'Economic Evolution,'492 wrote that Graham had confided in him that he took less than £100 a year from his estates, and that, 'I tremble in the presence of my poorest tenant.' This I took to mean that he was afraid the tenant might ask for repairs or improvements which he could not afford.'493 Lowe was in no doubt that his financial pressures were a major factor in his withdrawal from parliamentary and platform politics, adding, 'Within a few months thereafter he realised with painful clearness that the debt which he had inherited along with his estate was too burdensome to be borne much longer.'494

The two men who had his ear in later life and who might have given an insight into Graham's state of mind, his contemporary biographers, Faulkner West and Tschiffely, gave very little information about this period. After describing Graham's defeat, West simply moved on to his friendships and literary output, while Tschiffely, who, as stated previously was Graham's amanuensis, glossed over the entire period and simply recorded 'Time often hung a little heavily on Don Roberto's hands, especially in the long spells of rain which visit the District of Menteith.'495 His later biographer, Taylor, however, went into much more detail, cataloguing the many financial tribulations that Graham and his wife experienced in trying to keep their home, and it appears that up until its sale in 1900, they suffered considerable hardships.<sup>496</sup> In 1940, the painter John Lavery recorded a particularly revealing incident:

When I knew him at this time [1896] his finances were in a shocking state and things were getting unbearable down at Gartmore. Suddenly he wrote to say that he could stand it no longer. Would I come down at once and see him end it all with Pampa [Graham's horse] in a spot where I had painted a view of the Rob Roy country that he loved.<sup>497</sup>

This was no doubt exaggeration on Graham's part, but Benn wrote, that along with Hardie, Graham and his wife Gabrielle were 'unrecognized manic depressives,' 498 although she failed to substantiate this. However, in a letter to Edward Garnett, dated 1 March, 1899, Graham wrote 'My view of life is almost the same as yours. It is a joke, a black joke of course, but we must laugh at our own efforts.'499

Despite these challenges and setbacks, it soon became apparent that Graham had not lost his drive, and the strong urge to speak out on political matters, or indeed to modify his political and moral views

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>492</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Economic Evolution,' pamphlet, (Turriff: The Deveron Press, 1891).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>493</sup> Leatham, 60 Years of World Mending, pp. 162-3. This, not untypically, stands in contrast to his obituary in *The Scotsman* in which it was stated, 'he soon became recognised as the best farmer in the district.' *Scotsman*, 23 March 1936, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>494</sup> Lowe, 'The Old Scottish Labour Party,' Evening News, 18 February 1938, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>495</sup> Tschiffely, p. 269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>496</sup> Taylor, pp. 229-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>497</sup> John Lavery, *The Life of a Painter* (London: Cassell, 1940), p. 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>498</sup> Benn, p.46. Tschiffely only described a tendency towards the 'morose.' Tschiffely, p.24. Joseph Conrad commiserated with Graham's on his 'depression' in a letter dated 9 December 1898. Watts, ed., *Conrad's Letters*, p. 111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>499</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Edward Garnett, 1 March 1899 (MS: University of Texas).

had not been vitiated. However, the very nature of his new position out of parliament meant that he was now isolated from day-to-day political life, and political interest groups. Thus, the emphases on the major topics discussed in Part 1 of this thesis significantly alter, as Graham was obliged to accept a more distanced stance, and to increasingly express himself through the written word.

### LAND and LABOUR

The large majority of the political histories in which Graham's name is even mentioned, particularly histories of the Labour Party, not only relegated him to a minor role in its foundation, but some asserted that after his defeat in 1892, he disappeared from the political arena, only to re-emerge in the late 1920s. Recalling an undated speech by Graham in Glasgow, for example, his one-time associate David Lowe recounted, 'The enthusiastic cheering which followed was the last he was to absorb for almost two decades.'500 These assertions were incorrect, for although no longer a parliamentarian, Graham remained politically active, and quickly re-emerged as a social commentator and a stern critic of government. On 11 February 1893, his first letter to a newspaper since June of the previous year appeared,<sup>501</sup> in which he returned to attacking the Liberals, and in the same month, he was again addressing meetings, and promoting the ILP.<sup>502</sup> One month later, his first journalistic article since June 1892 was published,<sup>503</sup> and he continued to write occasionally for socialist publications such as *The Social Democrat* until 1897, and *Justice* until 1902. In his speeches and writings he made no references to land ownership, nor to those who made their living from the land, nor to Ireland.<sup>504</sup>

Opportunities for political office still presented themselves, but Graham, at this period, showed no interest. In 1894 the Irish nationalist, James Connolly, offered to support him as a Labour candidate in Edinburgh, to which Graham replied, 'Many thanks for asking me to stand. However, I have no money, I am sorry to say, and this is the third or fourth offer I have been obliged to decline.'505 Even with his financial position secure, in 1905 he turned down an invitation to stand as a socialist candidate in the Leith Burghs,<sup>506</sup> and again in South Aberdeen in 1910, with the words that he would 'not re-enter [the] gas-works for £,5000 a year.'507

Graham's financial tribulations meanwhile continued, and in October 1895, it was reported that another farm on his Gartmore estate had been sold, and that he had been disposing of his estate in

<sup>500</sup> Lowe, 'The Old Scottish Labour Party,' p. 3.

<sup>501</sup> Labour Elector, 11 February 1893, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>502</sup> Scotsman, 16 February 1893, p. 6, 27 January, 1894, p. 6, 28 August 1894, p.6, and Manchester Guardian, 20 March 1893, p. 8., et al.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>503</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Is the Labourer Worthy of His Hire?' Labour Leader, March 1893.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>504</sup> During his time as an M.P. Graham had said little on the subject of Ireland, as there were 'many more able speakers than myself to deal exclusively with that question and were returned exclusively by Irish electors for that purpose.' *Airdrie Advertiser*, 25 November 1889, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>505</sup> Between Comrades, James Connolly, Letters and Correspondence 1889-1916, ed. by Donal Nevin (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2007), p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>506</sup> Scotsman, 4 October 1905, p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>507</sup> Ibid., 7 January, 1910, p. 9.

portions.<sup>508</sup> It was also around this time that he began a consistent literary career as a memoirist, and social commentator, and by 1896, virulent attacks on British imperialism and racism. It is impossible to tell, what, if any, the effect these personal pressures and distractions had had on his renewed political activism,<sup>509</sup> but there is a growing awareness of his disillusionment with the party that he was so instrumental in founding. However, since they are taken from second-hand reminiscences, it is also impossible to attribute any firm timeframe to them. Watts & Davies conjectured:

There is a case for saying that Graham was disillusioned by success. He was, legend claims, a lover of lost causes; one might therefore argue that he became bored with a cause that appeared to be winning after all. But one might also argue that the success of the ILP was not enough, and that the progress of the Left had been too slow for him to tolerate.<sup>510</sup>

No doubt echoing his patron's words, Tschiffely put it thus:

When the Labour Party became strong, and a number of "big" men joined its rapidly growing ranks, he characterised the leaders as 'p... pot Socialists, a lot of disillusioned Lords and Baronets, surrounded by the most bigoted bunch of bourgeois and social climbers.'<sup>511</sup>

Paul Bloomfield got nearer to the reality when he described Graham's personality within and without the political arena, reflecting on his impatience, and his general cynicism. Graham, he believed, had the feeling that Milton expressed in his 'new presbyter is but old priest writ large.'512 Bloomfield did not agree with Tschiffely that Graham was only a socialist until he thought the movement might succeed, but because he saw in this success the inevitable consequence, 'the existence in all of us of that "new presbyter," biding his time.'513

Graham was not the only original SPLP member to become disillusioned with the ILP. In his reminiscence of the early days of the movement, 'Sandy' Haddow recalled the excitement of their campaigns, but then his own disappointments:

And so the ball rolled on into the ILP for better or worse, and district councils, federations, executive councils, and sharks grew more plentiful . . . aggressive fighting force gone. It was no place for me . . . I now plough a lonely furrow with pleasure. <sup>2514</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>508</sup> Ibid., 1 October 1895, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>509</sup> The ILP was established at a meeting in Bradford in January 1893, at which there is no record of Graham attending.

<sup>510</sup> Watts and Davies, p. 118.

<sup>511</sup> Tschiffely, p. 260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>512</sup> John Milton, 'On the New Forcers of Conscience Under the Long Parliament.' (Poem 1646).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>513</sup> Paul Bloomfield, The Essential Cunninghame Graham, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), p. 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>514</sup> Alexander Haddow, Forward, 8 May 1909, p. 6. Following his death, Graham paid tribute, and unveiled a memorial to Haddow. The Glasgow Herald, 14 August 1922, p. 10.

By 1910, even Lowe accused the Labour Party of impotence.<sup>515</sup> There was also a general suspicion, expressed by Smillie, that 'In the mind of the Englishman [,] Scotland was merely a province of England' and that the ILP 'wire-pullers' had been 'working for the demise of the Scottish section.'516 This may also have been Graham's perception, that as the emphasis and power moved away from Scotland and onto the national stage, the nature of the party had changed, becoming more professional, but also less immediate and personal.

At this juncture, it is worth commenting on the fundamental personality and class differences between Graham and his Labour colleagues. Tschiffely, again undoubtedly quoting from Graham, conceded that his socialist companions considered him 'different from themselves,'517 and the noted mining engineer, Sam Mavor, wrote that Graham was not taken seriously by his fellow-socialists.<sup>518</sup> Graham's privileged upbringing had encouraged a manner that Compton Mackenzie would describe as 'polite hauteur [which] kept everybody at a distance,'519 or as Edward Garnett described him, 'Like the prince in the fairy tales he was accessible to all men yet stood aloof from them.'520 This would no doubt have riled many of those with whom he worked, but those whom he addressed from the platform would not have felt it, and it appears that he enjoyed continued popularity for his oratory and his stylish demeanour throughout his life.

The incongruity of Graham's position was also exacerbated by a sea-change in political and social attitudes within the labour movement itself. Benn wrote of this period of transition 'The cloth cap man, once derided, was now exalted; Hyndman, the wealthy Oxbridge graduate, became a villain. 521 Leatham put it thus, 'The political fashion changed so completely in the mining areas that the new Labour label counted for everything, and past services, ability, and actual political principles did not, for a time, seem to matter.'522 MacDiarmid named some men with whom Graham might have worked:

But the future of the Labour and Socialist Movement lay with a very different type with whom he could not have worked and from whom he could not have disguised his contempt . . . They knew, and could know nothing of his writings; their pabulum was of a very different kind - and these two were mutually exclusive. 523

<sup>515</sup> Lowe, *Forward*, 9 April 1910, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>516</sup> Robert Smillie, Forward, 6 February 1910, p. 2.

<sup>517</sup> Tschiffely, p. 213.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>518</sup> Sam Mavor, M&C Apprentices' Magazine XX, Summer 1936, p. 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>519</sup> Mackenzie, C., *Listener*, 29 May 1952, p. 868.

<sup>520</sup> Edward Garnett, London Mercury, June 1936, p. 128.

<sup>521</sup> Benn, p. xvii.

<sup>522</sup> Leatham, 60 Years of World Mending, p. 159.

<sup>523</sup> MacDiarmid, A Centenary Study, p. 9. This chimes with Champion's statement that Graham's works in publications aimed at the working class were 'caviar to the general.' See passim. MacDiarmid went on to assert that the Labour movement, as it's membership and power increased, 'involved a progressive deterioration of mind and spirit,' while the majority of the M.P.s it returned to Westminster were mentally negligible,' Ibid., p. 10. As to the attitude of the rest of Scotland, MacDiarmid wrote, 'Cunninghame Graham's attributes were no asset among his

There may also have been a consensus among Labour's new adherents that they wished to achieve success on their own terms, without the help of a class renegade like Graham.

Of his elitism, MacDiarmid wrote that among his Labour colleagues, Graham was considered to be 'anti-democratic,'524 and compared him in this to Thomas Carlyle, whom he argued was 'an anti-democrat of the most pronounced and uncompromising type,' asserting, typically, that it was not democracy that 'the people' wanted, but that their deeper will was 'good government by competent rulers.'525 MacDiarmid went further, in saying that Graham would have agreed with Carlyle that the people were 'mostly fools' to the extent of being 'mere mesmerized cattle' under the malign influence of the political cant and claptrap abundantly poured forth by 'stump orators of every denomination, all intent on getting their votes.'526 If Graham agreed with this, he did not say it so bluntly, although there were occasional examples of a patrician attitude in his writings. In his tale 'Snaekoll's Saga,' for example, Graham let loose a diatribe on those who ordered society, in a particularly Nietzschean fashion:

The world is to the weak. The weak are the majority. The weak of brain, of body, the knock-kneed and flatfooted, muddle minded, loose-jointed, ill-put-together, baboon faced, the white eye-lashed, slow of wit, the practical, the unimaginative, forgetful, selfish, dense, the stupid, fatuous, the "candle-moulded," give us our laws, impose their standards on us, their ethics, their philosophy, canon of art, literary style, their false morality, their supplemented morganatic marriage, social injustice done to women; legal injustice that men endure, making them fearful of the law . . . in sum, the monstrous ineptitude of modern life, with all its inequalities, its meanness, its petty miseries, contagious diseases, its drink, its gambling, and terror of itself, we owe to this pug-nosed brothers in the Lord, under whose rule we live. 527

This was artistic exaggeration, but it undoubtedly reflected Graham's general view of humanity. In his obituary of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Graham expressed similar sentiments - 'Amongst the mass of mediocrities that constitute, have constituted, and will ever constitute mankind.'528 In 1902, a critic in *The Athenaeum* wrote of him, 'this writer betrays himself as a born and instinctive Tory,'529 and after his death, the American writer, philanthropist and horseman, Edward Larocque Tinker wrote that 'he was

countrymen but were generally resented as a sort of insult to their own irremediable mediocrity and lack of panache.' Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>524</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>525</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>526</sup> Ibid., p. 14. It appears however that Graham did not admire Carlyle, believing that his philosophy would not endure, and that he would in future be regarded as a humourist. Cunninghame Graham, 'A Survival,' *Saturday Review*, 3 May 1896, p. 542.

<sup>527</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Snaekoll's Saga,' Saturday Review, 18 December 1897, p. 709.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>528</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Wilfrid Scawen Blunt,' English Review, December 1922, p. 488.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>529</sup> Athenaeum, 15 November 1902, p. 645.

interested in his fellow man for whom he felt compassion balanced by contempt, '530 which may have much to say about his relationship to his erstwhile socialist comrades.

There is, however, a parallel explanation. Unlike those he wished to empower, Graham's livelihood and lifestyle were not dependent on physical labour or political change, but his own personal fulfillment. Watts and Davies quoted from a letter that Graham wrote to his literary adviser, Garnett in 1899, in which they saw yet another paradox:

Writing on politics is rot. But politics are good in themselves, this way. A man spends all his life for an idea (I speak of your Parnells etc.), is spat upon, reviled, & laughed at, for a fool, dies broken hearted, hated by those he fought against, half understood (at most) by those he strove for, & most likely not thoroughly believing in the cause, for which he gave his life. The last is the thing, & politics *that* way understood leaves literature millions of leagues behind, even from an artistic standpoint.<sup>531</sup>

They added, "Even from an artistic standpoint.' A man who does not thoroughly believe in his own cause . . . may yet choose to campaign untiringly for others, and in doing so he reconciles the moral and the aesthetic.' This is what would make Graham's personal and political legacy so unique, when he is compared to other labour leaders, and it closely resembled what Terry Eagleton described as Truth, the cognitive, becomes that which satisfies the mind . . . Morality is converted to a matter of style, pleasure and intuition. How should one live one's life properly? By turning oneself into an artifact.'533 Ambitions that were less than this, or based purely on self-interest, no matter of what social class, would have strained Graham the moralist's sympathy and patience, but to some of his colleagues, this demeanour would have smacked of artificiality.534 Watts wrote:

Graham was an affectionate connoisseur of the absurdities of human nature; and to him, both a skeptic and an idealist, there was something ludicrous yet heroic about men who strive arduously and give their lives for beliefs that defy reason.<sup>535</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>530</sup> Edward Larocque Tinker, New York Times Book Review, 29 November 1936, p. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>531</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Edward Garnett, 28 January 1899, quoted in Watts & Davies, *Critical Biography*, p. 290-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>532</sup> Ibid., p. 291. Wilmer considered that this philosophy underpinned Ruskin's view of Ancient Greece, 'The Greeks says Ruskin, though they lacked consolations promised by Christianity, saw the end of their activity as honour alone – not riches, or the promise of a future life. The earth itself with its natural riches was sufficient.' Wilmer, *Unto This Last*, p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>533</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 368.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>534</sup> Jeffrey Meyers wrote of Graham that 'this artificiality and egoism combined with disdain and contempt combined to explain Graham's failure in both politics and art.' Jeffrey Meyers, A Fever at the Core: Six Studies of the Idealist in Politics (London Magazine Editions, 1976), p. 44.

<sup>535</sup> Watts, *Cunninghame Graham*, p. 42. Graham's personality style did not appeal to everyone of his own class. Edward Garnett's son, David, wrote that Graham was 'a visitor who impressed my imagination rather than won my heart... But when he made a speech or wrote a book he adopted a pose, and his vanity overcame him.' David Garnett, *The Golden Echo* (Chatto & Windus, 1953), p. 68. David also wrote that his father, Edward, tolerated Graham's vanity, which assisted in the expression of his personality. Ibid., p. 69. David 'Bunnie' Garnett would in

Graham's writings were full of heroic failures who fitted this description, characters such as the socialist pamphleteer, Betterton, in his sketch 'An Idealist,'536 who, despite his eccentricities, poverty, and unswerving but hopeless idealism, were, we might imagine, much more deserving of Graham's admiration, despite, or maybe because of, his lowly social position.

As Hardie's profile increased, and Graham maintained an enigmatic distance, their relationship fractured. Lowe referred to the bad feeling between them both in his report of a rally held in Coatbridge in 1898, in which Lowe hoped Graham would stand for parliament again, this time as a *bona fide* Labour candidate:

It was a huge meeting and might have achieved its purpose, but, unfortunately, Keir Hardie was in the chair. The Irish element raised obscure personalities, those same dark rumours which had ended with estrangement of Graham and Hardie, with the result that by a small majority, our mission was defeated. Graham did not appear on the scene at all; the meeting was tentative.<sup>537</sup>

It appears, that by this stage, through personal slight or disillusionment, that Graham had already lost faith in the Labour party as a political instrument, and by at least 1905, he was openly criticising it, 'Had the party been called a Socialist party I would gladly have come forward, but so long as "Labour" is attached to the question it made a farce of the whole proceedings.'538

Despite his disillusionment, from this time, however, during a period of increasing industrial unrest, Graham became more militant. Watts and Davies described him as 'A mobile freelance well to the left of the working-class movement, joining forces with the most prominent or notorious militants . . . Graham did much to precipitate that unrest.'539 The Labour Party, on the other hand, had suffered many setbacks, and saw little improvement in its electoral position. It was increasingly regarded as ineffective in improving the conditions of the poor, while the Liberal party had seen a revival in their political fortunes, and an ideological shift in their social policies.<sup>540</sup> In 1908, the English socialist, and trade union activist, Ben Tillett<sup>541</sup> published a savage attack on Labour, 'The House of Commons and the country, which respected and feared the Labour Party, are now fast approaching a condition of

his turn become a noted writer and publisher, a prominent member of The Bloomsbury Group, and co-founder of the Nonesuch Press.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>536</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'An Idealist,' *The Saturday Review*, 25 August 1906, pp. 232-3. Betterton was the thinly disguised Dan Chatterton (1820-1895), atheist, communist, London slum-dweller, radical pamphleteer, and publisher of *Chatterton's Commune, the Atheistic Communistic Scorcher*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>537</sup> Lowe, *Evening Times*, 4 March 1938, p. 3. These dark rumours may have been a reference to Graham's position on the board of management of *The Labour Elector*, and its association with Maltman Barrie, 'the purveyor of Tory Gold, and the *éminence bleue* of labour politics.' Watts & Davies, p. 87-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>538</sup> *Scotsman*, 23 December 1905, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>539</sup> Watts & Davies, p. 221.

<sup>540</sup> Michael Freeden, The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>541</sup> Ben Tillett (1860-1943).

contempt towards its Parliamentary representatives.'542 Also, in 1908, in the depth of an economic depression, and following an impassioned speech on behalf of the unemployed in George Square, Glasgow, *The Scotsman*, described Graham as 'the chief spokesman of the deputation,'543 and 'a fanatical philanthropist,' accused him of encouraging violence and crime:

The meaning of such language is perfectly unmistakable. Mr. Graham protests his sense of responsibility; but nobody who recalls his career would attach any high value to that . . . his speech is calculated to promote a resort to crime by people who are not habitual criminals.<sup>544</sup>

Now acting outwith the constraints of party policy, we may be witnessing a freeing of Graham's rabble-rousing impulses, but during what looks like a rapprochement, at 'a great socialist demonstration' chaired by Graham in the St Andrew's Halls, Glasgow, on 2 November 1908, at which Hardie was the principal speaker, Graham expressed his growing reservations about the party's direction and effectiveness. In the following month, at the Guildhall Conference on 'Law and the Right to Work,' Graham stated that he disliked the words 'Labour politics or Labour Party,' as they are merely red herrings drawn across the trail,' and that despite the very best intentions, the forty Labour MPs, placed there by the self-sacrifice of their brothers in the mines, in the factory, had failed in their missions, perhaps by no fault of their own. He added:

There is an old proverb that you can't touch pitch without being defiled, and it has proved true again. They have become, perhaps unwittingly, statesmen, not revolutionaries. I stand for Socialism. I want a direct line of cleavage. (*Applause*.)<sup>546</sup>

He then proceeded to predict the creation of a small Socialist party in the next Parliament, which he hoped would be able to take up the cause of the unemployed. (*Applause*.)<sup>547</sup>

There were strong echoes in both of these statements of Graham's previous relationship. He had very quickly become disillusioned with the Liberals, when he came to believe, through his experiences in parliament, that they had no intention of fulfilling the role they had proclaimed, and that he saw for them, in representing or advancing the cause of the working classes. Now, having focused so much time and effort in promoting working men as M.P.s, this same disillusionment reappeared. It seems that getting working men into parliament had not been enough after all, and, notwithstanding the intellectual calibre of the candidates, the nature of parliament itself was a barrier to change, defiling any member with pitch, whatever their party.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>542</sup> Ben Tillett, *Is the Parliamentary Labour Party a Failure?* (London: The Twentieth Century Press, 1908), p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>543</sup> *Scotsman*, 25 September 1908, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>544</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>545</sup> Glasgow Herald, 3 November 1908, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>546</sup> Manchester Guardian, 7 December 1908, p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>547</sup> This may be a reference to a nascent British Socialist Party (see below).

Quantifying Graham's political legacy during this period, like his personality, has proved highly elusive. Even in 1927, Tom Johnston, a major figure in Scottish socialism in the twentieth century, found it impossible to quantify the role and impact of individual organisations, including the SPLP and the ILP, let alone individuals, in the growing socialist movement. While reminding his readers that Graham had been the first chairman of the SPLP, he continued:

the difficulty of securing a proper historical perspective is obvious; a polemical dust still clouds the vision of the observer, and all that is clear is a slow but steady growing tendency to a working class political party – a party suffused, stimulated and inspired by incessant socialist propaganda.<sup>548</sup>

Graham had been, and would continue to be, an incessant propagandist. At the beginning of his political career his had been a distinctive, unique, and controversial voice, particularly from one of his class, and particularly in parliament, but increasingly, it would become just one more voice, clamouring for political and social change.

#### **NEW LITERARY CAREER**

Graham's urge to write had not abated, and his first literary attempts in print were the essays Father Archangel of Scotland, (1893),<sup>549</sup> and In the Tarumensian Woods (1894).<sup>550</sup> Graham's major long-term literary breakthrough, however, was precipitated in 1895 by the publication of a guidebook entitled Notes on the District of Menteith.<sup>551</sup> Taylor believed that due to Graham's notoriety as hero/villain, his slim volume was widely reviewed,<sup>552</sup> and it ran to three re-prints. Perhaps most significantly, The Saturday Review extolled it as:

The wittiest little book to come out in a long time [. . .] Mr. Graham has found his vocation. We hope that he will cease to "fash" himself with politics and give us many another book small or great but, like this, discursive, poetical, full of ingenious reflection and pleasant distortion of history.<sup>553</sup>

Taylor added that, as a direct consequence of this piece, Graham had been recruited to *The Saturday* Review by the new owner and editor, Frank Harris, 554 who had purchased the periodical after *Notes* was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>548</sup> Thomas Johnston, A History of the Working Classes in Scotland (Glasgow: Forward Publishing, 1927), p. 264.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>549</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Father Archangel of Scotland,' Nineteenth Century, September 1893, pp. 384-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>550</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'In the Tarumensian Woods,' The Nineteenth Century, No.36, August 1894, pp. 244-25

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>551</sup> Published in August 1895. *The Aberdeen Journal* proffered that it was 'not a guide book in the ordinary sense at all', but 'a delightful monograph on Menteith,' and went on to describe it as, 'this bright, attractive, and sparkling little volume.' *Aberdeen Journal*, 2 September 1895, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>552</sup> Taylor, p. 225.

<sup>553</sup> Saturday Review, 21 September 1895, p. 437.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>554</sup> Harris wrote, 'What a crew of talent to get together on one paper before they were appreciated elsewhere – [H. G.] Wells and [Bernard] Shaw, Chalmers Mitchell, D. S. McColl, and Cunninghame Graham.' Frank Harris, *Contemporary Portraits*, p. 47. Harris was another adventuring outsider, a maverick in the sedate publishing world, who would have found Graham's unconventionality attractive, in contrast, perhaps, to others in his position.

published, and that Graham's first article was 'Salvagia,' published in September 1896. Taylor's assertions were, however, incorrect. Harris purchased *The Saturday Review* in December 1894, and Graham made his first contribution to it in early August 1895,<sup>555</sup> the same month as his *Notes* appeared in print, and a month before the review in *The Saturday* was published. Graham continued his association with the journal long after Harris sold it in 1898, and contributed regularly up until 1913, with occasional contributions between 1924 and 1926, and a final article in 1931. It had been by a stroke of luck (and personal contact)<sup>556</sup> that Graham became a regular contributor, and it was the prestige of *The Saturday Review*, that made and sustained his literary reputation, for, as Taylor wrote:

While his political articles had much of the force and style of his later work, very few of his contemporaries, and fewer still of what have to be termed his social equals, took the *Labour Elector*, *Justice*, or *The People's Press. The Saturday Review* was a different matter: discussed in the London clubs and, if not always read, at least laid out on the table in the library of every country house in Britain.<sup>557</sup>

Hitherto, Graham's literary output had been marginal, and somewhat chaotic. Now, writing for a prestigious periodical, which was described by *The Manchester Guardian* as being 'soaked in eighteenth-century Toryism,'558 undoubtedly leant a new kudos and respectability, which he had lacked in the eyes of the public, and his peers. However, writing for this and other mainstream periodicals, Graham's works could no longer espouse socialism *per se*, but the moralist's hatred of injustice and the disappearance of a more harmonious world were never far below the surface. It was, however, an unusual partnership, the fiery communistic radical, writing for the sedate country house journal, but it seems that Graham's writing talents, plus his larger-than-life personality could compensate for much. In 1899, a reviewer for *The Saturday Review* wrote of him:

Many heresies may be forgiven or at least ignored for the sake of brilliant individuality in a humdrum age, and though we do not take the man seriously, we owe homage to the master of style. Indeed, were we invited to recommend a model of graceful, vigorous and eloquent English, we could mention few modern examples better calculated to instruct and inspire.<sup>559</sup>

This condescending tone probably summed up the thoughts of many reviewers and readers, who chose to separate what they considered Graham's radical, and to them, eccentric views, from his persona and his literary talents. Graham, as stated, would be restricted in his espousal of overtly political views in these new publications, however, at the beginning, apart from what might be considered literary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>555</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Jesuit,' Saturday Review, 3 August 1885, pp. 135-6.

<sup>556</sup> At this time, Graham and Harris socialised in the same London circles, and occasionally rode together in Hyde Park.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>557</sup> Taylor, p. 235.

<sup>558</sup> Manchester Guardian, 'Miscellany,' 23 February 1914, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>559</sup> Saturday Review, 29 April 1899, p. 533.

experiments, he next launched into a series of anti-imperial diatribes.

#### **EMPIRE**

A subject that was not overtly socialist, but one which was entirely analogous with Graham's views on the conditions of the working poor, was his views on empire. Graham had expressed imperial scepticism on the hustings, and in parliament, but his early socialist journalism made little reference to imperialism. Now, apparently averse to storytelling, he was obliged to write as a memoirist, drawing his subject matter from his own experiences in foreign climes, and some of these would have an implicit anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist message.

Graham's new position as a journalist and social commentator was contemporaneous with the approach of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897), when a fevered imperial jingoism was nearing its height. As previously stated, Graham drew no distinction between capitalism and imperialism, indeed, as Bernard Porter observed, there were 'signs . . . towards the end of the century that the nation's policy was being shaped by capitalists to an extent unknown before, and with little concern for the interests of anyone but themselves,' and added, 'emotional accretions to the name of the Empire became thicker and more beguiling as the last thirty years of the century wore on.' <sup>560</sup> Thus, for Graham, the forthcoming hubristic celebrations provided a perfect excuse to attack capitalism and the powerful elites both directly and obliquely.

A key event that excited national interest, but which also exacerbated moral qualms among certain sections of society, as well as international condemnation, was the botched Jameson Raid of 1895 to 1896, sponsored by Cecil Rhodes, which had been aimed at provoking conflict with the Boers. Porter agreed that the Raid 'pointed a clear and unmistakable connection between empire and finance,'561 and it became the perfect opportunity for Graham to voice his anger.562 Surprisingly, after publishing only three pieces in *The Saturday Review*, it was this conservative journal that published Graham's first major anti-imperialist article, since it was also a direct attack on Rhodes (whom elsewhere Graham had called 'The Bulawayo Burglar'563), a man whom Frank Harris greatly admired.564 It was also an attack on British intrigues in southern Africa as a means of gaining access to the goldfields and diamond mines, published in two parts under the title 'Fraudesia Magna.'565

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>560</sup> Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radicals and the Imperial Challenge* (1968), (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008), p. 36. Graham received the briefest of mentions in this book, as a note on p. 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>561</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>562</sup> It may also have been Graham's direct response to the Poet Laureate, Alfred Austin's much-derided poem, *Jameson's Ride*, printed in *The Times* on 11 January 1896, and Rudyard Kipling's poem, *Hymn Before Action*, also published there in the same month.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>563</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'With the North Wind,' Saturday Review, 10 October 1896, p. 389.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>564</sup> Frank Harris, My Life and Loves, Vol.II (privately printed, 1925), p. 463.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>565</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Fraudesia Magna,' *Saturday Review*, Part I, 21 March 1896, pp. 293-5; Part II, 4 April 1896, pp. 340-2.

After tracing the advance of the Boers, and their destructive impact on the native inhabitants, at least they were not 'money-grubbers,' but Graham added:

Nothing excites our [British] wrath more fully than to see rich mineral lands in the hands of others. It seems to strike us as a sort of coming between the Lord and His anointed . . . We have a mission to perform, and to be free to follow it we must have gold and diamond mines in order to obtain a market for our sized cotton and our trash from Birmingham . . . Superior morality is not bound by treaties [. . .] Britons were never slaves to treaties when gold was found in adjoining countries.

Never reluctant to introduce Spanish or South American allusions, Rhodes was then compared to Cortez, in his love of wealth and power, but there the resemblance ended. Rhodes was no warrior; he took no physical risks, but offered the British upper-classes and industrialists huge profits, 'chances of wealth unsoiled by work.' In this, he had used others, like his friend Dr. Jameson, to do his dirty work, by goading the Boers into war in 'a sordid and tinpot affair . . . England, perhaps, is justified, if not by works, by her humiliation; for, once again, the whole world thinks us liars.' <sup>566</sup>

Graham was by no means alone in his scepticism; many on the left shared his views. For example, ten years earlier, Morris's *The Commonweal* railed against it, 'this rhetoric . . . about honour and glory, and law and justice simply means NEW MARKETS, and nothing more; that the whole bombastic business is just a glorification of commercialism,'567 while Hardie saw the dangers of those returning from imperial postings to positions of power back in Britain, and imposing with autocratic ideas.<sup>568</sup>

Graham's next anti-imperialist diatribe was a satirical pamphlet, which would have been unlikely to appear in a mainstream journal. It was entitled *The Imperial Kailyard: Being a Bitter Satire on English Colonisation*. Here he recalled how, in the naivety of youth, he had once believed that all the good and honourable virtues had been patented in England, that wherever the British flag floated all were free and equal before the law, irrespective of race, position, or colour, and that:

The sanctity of British soil, the superior virtue and chivalry of my countrymen, their justice, toleration, and fair dealing with all stronger than themselves, and their generous commercial attitude to weaker nations than themselves, grew to be my most serviceable creed.<sup>570</sup>

If some slight injustices had been done in extending these blessings, this was only natural, all change

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>566</sup> Despite his attacks on British intrigues in South Africa, Graham saw the Boers as in some ways worse, as reported in a speech he gave in Edinburgh on 22 September 1899, *Scotsman*, 23 September 1899, p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>567</sup> Commonweal, May 1885, p. 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>568</sup> Keir Hardie, Labour Leader, June 1893, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>569</sup> Cunninghame Graham, *The Imperial Kailyard: Being a Bitter Satire on English Colonisation*, Pamphlet (The Twentieth Century Press, 1896), pp. 1-15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>570</sup> Ibid. pp. 3-4.

incurred some loss, and the odds were so great.'571 However, Graham's anger was then loosed on 'the useless sons' and missionaries sent to administer and pacify these far-flung regions, degraded by their institution, as are their 'niggers,' and if on some rare occasion one [a coloniser] was killed, the corrupt press described it as 'a massacre.'572 This was a bitter indictment indeed, a comprehensive attack on arrogance, brutality, hypocrisy, and jingoism as Britain plundered its way around the world under the guise of a civilising mandate, sending armies of incompetents to rob and defile. The specific focus then became Britain's contemporaneous involvement by proxy in the Matabeleland Rebellion (1896–1897):

No one doubts that eventually the Matabele will be conquered, and that our flag will wave triumphantly over the remnant of them, in the same way as it waves triumphantly over the workhouse pauper and the sailor's poor whore in the east end of London. Let it wave on over an empire reaching from north to south, and still keep waving over Leicester Square, where music halls at night belch out their crowds of stout imperialists.<sup>573</sup>

The third piece, also an indignant biting satire, was "Bloody Niggers." 574 This ironic diatribe was really an extension of The Imperial Kailyard, but a more focused assault on bigotry, ironically describing the world, its resources, and its peoples, as having been designed by an all-wise Creator exclusively for British use. Why had this Jahvé gone to the trouble of creating these other races, if not to be ruled by Englishmen:

'Niggers' who have no cannons, and cannot construct a reasonable torpedo have no rights. Their land is ours, their, cattle, fields, their houses their poor utensils, arms, all that they have; their women, too, are ours to use as concubines, to beat, exchange, to barter for gunpowder and gin, ours to infect with syphilis, leave with child, outrage, torment, and make by consort with the vilest of our vile, more vile than beasts.<sup>575</sup>

It is worth noting in both of these tracts, that to Graham, imperialism was not something that exclusively occurred overseas, out of sight. It was all around, part of the same institutionalised system of greed and exploitation, which the jingoistic public swallowed, as part of their own enslavement:

If they are poor, then woe betide them, let them paint their faces white with all the ceruse which ever Venice furnished, to the black favour they will come. A plague of pigments, blackness is in the heart, not in the face, and poverty, no matter how it washes, still is black.

This extraordinary broadside concluded by asking if England was 'a vast and seething mushroom bed of base hypocrisy,' and God 'an anthropomorphous fool?'

<sup>572</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>571</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>573</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>574</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Bloody Niggers,' Social Democrat, April 1897, pp. 104-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>575</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

As if to encapsulate all of his anger, the fourth anti-imperialist piece was a breathless newspaper article entitled 'Expansion of Empire,' published only eight days before the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee, in which he ridiculed Britain's imperial ambitions:

In every corner of the world some epoch-making little man has been extending our national power on an insecure footing and building his own fortunes. Truly an age of expansion, national expansion and international expansion [. . .]. Well, it is done, and hardly a corner of the known world remains in which the name of Britain is not mentioned with a curse.

'Conscience,' he satirically asserted, was a British product, and once across the English Channel it withered and died; the British were the chosen race, and had taken out a patent on the 'gentleman' to defend themselves from the infringement of copyright by foreign counterfeits. Thus, Britain reserved the right to reclaim the rest of the world from barbarism and recast it in its own image.<sup>576</sup>

1896 and 1897 marked the height of Graham's anti-imperialist writings, but a final criticism was published in early 1899 in a letter in *The Evening Telegraph* (Dundee), in which he again attacked the hypocrisy of empire, pointing out the similar actions the British had taken to quell or destroy native people as a patriotic right, while the Turks killing Armenians was tyranny:

We are the Turks, the oppressors, spoilers, and the patriots were the men who fell for those old-world ideals – love of their country and their faith? If not, surely there is one patriotism for the Whites, another for Arabs, and a third for blacks, all differing in degree, and each divided from the other by biothermal lines. So what is patriotism at Ashford-under-Lyne is rank rebellion in Darfur, and becomes Anarchism in Rhodesia; and so on of all the virtues, vices and the like the whole gamut of the human farce.<sup>577</sup>

This was a well-thought-out attack on British hypocrisy, and the satirical stridency of Graham's writing, and the expression of such uncompromising and controversial views, is worthy of note, for their courage if nothing else. This was particularly true when their publication coincided with the zenith of British nationalism, prior to the beginning of the Second Boer War, <sup>578</sup> and a period of paranoia, which found voice in a popular literary genre known as 'Imperial Gothic.' Works in this genre revealed underlying anxieties over matters of mysticism, miscegenation, degeneracy, contagion, irrationality, and the fragility of civilisation. Many people also felt threatened by the economic and technological rise of other European powers, which found expression in yet another popular literary form, 'Invasion

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>576</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Expansion of Empire,' Sunday Chronicle, 13 June 1897, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>577</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Evening Telegraph, 14 January 1899, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>578</sup> It is all the more perplexing that Graham published no critique of Britain's involvement in the Second Boer War (1899-1902), nor mentioned Emily Hobhouse's reports on the conditions in British concentration camps during the conflict. On the contrary, in a letter dated 14 December 1901, Graham almost condoned their use, or suggested they were no worse than recent American actions in the Philippines. Cunninghame Graham, letter: 'Buncombe', to the *Saturday Review*, 14 December 1901, p. 740.

Literature' in which the outward thrust of imperialist adventure was reversed. Ellke Boehmer wrote of these concerns:

Though fears and doubts about Empire only came fully into their own in the new century, expressions of anxiety about social regression and national decline were widespread. Movements that implied a loss of traditional authority - Irish nationalism, socialism, the New Woman - met with stern repression.<sup>579</sup>

It is worth noting that the topics that Boehmer selected were exactly the topics that occupied Graham's early crusades, and we might ask to what extent these formed a deliberate and comprehensive attempt, in his own small way, to undermine all aspects of British establishment authority. Evidence of this appeared in 1898, when Graham published his first full-length book, his most celebrated work, *Mogreb-El-Acksa*, (1898)<sup>580</sup> the description of his attempted journey from October 1897 across the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, disguised as a Turkish doctor. Conrad eulogised it<sup>581</sup> and Hugh MacDiarmid called it 'one of the best books on travel ever written,'<sup>582</sup> but it did not conform to Graham's previous forthright anti-imperialist pieces. It was, in part, an attempt to present foreign incursions through the eyes of the natives, and to understand local cultures on their own terms, without the strictures of foreign moralities. It was a more subtle attack on western preconceptions and the standard travel books of the time, which took a superior position over the backwardness and racial characteristics of native populations. In the words of Philip Healy, in his Introduction (appended in 1988), 'Europeans have no proprietary claim on other countries because of some 'higher' morality which they enjoy.'<sup>583</sup> A reviewer in *The Academy* regarded it 'as a satire on things done in Mayfair or Mincing Lane . . . a constant playing off of British character against the types of Morocco under a convention of social and political equality as between us and them.'<sup>584</sup>

Graham did not confine his criticism to British imperialism. In 1898, he criticised America's role in the 10-week Spanish–American War, and in 1900, in a letter to *The Saturday Review* he criticised Britain for betraying her old ally, Spain, to gain American favour. 585 Also, as a frequent visitor to, and writer on Morocco, for the months of April and May 1906, during the Moroccan Crisis, Graham was given the title of 'Special Correspondent' for *The Glasgow Herald*, the newspaper that had once campaigned against his election to parliament.

Graham's most controversial public utterance on the subject of Empire, took place at a conference entitled 'Nationalities and Subject Races,' held in Caxton Hall, Westminster, between 28 and 30 June 1910, which attracted a large and enthusiastic international audience. Graham had his opportunity to share his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>579</sup> Ellke Boehmer, Colonial & Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>580</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Mogreb-El-Acksa (London: Heinemann, 1898).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>581</sup> Letter dated 9 December 1898. Watts, Joseph Conrad's Letters, p. 111.

<sup>582</sup> MacDiarmid, Centenary Study, p. 28.

<sup>583</sup> Philip Healy, Introduction to Graham's Mogreb-El-Acksa (London: Century, 1988), p. xvi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>584</sup> Academy, 13 October 1900, p. 301.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>585</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Saturday Review, 3 February 1900, p. 138.

uncompromising views on empire during the fifth and final session, entitled 'Proposed Remedies.' Here he stated that he hated the idea of empire, but he believed that, initially at least, Britain had sent great men to introduce civilisation to her overseas possessions, but little by little, 'the insidious bacillus of Imperialism' had undermined its high ideals, being corrosive both to the rulers and the ruled. Most controversially he stated, 'I am not one of those people whom the word assassination terrifies.'586 Edward Garnett witnessed this speech with his son David (see passim), then aged 18. Many years later, David inaccurately recalled the words in his memoirs:

The only speech I heard, which was not completely boring, was delivered by Cunninghame Graham. He began his speech with the words: "I am not one of those who tremble [sic] at the word – ASSASSINATION!" There was a storm of applause, which prevented his proceeding for some minutes, and it was obvious that all the delegates, whatever the colour of their skin, were consumed with the passionate longing to commit murder.<sup>587</sup>

Graham, of course had been in frequent contact with Prince Kropotkin, and various other anarchists, who were part of Morris and Garnett's inner circle, which also included Sergey Stepnyak-Kravchinsky (1851-1895), the assassin of General Nikolai Mezentsov, Chief of the Tsar's secret police. In Graham's more sanguine (or rather sanguinary) moments, such direct action no doubt had its appeal. However, post the First World War, Graham took an entirely contrary view, and reacted angrily to political assassination, particularly in Ireland.

If the subject of Ireland had slipped from Graham's agenda during this period, this was likely because it had been overtaken and subsumed by a growing and more general imperial clamour, and Ireland, in Graham's mind, was also a subject nation, ruled over by unwelcome foreigners, and was subject to the same misconceptions as other colonised peoples.

# THE SKETCHES

By his own admission, Graham was not a storyteller, admitting to Garnett, 'I am an essayist and an impressionist, and secondly a storyteller but have the story telling faculty very weakly. Therefore if you cut out my reflections, nothing remains.'588 He also eschewed 'invention,' stating:

It is (I think) a general belief, that every writer draws his matter straight from the fountain of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>586</sup> 'Conference Report, Caxton Hall, Westminster,' 28-30 June 1910, (London: P. S. King & Son, 1910), pp. 142-6. <sup>587</sup> David Garnett, *The Golden Echo* (London: Chatto, 1953), p. 119. (See passim). He added: 'Although I was very uncritical at that age, it did strike me that Cunninghame Graham's remark was one of the silliest I had ever heard. He was in no danger of assassinating or being assassinated. He had no reason to tremble.' The economist and social scientist, J. A Hobson, who had chaired the meeting, denied that Graham had said anything that was 'a direct encouragement to murder.' While regretting Graham's words, he added: I did not think it necessary, by my intervention from the chair, to give additional prominence to Mr. Graham's language, which was not that of instigation, or, indeed, of particular condonation, but a rhetorical protest against the ruling out of violent methods.' *Nation*, 16 July 1910, p. 563.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>588</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Edward Garnett, 6 August 1898, University of Texas. Quoted in Helen Smith, The Uncommon Reader: A Life of Edward Garnett (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017), p. 107.

his brain, just as a spider weaves his web from his own belly... This may be so, especially with folk of much invention and no imaginative power. The makers of Utopias and the like, forecasters of society under socialism... no doubt enjoy the gift. Peace and good luck to them... It may be that which I refer to as invention they style imagination. 589

Thus, no longer able to write overtly polemical pieces for his new, more conservative readership, and lacking, or unwilling to employ a story-telling talent, Graham was obliged to find another form. Fortuitously, however, he had already prototyped the hybrid 'sketch' form in his foreign reports for *The Labour Elector* and *The People's Press*, and this, by necessity, now became his standard format. The large majority of these sketches for *The Saturday Review* and other periodicals, were known as 'middles,'590 vivid descriptions of locations that he had experienced at first hand, knew about, or was interested in, in South America, Morocco, and later, Scotland, which eventually comprised a unique literary legacy. Chris GoGwilt wrote 'It is really the sketch that defines the genre of all of Graham's works, and his sketch artistry is the medium through which 'the adventure of being Cunninghame Graham'591 links the battlefronts of socialist struggle and colonial politics.'592 GoGwilt thus believed that these more literary offerings were in fact heavily disguised critiques of the advance of so-called civilisation, mediums for anger and nostalgia, which implicitly regretted the destruction of lifestyles and traditions.

Watts believed that it was in a very early piece, 'A Jesuit,'593 his first for *The Saturday Review*, that Graham tentatively developed the impressionistic 'sketch' into the 'sketch-tale,' first by the evocation of atmosphere, and, by what John Walker described as one of his constant literary techniques, 'the story within the sketch,' containing more than an echo of his friend Conrad's 'anti-rational primitivism,' the view that a limitation of the individual's consciousness or reflective and ratiocinative abilities may best equip him for life.'594 Here, a doomed Jesuit, the 'tobacco priest,' was pursuing his mission of bringing light to the heathen, facing the jungle and its horrors. It was, however, important in literary terms, because, for the first time, his sketch was self-contained, and did not rely on verification from older recorded material (like 'Father Archangel of Scotland' or 'In The Tarumensian Woods'), and for him, at this stage of his career, it was an admirable demonstration of restraint, as he allowed his reader's

<sup>589</sup> Cunninghame Graham, *His People* (London: Duckworth, 1906), p.ix. He expressed very similar sentiments in *Faith* (1909), pp. xi-xii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>590</sup> Literary essays placed between reviews and news items. Watts describes them as 'stories, essays reminiscences and descriptive pieces - particularly if, during this heyday of European imperialism, they dealt with remote and exotic regions.' Watts, *Cunninghame Graham*, p. 32. A contemporary reviewer described the country's fascination with travel, 'The spirit of vagabondage possesses the nation. Call it what you will, *Reiselust*, or go-fever, we are most of us subject to this malady.' *Outlook*, 6 May 1899, p. 455.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>591</sup> Borrowed from G. K. Chesterton's *Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1936), p. 269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>592</sup> Chris Gogwilt, 'Broadcasting News From Nowhere: R. B. Cunninghame Graham and the Geography of Politics in the 1890s,' in *High and Low Moderns*, ed. by Maria DiBattista and Lucy McDiarmid, (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 239.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>593</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Jesuit,' Saturday Review, 3 August 1895, pp. 135-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>594</sup> Watts, *Joseph Conrad's Letters*, pp. 54-5. Graham wrote, 'Education is a splendid thing for engineers, county councilors, and waiters; it makes them fit to bear their crosses and to impose others on the general public, but it spoils a shepherd.' Cunninghame Graham, *Notes on the District of Menteith*, p. 2.

imaginations to conjure up the priest's fate, which made it all the more disturbing.<sup>595</sup> This sketch was a precursor to what would be Graham's standard format of a long vivid description,<sup>596</sup> usually of some South American location, followed by the gist, usually short bursts of (sometimes violent) action, or a meditation, often switching between discourse and narration, and what Watts described as 'panorama terminating in close-up.'<sup>597</sup> Watts believed that 'his better tales are frequently those which employ the oblique narrative form, so that the comments are assimilated to the personality of the fictional teller of the tale-within-the-tale.'<sup>598</sup>

These works often carried a peremptory punch at the end, or simply stopped, where the protagonists walked or rode off the page, a snapshot of a continuum, I liked the manner of his going off the stage. This would become a recurring feature throughout his long writing career, leaving the reader to decipher a meaning or a moral. However, in many cases, there was no exact meaning or moral, other than his own nostalgic regret for the passage of time and the loss of more natural and spontaneous lifestyles and populations, overcome by encroaching civilisation, political statements in their own right. The reader was thus often left with a feeling of incompleteness. James Steel Smith made probably the most comprehensive attempt to describe their uncomfortable uniqueness:

Without themselves seeming accidental or incomplete, Graham's tales leave one with an aftersense of fragmentation, a feeling that the scene or episode or persons described were fragments of something not given and to be guessed at. They are bright, vivid pieces, but their very vividness somehow suggests chipping, a breaking-off in such a way that the ragged edges, clear and hard, promise, without defining, a larger reality - which, too, might be just a large, jagged fragment.<sup>600</sup>

Smith believed that this incompleteness, had two primary purposes. First, to make the core of his otherwise impressionistic story explosive, by illustrating 'un-rationalised, uncompensated loss,' and second, to demonstrate a 'casual irrelevance and unreason' ('anti-rational primitivism') in the events he described. Smith, then, like other critics of Graham's anthologies had great difficulty in classifying his works, but was conscious of what might be called 'a practiced emotional detachment,' as if the author

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>595</sup> Watts relates that the story was based on Graham's own recollections of a steamboat journey in 1872. Watts, *Cunninghame Graham*, p. 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>596</sup> Gregory Smith perceived this as a common trait in Scottish literature, and described it as the 'Scots zest for handling a multitude of details rather than seeking broad effects by suggestion is very persistent,' and 'the tedious arithmetic of the Scottish mind.' G. Gregory Smith, *Scottish Literature* (London: Macmillan), p. 5 and p. 19. <sup>597</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>598</sup> Ibid., p. 30. Watts asserted that Graham's literary career began 'around 1890,' Watts, *Cunninghame Graham*, 'Preface and Acknowledgements' (no page number), but this was incorrect. Graham's political writings began in 1888, and his purely 'literary' works began tentatively in 1893.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>599</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Preface to Brought Forward (London: Duckworth, 1916), p. x.

<sup>600</sup> James Steel Smith, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham as a Writer of Short Fiction,' *English Literature in Transition* Vol.XII, Issue 2 (1969), pp. 61-2.

was above and unmoved by the often violent or tragic scenes he had witnessed and was now describing, the stance of a superior but heroic witness.

One critic wrote, 'Sketches, stories, studies, or what do you call them? Is Mr. Graham a novelist or an essayist; is he bent on picturesque reminiscence or on preaching? In truth we do not know, and do not believe Mr. Graham knows either.'602 Wendell Harris acknowledged 'The difficulty of knowing precisely what to call these brief pieces of prose is a reflection of Graham's uncertain appeal as a writer.'603 Harris concluded that Graham's perseverance on this chosen form was Quixotic; indeed, apart from his histories and travelogues, and a very few notable exceptions, Graham persevered in this form throughout his writing career, and seemed incapable of, or had no desire to develop further, despite encouragement from his friends Conrad and Garnett to do so.

Watts believed that in his young adulthood Graham had been influenced by the 'chronicler of frontier life,' the popular American author, Bret Harte (1836-1902), whose tales, according to Watts, had been told with 'vernacular gusto and boldness, captured the democratic imagination by their combination of humour, realism, and sentimental pathos.'604 Watts quoted from a letter from Graham to his mother in which he wrote 'Decidedly it is reserved for me to be the Bret Harte of the South, but in Spanish or English.'605 Graham was certainly an admirer of Harte, and his support for the Native American peoples, writing in 1891, 'I had hoped that the matchless pen of Bret Harte would have raised a protest against the doings in Dakota; if the protest had been made it would have run through the American press like wildfire, and surely must have produced some good. 606 There were similarities in the writings of both men, particularly of course in Graham's South American work. Both had an eloquent writing style, and both dealt with life in primitive, and often hostile environments, where human life was arbitrary. Both used the short story length, and both employed 'the authorial silent finish.'607 Unlike the large majority of Graham's works, however, Hart was a story-teller, using the minimum of description; instead, employing the place and character names to communicate the roughness, exoticism and imminent danger of his settings, relying on his reader's already established knowledge of popular 'cowboy' literature. 608 Graham, however, whose South American and North African locations and names were less well-known, had to rely more heavily on description.

602 Outlook, 6 October 1900, p. 313.

<sup>603</sup> Wendell V. Harris, English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920, Vol. 30, Issue 2, 1 January 1987, pp. 221-4.

<sup>604</sup> Watts, Cunninghame Graham, pp. 30-1.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid. From 1880-85, Harte was the United States Consul in Glasgow.

<sup>606</sup> Cunninghame Graham, "The Redskin Problem: "But 'Twas a Famous Victory," *Daily Graphic*, 5 January 1891, p. 6. My italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>607</sup> Watts & Davies, p. 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>608</sup> Tschiffely, reprinted a letter from Graham to Theodore Roosevelt, in which Graham claimed to have first met William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody in San Antonio, Texas, in 1880. Tschiffely, *Don Roberto*, p. 375. Graham entertained Cody in The Glasgow Art Club, during his show's second visit to Glasgow between the 1 and 6 August 1904.

We can only assume that Graham's anti-imperialist works, had little or no effect on the British public opinion, but in another example of the unintended consequences that occurred throughout his life, they had a long-term effect on his literary career. Graham's sketch of the funeral of William Morris, for The Saturday Review, 609 had been read and retained by an upcoming publisher's reader and editor, at T. Fisher Unwin, Edward Garnett, mentioned above. Garnett, also an imperial skeptic, was planning a series of books entitled 'The Overseas Library,' which aimed at presenting a true picture of imperial expansion, and the challenges and thoughts of those involved with it, stating "The Overseas Library' makes no pretence at imperial drum-beating, or putting English before Colonial opinion. It aims instead at getting the atmosphere and outlook of the new peoples recorded, if such is possible.' 610 Garnett had been impressed by Graham's anti-imperialist pieces, and wrote to him through Joseph Conrad (whom Graham had first befriended in 1897), 'I read your Sketches as they appeared in The Saturday Review and very much taken with them – the paper on Morris's funeral appearing to me the best thing of its kind I have met with.' Garnett then contacted Graham's publisher, with the intention of acquiring Graham's sketches with the intention of using them in a new volume entitled 'The Overseas Library' featuring tales and sketches of colonial life<sup>611</sup> This was the beginning of a friendship and collaboration that would span four decades, with Garnett constantly commenting on Graham's work, and sending suggestions.

Garnett had complimented Graham on his erotically-charged story *Aurora La Cujini*,<sup>612</sup> to which Graham replied that it was 'an impression, nothing more, but that is all I can do,'613 however, Garnett persevered over several years, by a mixture of blandishments and gentle criticism, in trying to encourage Graham to extend himself by becoming more emotionally expressive, and to develop his plots and characterisation into full-blown stories, 'I want you to think over what there is in yourself and life which you have shrunk from writing.'614 It appears, however, that Graham lacked the confidence to push these boundaries, responding, 'Now you must understand that I am a man of action and have passed most of my life out of doors. I am really *pas de blanque*, extremely diffident in all I write.'615 As Helen Smith wrote:

Once again, what Garnett perceived a flaw was the result of a deeply personal and subjective element in Graham's writing; the 'man of action, the disdainful witness' gains the upper

<sup>609</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'With the North-West Wind,' Saturday Review, 10 October 1896, p. 389.

<sup>610</sup> Edward Garnett, 'The Prospectus for 'The Overseas Library.' Reprinted in Vol.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>611</sup> Edward Garnet, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 16 May 1898. University of Texas. Quoted in Helen Smith, *The Uncommon Reader*, p. 102.

<sup>612</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Aurora La Cujini: A Realistic Sketch in Seville (London: Leonard Smithers, 1898).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>613</sup> Cunningham Graham, letter to Garnett, 27 August 1898. Quoted in Davies, 'Concept of Impressionism,' p.64. Watts suggested that Graham's 'impressionism' was a deliberate decision to fit in with the current artistic trends, Watts, *Cunninghame Graham*, pp. 57-8, but this statement belies that. Also, Graham persisted in his impressionistic style until his death in 1936, long after Impressionism was no longer in vogue.

<sup>614</sup> Edward Garnett, letter to Graham, 28 December 1905. Cunninghame Graham Papers, NLS. Acc.11335/71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>615</sup> Quoted by Taylor, p. 276.

hand over the artist, despite his attempts to persuade Graham that it '[is] the artist that is the most important now.'616

Smith also perceived that both Graham and Garnett were quite similar in many ways, cosmopolitan and irreverent, and that they 'also shared a sardonic wit, coupled with a strong streak of melancholy, a fierce strain of anti-imperialism and a love of the underdog.' Also, she recognised a 'mutual feeling of displacement,'617 similar perhaps to Watts and Davies' description 'Cunninghame Graham observed Britain as a detached but easily-angered stranger might have done.'618 Garnett also noted a lack of subtlety in Graham's work, in one instance, commenting on Graham's 'Evolution of A Village,' 'I think your account would be more likely to *live* if it had a little more wrist play and a little less battering blows; if its tone were quieter, more ironical, even congratulatory it would be more dangerous.'619 Graham, it seems, certainly at this early stage of his writing career (pre-1900), remained first and foremost a polemicist, where the style and even the content remained secondary to the message.

## **COLONIALISM**

The bulk of Graham's most outspoken anti-imperial works were focused around 1895-6, where, apart from 'Fraudesia Magna,' they were confined to small circulation periodicals, a pamphlet, and a provincial newspaper known for its radical views, where they would have been little-read, and had no discernable influence other than to attract Garnett to him. As Gregory Claeys wrote of the critics of empire, 'naysayers and doom-mongers were rudely brushed aside.'620 There is certainly a hint here, however, as we have seen in his political writings, that rather than espouse a consistent political and philosophical view, some of Graham's works were reactions to current events. There was, however, a more subtle but related canon of work that found a wider readership, where he wrote his sketches, sketch-tales, and histories set in exotic locations, as described above. These not only gave him more scope to develop his impressionistic skills, they were a more consistent conduit for his views on the lasting impact of imperialism, and colonialism.

Graham had been struggling with a history of the gauchos since 1894, when his friend, the naturalist and author, W. H. Hudson,<sup>621</sup> encouraged him to write about his own experiences in South America in

<sup>616</sup> Helen Smith, The Uncommon Reader: A Life of Edward Garnett (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017), p. 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>617</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-5.

<sup>618</sup> Watts and Davies, p. 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>619</sup> Edward Garnett, letter to Graham, 30 June 1898. Cunninghame Graham Papers.

<sup>620</sup> Gregory Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire 1850-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 3. Claeys described a rather chequered response of British socialists towards the empire. Like Graham, some regarded it as an evil imposition, some saw it as a distraction from conditions at home, while others saw it as a democratic and liberating force. Claeys, p. 125. Claeys incorrectly confined Graham in the second category, as one who lamented its deleterious effects at home.

<sup>621</sup> William Henry Hudson (1841-1922). Naturalist, ornithologist, and author of Green Mansions (1904).

the form of vignettes, following the model of La Pampa (1890), by the Frenchman, Alfred Ébélot: 622

If you could get up a book containing mainly your own impressions of Gaucho life and character, on the lines of the French work 'La Pampa,' and well illustrated (like that work), it would, I think, stand a better chance of success than a historical book.<sup>623</sup>

It appears that it was from Ébélot that Graham, at the beginning at least, derived some of his inspiration. Graham did indeed use his own memories as a means of celebration, of documentation, but, more often, like Ébélot's work, they were a means of communicating loss. If his anti-imperialist polemics dealt with the moral questions of conquest and annexation, these pieces would mourn the consequences of colonisation, and the advance of 'civilisation' and 'progress,' and the subsequent passing of uniqueness, of customs, of whole populations, as well as the loss of habitat. An excellent example of this was Graham's early sketch, 'Un Angelito' (1896),624 which described the gaucho custom of displaying the corpses of recently deceased infants:

An "Angelito" stored in a cool, dark room to keep him from the flies, and then brought out at night to grace a sort of Agapemone,<sup>625</sup> shows past and present linked together in a way that argues wonders, when they both make way for that unfathomable future, the fitting paradise for the unimaginative [. . .] one thing I know, that in the Pampa of Buenos Ayres it and all other customs of a like kind are doomed to disappear.

Jennifer Hayward wrote that, 'Ultimately, the dead child becomes the absent centre of the story, standing in for the larger cultural loss that was taking place – unmourned and almost unnoticed – all around it.'626 Graham, however, was quite specific what was responsible for this cultural loss:

A cultivated prairie cut into squares, riddled with railings and with the very sky shaped into patterns by the crossing lines of telegraphs, may be an evidence, for all I know, of progress; but of all that makes a Pampa what the Indians imagined it when they gave the plains the name –

<sup>622</sup> Alfred Ébélot (1837-1912). Ébélot who wrote of the rapid transformation of the Argentine gives these pages a melancholy interest and a sort of historical value,' La Pampa: Mæurs Sud-Américaines (Paris, Zulma, 1992), p. 20. Ébélot's book also contained a tale entitled La Pulperia, a title that Graham used in a similar sketch in The Saturday Review, 22 October 1898, pp. 529-30. In 1992, Sandra and Glenn Erikson repeated an accusation made by Frederick H. Garcia of 'blatant plagiarism' in Graham's A Brazilian Mystic (1920), of Euclides da Cunha's 1902 book Os Sertões (The Backlands). Sandra S. Fernandes Erickson, Glenn W. Erickson, 'Cunninghame Graham's Plagiarism of da Cunha's Os Sertões, and Its Role in Vargas Llosa's La Guerra del Fin del Mundo, Luso-Brazilian Review Vol. 29, No.2, Winter 1992, pp. 67-85.

<sup>623</sup> Curle, letter from Hudson to Graham, 17 April 1894. It appears, however, that it was in fact Graham who first mentioned 'a French book' to Hudson, and Hudson replied in a letter dated 10 March 1894 that he had not read it. None of Graham's letters to Hudson have survived.

<sup>624</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Un Angelito,' Saturday Review, 1 January 1896, p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>625</sup> An English religious community that existed between 1846 and 1956.

<sup>626</sup> Jennifer Hayward, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham and the Argentinian Angelito,' in *Empires and Revolutions: Cunninghame Graham and His Contemporaries* (Scottish Literature International, 2017), p. 99. Hayward also pointed out the strong similarities between this sketch and Ébélot's 'El Velorio' (The Wake), published in 1890, p. 102.

for Pampa in the Indian tongue signifies the "space"- no traces will be left. 627

Graham's great niece, Jean, described his encounter with such an 'angelito' twenty years earlier, in 1876,<sup>628</sup> and it became increasingly apparent that Graham was almost exclusively, drawing on his own experiences to illustrate these links between the past and the present which were being broken, as a rural society was being cast adrift from its physical and cultural roots because of its increasing disassociation from the land. This was exactly the same situation, and economic and cultural consequences, that he had so vehemently attacked (and continued to criticise) in the context of Scotland. Hayward believed that Graham was:

to some extent an 'outsider,' simultaneously within and outside imperial networks of power. His unique sensibility as a border-crossing Scot, strengthened by the cultural awareness he developed while travelling in South America, gave him an unusual perspective on the countries he visited.<sup>629</sup>

The subjugation of these populations, leading to the exclusivity of land ownership, was in some form or another Graham's major preoccupation when dealing with natural and traditional habitats, or addressing racism and ethnic cleansing (as in his three pieces on the Sioux in *The Daily Graphic* during 1890-91), or unconscious despoilment.

On the latter topic of unconscious despoilment, Graham's first descriptive sketch set in such environments had been 'In the Tarumensian Woods,'630 published in *The Nineteenth Century* in August 1894, which was a confused and confusing piece, because it tried to combine two of his major themes of this period, 'religious enterprises pursued under disadvantageous circumstances,'631 and civilisation's baleful effects on native populations. Claiming to have been transcribed from an old manuscript (as if afraid to take ownership), it began as a defence of the Jesuits and their selfless work among the Guarani Indians in the eighteenth century. In this, Graham related a tale of a Jesuit priest who brought three members of a family into his township. They were soon afflicted by lethargy and pains, and one by one, they wasted away and died, which would be the fate of many of their fellows. After praising the piety and sacrifice of this priest, Graham also called him 'muddlehead,' and suggested that the baptisms he had carried out had resulted in death. The priest, however, believed that their deaths were due 'to the exceeding compassion of the Almighty,' and Graham concluded that 'the Jesuits did much good, mixed with some folly, as is incidental to mankind.'632 However, this respect slowly disappeared, and we might contrast it with an uncompromising stance towards similar good works, written ten years later:

<sup>627</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Un Angelito,' p. 17.

<sup>628</sup> Jean Cunninghame Graham, Gaucho Laird (Long Riders Guild Press, 2004), p. 158.

<sup>629</sup> Hayward, p. 102.

<sup>630</sup> Cunninghame Graham, In the Tarumensian Woods,' Nineteenth Century No.36, August 1894, pp. 244-52.

<sup>631</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Father Archangel of Scotland,' Nineteenth Century, October 1893, p. 385.

<sup>632</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'In the Tarumensian Woods,' p. 252.

Who does not feel as if a slug was crawling on his soul on reading in some missionary report of all their misdirected labours and their sufferings, and of the perils that they have endured, to turn some fine free race of savages [...] into bad copies of our lowest class, waddling about in ill-made clothes and claiming kindred with us as brother "Klistians" in the Lord?<sup>633</sup>

This unconscious impact on native populations, due to arrogance and naivety would become another recurring theme in Graham's works.

Part of Graham's individual style was his uncompromising directness of expression. 634 In Malcolm Muggeridge's words, quoted previously, Graham admired the fearless and sensual in mankind, 'Since they were not so, he had to comfort himself with dreams, and self-dramatisation, and heroic episodes.'635 They were, however, undoubtedly also an attempt to share his experiences of unique landscapes and cultures with the wider public, but, as the one who is sharing these experiences, in describing exotic, lawless, and often dangerous locations, as Muggeridge suggested, Graham was incidentally self-dramatising, presenting himself as hero, or at least a witness, which can be heroic in its own right. Indeed, Shaw may have been slyly referring to this when he wrote 'Cunninghame Graham is the hero of his own book. 636 Thus, as discussed earlier, Graham the aesthete was slowly turning himself into another artifact - the frondeur-dandy-adventurer-literateur. Watts wrote that Graham was 'mythogenic, he attracted and helped to generate myths about himself,'637 which should include his supposed capture by Indians; his capture by revolutionaries and being forced to fight on their side, neither of which was ever substantiated; his supposed time teaching fencing in Madrid, 638 and his wife Gabrielle's fabricated background. Tschiffely's assertion that Graham had been appointed a colonel in the British Army during the First World War was also inaccurate. 639 In Pritchett's critique of Tschiffely's biography of Graham, he wrote 'Spaniards understood him more truly. They were, those who knew him, inclined to soft pedal his Spanish grandmother; at the gaucho they raised their eyebrows a little.'640 Not only were some things exaggerated, there were inconvenient facts that did not fit the legend disappeared. This at first seems at odds with his desire to stay in the background as a politician, but it is

633 Cunninghame Graham, Progress and Other Sketches (London: Duckworth, 1905), p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>634</sup> 'Mr Cunninghame Graham is as plain in his language as he is independent in his opinions, and his readers who object to a spade being called a spade had better look elsewhere for their entertainment.' *Spectator*, 24 June 1899, p. 887.

<sup>635</sup> Muggeridge, p. 440.

<sup>636</sup> George Bernard Shaw, 'Notes on Captain Brassbound's Conversion,' in *Three Plays For Puritans*, (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p. 341. In his autobiography, the painter William Rothenstein described his first meeting with Graham at a performance of Shaw's 'Arms and the Man' in 1894. Graham's mother, who had been sitting near, at the interval, introduced him to Graham with the words 'my son is a great friend of Mr Shaw.' William Rothenstein, *Men and Memories*, 1900-1922, (London: Faber & Faber, 1932), pp. 179-80.

<sup>637</sup> Watts, 'Janiform Genius,' p. 12, n. 18.

<sup>638</sup> Watts and Davies, pp. 33-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>639</sup> Tschiffely, p. 361. Graham stated that he had been offered the grade of colonel, which he refused: 'thinking it ridiculous for a private citizen not a military man to hold such a title.' *Stirling Observer*, 2 December 1918, p. 3. <sup>640</sup> Pritchett, *London Mercury*, p. 339.

self-romanticisation rather than self-aggrandisement. Graham's temperament was more suited to playing *el gran señor*; the speech-maker, the controversialist, the puppet-master, the distant aesthete, the shepherd who leads from behind, not indulging in disputations as a party 'hack.'

Since his attacks and satires on British imperial attitudes was predicated on the commonly held acceptance of the right to conquest and colonisation, Graham next turned his attention to the exploiters and colonisers, but it was not until February 1898 that two significant sketch-tales appeared, that dealt with two very different types of men. The first was another erotically-charged sketch-tale entitled *Bristol Fashion*, after the words of a sea captain named 'Honest Tom Bilson,' who plied his trading vessel along this Moroccan coast, 'a strange hell-broth of geography, ethnicity, flora and fauna.' Part one was a colourful evocation of the exotic world along the coast, of the unscrupulous practices of the captain, and of his treatment of his "niggers," and it seems that we are in the territory, first of Herman Melville, or the nautical word-pictures of William Clark Russell. A contemporary reviewer wrote that it was a story 'which Mr. Conrad might have been proud to sign.'641

Graham's Bilson displayed in microcosm all that Graham despised about imperial commerce; he was one of thousands nibbling on the edges of empire, there to unscrupulously exploit the natives and imperial leftovers as quickly as possible. Bilson in Cunninghame Graham's eyes was simply common clay, an *untermensch*, incapable of any higher aspiration other than his own selfish needs; his 'anti-rational primitivism' was his defining characteristic:

Men's minds are built in reason-tight compartments, and what they do but little influences them. Honest Tom Bilson cared not for speculations, but acted in a manner he called practical, that is, he tried to square his conscience with his life, except when personal interest, hate, love, and other human passion intervened.<sup>642</sup>

Thus, when he recaptured escaped black crewmembers, he promptly sold them to cannibals, and when, back in England, retired to church-going respectability, he regularly boasted about it. Again, Graham's great-niece, Jean, claimed that this tale was drawn from his own experience of a sea voyage in 1875, captained by the New Englander, Bilson,<sup>643</sup> showing again that Graham was, in the majority of cases, using material from his past. It is possible, however, that she had retro-historicised Graham's experience from his writings, as there is no other evidence for this event. However, the detail of Bilson being a New Englander might corroborate it, as this information did not appear in Graham's text.

It should be noted that throughout these, and other sketch-tales, along with an uncompromising directness of expression, there was also a strong thread of sardonic, black humour, which throws the

<sup>641</sup> Academy, 28 May 1898, p. 580.

<sup>642</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Bristol Fashion,' Saturday Review, 5 February 1898, pp. 431-2.

<sup>643</sup> Jean Cunninghame Graham, pp. 139-143.

often grisly nature of his depictions into high relief. In a letter to Graham about Graham's rare tale *Snaekoll's Saga*, Conrad wrote, 'As to the Saga it confirms me in my conviction that you have a fiendish gift for showing the futility - the ghastly, jocular futility of life.'644

Graham's next piece in this group was a tale entitled *Higginson's Dream*, which concerned a trader who was similar to the sympathetic Jesuit type, one who empathised with, and befriended the natives, but to Graham, the influence of men like this was even more insidious and dangerous than transients like Bilson. Like the missionary in *In The Tarumensian Woods*, despite his altruism, Higginson's very presence and influence exerted baleful effects on the natives, 'the strange anæmia which comes to wild peoples by the mere presence of a white man in their midst [. . .] the 'modorra' <sup>645</sup> [which] exterminates the people whom he came to benefit.'<sup>646</sup> This was more fully explained in a letter to *The Saturday Review* in 1903, in which Graham described how, during the Spanish conquest of the Canary Islands, natives afflicted by this lethargy simply sat down by the roadside and died. 'What caused it, probably was the mysterious influence induced by the presence of the whites. Usually, gin and rum . . . with small-pox, aid the civilizing rifle bullet.'<sup>647</sup> It is unlikely, in this case, that Graham met a Higginson, but he became a means by which his apparent fascination with this mysterious wasting affliction, and the baleful effects of civilisation could be communicated.

Graham was by no means the first or only writer to deny the idea of progress in native communities. There were many precedents, including Melville. In *Typee* (1846), Melville's most widely read novel up until the late 1930s, based partly on his own experiences, he regretted European penetration of the South Seas, particularly, like Graham, by those of a low moral character:

Alas for the poor savages when exposed to the influence of these polluting examples! Unsophisticated and confiding, they are easily led into every vice, and humanity weeps over the ruin thus remorselessly inflicted upon them by their European civilizers. Thrice happy are they who, inhabiting yet undiscovered island in the midst of the ocean, have never been brought into contaminating contact with the white man.<sup>648</sup>

Living in the South Seas, another far-travelled Scot, Robert Louis Stevenson, had also recognised, in the words of Professor Barry Menikoff 'the irrevocable advance of European whites throughout the Pacific, and the consequent decline of Polynesian culture.'649 It is becoming clear that Graham's 'themes' (anti-

<sup>644</sup> Conrad, letter to Graham, dated 7 January 1898. Watts, Joseph Conrad's Letters, p. 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>645</sup> Torpor.

<sup>646</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Higginson's Dream,' Saturday Review, 1 October 1898, pp. 431-2.

<sup>647</sup> La Modorra De Uganda. Cunninghame Graham, letter to Saturday Review, 3 January 1903, p. 15.

<sup>648</sup> Herman Melville, Typee (1846) (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1994), p. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>649</sup> Barry Menikoff, Robert Louis Stevenson and The Beach of Falesa (Edinburgh University Press, 1984), pp. 3-4. Linda Dryden argued that 'Stevenson should be regarded as an imperial sceptic whose fictions prepared the way for the bleak vision of empire that Conrad espoused.' Linda Dryden, 'Literary Affinities and the Postcolonial in Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad' in Scottish Literature and Postcolonial Literature: Comparative Texts and Critical

imperialist diatribes, anti-colonialist tales) were beginning to form a regular pattern, as if they were fads, which, as soon as the moment had passed, remained inert, which displays a dilettantism, rather than a consistent and fully developed political philosophy. However, they were part of an overarching theme that will permeate his later literary works, echoing the preoccupation of Morris, that of the destructive nature of progress, within expanding capitalist empires.

Graham's subsequent sketches of this period were mostly concerned with his adventures on board ships, and in Spain and in North Africa, and the individuality and often-futile bravery of others. In the words of Richard Haymaker, '[the] persons that inspired his pen were those embodying the heroic virtues, virtues whereby we become more than ourselves,'650 and very commonly, with death. Two other groups stand out however, his nostalgic reminiscences about Scotland (dealt with below), and his sketches of gaucho life, both of which, counter-intuitively, are positively linked. His gaucho sketches and tales contained a subtle, superimposed, second layer in Graham's preoccupation with the impact of civilisation on indigenous peoples. Many of his reminiscences of life in South America, especially among the lawless gauchos, were purely nostalgic, filled with images of rough-hewn men living in un-hewn environments, where luxuries and manners were few, and life was spontaneous, and not a little dangerous and brief. 651 Even though some of his characters were not indigenous in the true sense of the word, and may have been exploiters and abusers in their own right, they were indigenous then. They were indigenous in Graham's memories, a motley collection of pioneers and survivors, who, unconsciously, had created a new aesthetic. They had a sort of riotous harmony, one which contained a strong measure of mutuality, both of which Graham was only too aware would be destroyed by the selfinterest of modern society, and when the prairie was being tamed and divided. This ugliness and constriction was being created by greedy land-grabbers, and by what Augustine Friedl called 'lagging emulation,' peasant imitation of city fashions. 652 Graham was opposed to invasion, both physically, and culturally, the stealthy imposition of cultural imperialism, and was engaged, both politically, and in his reflective writings, not just in nostalgic reminiscence, but in what Michael Herzfeld called 'structural nostalgia, the longing for an age before the state, for the primordial and self-regulating birthright . . . that citizens can turn against the authority of the state itself, along with all the other similarly vulnerable symbols of official fixity.'653 In these words, which are redolent of Graham's attraction to anarchism, we

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Perspectives, ed. by Michael Gardiner and Graeme Macdonald (Edinburgh: Napier University, 2012), p. 88. It appears that Graham was an admirer of Stevenson, and in his will, left his collection of Stevenson's complete works to Gartmore Village Library. Scotsman, 21 April 1936, p. 11.

<sup>650</sup> Richard E. Haymaker, *Prince-Errant and Evocator of Horizons* (Printed Privately, 1967), p. 67. This is another particularly Nietzschean point of view.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>651</sup> This is particularly well realised in his sketches 'Un Pelado,' *Saturday Review*, 15 May 1897, pp. 535-7, which concerns the hanging of a Mexican, and 'La Pulperia,' *Saturday Review*, 22 October 1898, pp. 529-30, the evocation of a wild trading post.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>652</sup> Augustine Friedl, 'Lagging Emulation in Post-Peasant Society,' *American Anthropologist*, June 1965, pp. 569-86. We might assume that 'fashions' also include social attitudes and relationships.

<sup>653</sup> Michael Herzfeld, Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics and the Real Life of States, Societies, and Institutions (London, Routledge, 2016), p. 28.

can unite Graham's earlier political campaigns in Britain, particularly on land ownership, poverty, social inequality, and a desire for home rule or independence, for, Herzfeld asserted that 'Nostalgia for original perfection is common to much nationalist historiography, as it is to religious narrative. Both explain the compromising of purity . . . in terms of the corrosion of time.'654

The key issues in this 'structural nostalgia,' according to Herzfeld, were, what he referred to as (a) 'replicability in every succeeding generation,' of kindness, generosity, and hospitality, which each cohort reproduces a few years or decades later, and (b), the converse, 'damaged reciprocity: the virtue that has allegedly decayed always entails some method of mutuality, a mutuality that has been, perhaps irreversibly ruptured by the self interest of modern times . . . it has lost its pristine perfection and may be in danger of disappearing altogether.'655 This is perhaps an accurate description of Graham's deepest concerns (in both South America, and Scotland), reflected in his next meditation which appeared in the anthology A Vanishing Race where he opened with words which probably encapsulate a large part of his motivation, 'A melancholy interest attaches to anything about to go for ever. Especially so to a people who with their customs, superstitions, and mode of life, are doomed.'656 This concerned the disappearance of the gauchos, as he knew them, 'still savage enough to know by a footprint if the horse that passed an hour ago was mounted or running loose. A strange compound of Indian and Spaniard, of ferocity and childishness, a link between ourselves and the past.'657 It was these linkages that would increasingly dominate Graham's work, particularly when he turned his attention to Scotland.

This new urban, constricted, regulated, culture would replace the old gaucho way of life, but that, in its turn, had replaced an earlier entirely natural form of existence, 'As the gaucho replaced the Indian, the European colonist will replace him, one more type will have faded from the world, one more step will have been made to universal ugliness.'658 Now, it seemed, that a crisis point had been reached, for, what Graham had experienced and remembered (idealised, perhaps), despite being superimposed, had a unique quality of freedom and spontaneity of its own, which would vanish, never to return, a situation that he had already witnessed in Scotland. The crisis point was urbanisation and commerce, 'Commerce, that vivifying force, that bond of union between all the basest instincts of the basest of mankind, that touch of lower human nature which makes all the lowest natures of mankind akin.'659 Graham died during a visit to Argentina, and in an obituary published there, the writer surmised that 'Graham probably died of disillusionment when he saw the results of the new, improved, "civilised" country, with its railways, telegraph wires, tall buildings, etc. – a country despoiled, its innocence, and purity gone

<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>656</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Vanishing Race,' in Father Archangel of Scotland (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1896), p. 166.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid. pp. 166-7. My italics

<sup>659</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Calvary,' Justice, 1 May 1899, p. 5.

## IRELAND and SCOTLAND

From its inception in May 1886, The Scottish Home Rule Association,<sup>661</sup> had emphasised the comparative legislative neglect of Scotland. After an initial popularity, it went into terminal decline, particularly after the death of one of its high-profile activists, Professor John Stuart Blackie in 1895, and a resurgence of British 'national' sentiments, including the Conservative victory at the 'khaki election' of 1900, and renewed jingoism during the Second Boer War. The SHRA had ceased to function on the death of Charles Waddie, in 1912, the same year that The Scottish Unionist Association was formed from the Scottish Conservative and Liberal Unionist parties. However, between 1890 and 1914, measures proposing Scottish Home Rule appeared no fewer than thirteen times in the House of Commons and were accepted in principle on eight occasions, yet, none of the Bills succeeded in reaching the Committee stage. According to Bogdanor this reflected the low priority attached to Home Rule even among parliamentarians sympathetic to the cause, and the appearance of Home Rule Bills was often part of a 'ritual gesture' by Labour and Liberal M.P.s.<sup>662</sup>

Now out of parliament, and to an extent, mainstream politics, during this period, Graham wrote nothing about Ireland, except obliquely in an article entitled 'An Tighearna: A Memory of Parnell,'663 and nothing about the political situation in Scotland vis-à-vis Home Rule. Graham's approach to Scottish home rule had previously been entirely pragmatic,<sup>664</sup> a means by which legislation, particularly on labour matters and social change, could be more speedily implemented, and that Scottish and Irish Home Rule could be a means of undermining the ossified power structures he had hopelessly attacked as an M.P. It is also likely that he saw home rule as a means by which the Empire could be eroded from within, but this was only expressed in a letter to *The Saturday Review*.

Bulgaria, Roumania, Servia [sic], Norway, have all seceded from Greater powers within the memory of man. Finland and Hungary, Poland and Ireland, with Bohemia and Macedonia, all mortally detest their union with great oppressive States. Nothing but force keeps any one of them a portion of the great empires to which respectively they all belong . . . the whole trend of modern thought and economics is towards the evolution of small states, and every great unwieldy Power, our own included, is on the verge of a break-up and a return to its component

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>660</sup> Vizconde de Lascano Tegui, 'Don Cunninghame Graham,' *Nosotros*, 1 May 1936, p. 125. (Translated from Spanish). Faulkner West wrote that W. H. Hudson 'never wished to return, for he knew the illusions that memory [he] created in *Far Away And Long Ago* would go crashing like a house of cards.' Faulkner West, p. 50. This sentiment was undoubtedly taken by Faulkner West from Graham's own perception.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>661</sup> Of which Taylor claimed that Graham was 'a principle begetter.' See passim.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>662</sup> Vernon Bogdanor, Devolution in the United Kingdom (Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 120.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>663</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'An Tighearna: A Memory of Parnell,' *Dana* (Dublin), November 1904, pp. 193-9. Reprinted in *His People* (1906).

<sup>664</sup> They did not want a Parliament to sit and quote Burns or sing the praises of whisky or kilts.' *Glasgow Evening News*, 1 July 1892, p. 7.

Graham, however, began to express his nationalist sympathies through expressions of loss, and evocations of Scottish cultural identity, both negative, and positive.

Having experimented with, and no doubt gained confidence from his recording of South American experiences, it might have been assumed that Graham could have easily transferred these developing skills and his methodology to Scotland, but it would not be a simple transition. Although the heroic virtues of the pampas were quickly disappearing, the dramatic incidents from his past were still relatively fresh in Graham's mind, which he could record, to demonstrate the vibrancy of the untamed. Scotland by contrast was an old country in comparison, whose turbulent history and dramatic incidents were now in the distant past, which only survived in history books, folk memory and traditions. Graham mourned the passing of the spontaneous life he had known in South America, but the life he had known in Scotland, and was witnessing again, was of an entirely different nature, domesticated, sedentary, unheroic, and, conjuring up excitement would not be an option, unless it lay in the past. He was thus obliged to rely purely on nostalgia, seeking out tentative links and echoes, among the population and the landscape, and he may in fact have been motivated to add spice up to his early Scottish works by introducing South American memories and reflections.<sup>666</sup>

In his 1982 Introduction to his anthology of Graham's Scottish sketches, one of Graham's 'eager champions,' Professor John Walker, divided these new but infrequent Scottish writings into three periods. The first, around 1896-1897, Walker described as 'bitter portrayals of the defects of the Scottish character somewhat in the naturalistic manner of George Douglas Brown's *The House With the Green Shutters* (1901).'667 The next two decades up to 1916 (Graham's middle period), saw the bulk of his work. During this stage, having lost his early anger, Walker believed that Graham settled into a more realistic portrayal of places and people, of types of characters, of customs and events, and near the end of his writing career, voyages into the dream world of mythology and sentimentality.'668 Walker, however, had drawn the sketches from Graham's own anthologies published during Graham's lifetime, which Graham and his editor, Garnett, had selected and edited from articles, the large majority of which had previously appeared in literary magazines. In some cases, Graham's anthologies were published some time after the articles originally appeared, and Walker further distanced them historically by arranging them into themes, for example, 'Landscapes and Places,' 'The Scottish Character,' and 'The Scots Abroad,' etc., so

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>665</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Spain and Catalonia,' letter to Saturday Review, 30 June 1906, p. 819.

<sup>666</sup> Graham liked to draw analogies between the Scotland and foreign lands as disparate as Mexico, Morocco and Afghanistan. A reviewer wrote, 'In *Notes on the District of Menteith* he talks pleasantly about atavism and things traditional and pantheistic.' 'The Stewartry of Menteith,' *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 March 1931, p. 166.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>667</sup> The Scottish Sketches of R. B. Cunninghame Graham, ed. by John Walker (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982), p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>668</sup> Ibid. Watts, who also drew on Graham's work in anthologies (but did not group them thematically), believed that Graham's 'Middle Period' began in 1902, and ceased with the publication of *Brought Forward* in 1916. Watts, *Cunninghame Graham*, p. 82.

that their significant historical and political context was often lost.

Walker's first, and most distinctive group contained only three 'bitter portrayals,' 'A Survival' (1896), 'Salvagia' (1896), and 'Heather Jock' (1897). However, what Walker failed to discern, was that Graham was quite explicit in each, that his motivations were revolts against, and subversions of, the popular literary taste of the time, the writings of 'The Kailyard School.' Thomas Knowles described this as 'characterised by the sentimental and nostalgic treatment of parochial Scottish scenes, often centred on the church community, '669 which William Power assessed as appealing to, 'the amiable, respectable, slightly cosy church folk,'670 and in which Andrew Nash perceived as having 'a tendency to evade social and industrial issues.'671 The genre has had many critics over the years, and criticism ranging from George Douglas Brown's description of 'the sentimental slop of Barrie, and Crockett,'672 to George Blake's description of S. R. Crockett's works as 'sentimental sludge,'673 and to the Kailyard literature in general which 'presented the English and American reader with a picture of a country as a sort of collection of picturesque rural parishes peopled by "pawky" and/or "nippy" characters.'674 Harvie categorised the literature as social escapism, 675 and Gillian Shepherd assessed the Kailyard works as parables, perfectly suited the mood and taste of the times, 'it is not far-fetched to claim that they were in a sense dictated by their readers. They are the product not only of three individuals but also of an era.'676 That era was defined by Richard Cook as:

The end-of-the-century bourgeois anxieties about the excesses of urbanisation, over-population, and moral decay, as well as New Woman politics and liberal municipalization of social programmes. The consumption of Kailyard literature outside Scotland – In England and even more so in The United States and Canada – suggests that the popularity of these narratives responds to anxieties that extended beyond the realities of Scotland.<sup>677</sup>

Cook continued to describe a bourgeois nostalgia for stability and traditional class structures, 'parish rule, and the strict control of deviant citizenry in the face of increasing economic disparities between

<sup>669</sup> Thomas Knowles, Ideology, Art & Commerce: Aspects of Literary Sociology in the Late Victorian Scottish Kailyard (Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1983), p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>670</sup> William Power, Literature and Oatmeal, p. 161.

<sup>671</sup> Andrew Nash, Kailyard and Scottish Literature (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. 14.

<sup>672</sup> G. D. Brown, letter to Ernest Barker, 24 October 1901. Quoted in James Veitch's, *George Douglas Brown*, (London: H. Jenkins, 1952), p. 153. Davies wrote, that unlike Brown's novel, 'Graham's earlier attacks seem to have made little impression at the time.' Laurence Davies, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham: The Kailyard and After,' *Studies in Scottish Literature* XI No.3, January 1974, p. 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>673</sup> George Blake, Barrie and the Kailyard School (London: Arthur Barker, 1951), p. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>674</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>675</sup> Christopher Harvie, Scotland and Nationalism (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>676</sup> Gillian Shepherd, 'The Kailyard,' in *The History of Scottish Literature*, Volume 3., ed. by Douglas Gifford (Aberdeen University Press, 1988) p. 311.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>677</sup> Richard Cook, 'The Home-Ly Nation: Nineteenth Century Narratives of the Highland Myth of Merrie Old Scotland,' *The Nineteenth Century*, Winter 1999, p. 1054.

the discontented lower classes and the triumphant middle classes,'678 a summation, from what we have seen, of everything that Graham despised.

The first serious critic of the genre had been the novelist and literary critic Margaret Oliphant, who, in 1889, after praising the works of J. M Barrie, and his use of the Scots language, expressed her consternation at:

the host of little books which are finding their way to immense popularity in Scotland with very little claim upon the attention beyond that which this dialect brings . . . it is because we have so true a reverence for the language which Sir Walter Scott used, which was the mother tongue of Jeanie Deans and Edie Ochiltree, handled with the finest reticence, yet spontaneity, by our master in fiction, not because it was Scotch, but because it was the natural medium of speech to which many of his finest creations were born – that we regard the springing up of this literature which may justly be called provincial with dismay.<sup>679</sup>

These words preceded mounting criticism of those considered inferior writers to Barrie, particularly Ian MacLaren and S. R. Crockett some five years later in the national newspapers. For example, *The Glasgow Herald*'s criticism of MacLaren's *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* in 1894,<sup>680</sup> was followed by criticisms of Crockett's 'overpraised book' *The Stickit Minister* in 1895.<sup>681</sup> Between these two critiques, was the first use of the word 'kailyard' by J. H. Millar is his 1895 article 'The Literature of the Kailyard,' in W. E. Henley's radical *New Review*.<sup>682</sup> In this piece, Millar reserved some praise for Barrie with the proviso that, 'His writings are eagerly devoured in England by people who, on the most charitable hypothesis, may possibly understand one word in three of his dialogue.'<sup>683</sup> Millar, however, went on to savage the works of the MacLaren and Crockett, with a particular focus on Crockett's purple prose, 'this slough of knowing archness, of bottomless vulgarity.'<sup>684</sup> It was not, however, until later in 1896, that the word 'kailyard' became, and continued as a disparaging term for the genre.

It was in this year that Graham first started his own brief campaign against what he saw as a debasement of Scottish language and culture,<sup>685</sup> and there were three inextricably connected strands to Graham's objections. Initially, like those of Oliphant and Millar, it appeared that Graham's main objection was purely linguistic, as expressed in the Preface to his first anthology, *Father Archangel of Scotland* (1896), where he referred to 'that all sufficient cloak of *kailyard* Scotch spoken by no one under

<sup>678</sup> Ibid.

<sup>679</sup> Margaret Oliphant, 'The Window in Thrums,' Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, August 1889, p. 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>680</sup> Glasgow Herald, 13 October 1894, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>681</sup> Ibid., 26 September 1895, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>682</sup> J. H. Millar, 'The Literature of the Kailyard,' New Review, April 1895, p. 384.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid., p. 384.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>685</sup> MacDiarmid testified to Graham's extensive knowledge of Scottish literature. Centenary Study, p. 20

heaven, which of late has plagued us.'686 This was repeated in the first of Graham's 'bitter portrayals,' a polemical piece entitled 'A Survival,' also from 1896, half of which is taken up by an attack on the genre:

It is in vain to plead that all our greatest writers in the past have written in what they hoped was English. Hume, Smollett, Thomson, and Sir Walter Scott, with Dugald Stewart and Adam Smith, endeavour to make themselves intelligible in English. Be all that as it may, the fact remains that the modern Scottish writer to be popular in England, must write in a dialect his readers cannot understand.<sup>687</sup>

Graham's second objection was that he believed that the settings, characters, and language of this literature was having the unwitting effect of mocking and population through stereotyping, and making a travesty of an ancient kingdom in the eyes of others. Millar later described this as 'this holding up of their fellow-countrymen to the ridicule and contempt of all sane and judicious human beings,'688 and that, 'The "Kailyard" writers, after all, have touched a mere fringe of the population.'689 Graham continued:

The fact remains that the modern Scottish writer to be popular in England must write in dialect. If he must live (and write) he has, I presume, to adopt the ruling fashion and write of weavers, idiots, elders of churches, small farmer's wives . . . I verily believe there is not a henwife, weaver, idiot, elder, or ploughman . . . that would recognise himself in the dress in which the British public has been eager to welcome him. 690

In his essay 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham: The Kailyard and After,' Laurence Davies did not focus on Graham's disdain for the debasement of the language, but more on his Graham's second objection the stereotyping of the Scots, and the 'narrow definition of Scottishness' presented to English and other readers, which ignored Scotland's rapidly expanding industry and commerce,<sup>691</sup> a distortion of reality. However, he failed to follow through on why this would be so crucially important to Graham. Implicit in Graham's second objection, lay a third, one which was much more political. For a man who had spent the previous ten years fighting for the underdog and the industrial poor, Graham's political experiences had shown him a grimy, industrial, impoverished, violent side of Scotland, which cried out for reform, even revolution. Meanwhile, Kailyard literature was depicting a picturesque and harmonious continuity, disguising life's harsh realities, and ameliorating calls for radical change.<sup>692</sup> George Blake claimed that the Industrial Revolution had:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>686</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Preface' to Father Archangel of Scotland, p. ix. My italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>687</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Survival,' Ibid.

<sup>688</sup> J. H. Millar, A Literary History of Scotland (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901), p. 659.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>689</sup> Ibid., p. 680.

<sup>690</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Survival,' Ibid.

<sup>691</sup> Laurence Davies, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham: The Kailyard and After,' p. 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>692</sup> In Cooks words, 'the Kailyard nation imagines its own legitimacy by naturalizing the hierarchies that sustain it.' Cook, p. 1055.

knocked the old Scotland sideways, with a violence in both the process and the consequences unexampled. A really dramatic, often beastly, revolution was taking place. And what had the Scottish novelists to say about it? The answer is – nothing, or as nearly nothing as makes no matter. They might as well have been living in Illyria as in the agonized country of their birth.<sup>693</sup>

Harvie attempted to explain this, and the incongruity and the popularity of the Kailyard writings, in the context of a modern industrial Scotland:

A society beset by terrifying social problems was *threatened* by realism . . . exacerbated by the deep seated evils of poverty and overcrowding generated by Scotland's pell-mell industrialisation. To expose these would be revolutionary; it would also break the discipline of puritanism by mentioning the unmentionable . . . The Kirk enforced silence out of conviction, the middle class out of fear. The bogus community of the Kailyard was an alternative to the horror of the real thing.<sup>694</sup>

Any 'revolutionary' opportunity to subvert the genre, however, would have been attractive to Graham, who was no lover of 'the Kirk,' and so in his three 'bitter portrayals,' Graham attempted to inject a squalid reality into Scottish life, in a manner that Watts described as 'tactical.'695 However, any depiction of poverty, deprivation, and overcrowding in Scotland's industrial towns would have required vivid description, which, from his position as a landowner, and the perennial outsider, would have appeared crass and patronising. 696 Instead, Graham chose the more available option of de-constructing the cosy bucolic lifestyle in his own familiar 'kail-yard' of Menteith, by holding up his fellow-countrymen to potential ridicule and contempt, but in a radically different way to the Kailyard writers.

In 'A Survival,' the bulk of which was a diatribe, Graham attacked how Scotland was now perceived. He did this by undermining of the concept of the Protestant work ethic, and the perceived passivity and orderliness of Scottish rural life, by introducing the reader to a more ancient past which was still present, in the form of a semi-drunken Highland crofter '[who] cared but little for hard work,' imported by an idealistic local landlord, who, in a short space of time, had reduced his farm to squalor. There is an unmistakable joy in Graham's attempted sabotage, by what Watts and Davies referred to as 'his

<sup>694</sup> Harvie, p.99. Power described social condition of the time in industrial Scotland as 'beyond the scope of realism.' William Power, *Literature and Oatmeal*, p. 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>693</sup> Blake, pp. 8-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>695</sup> Watts, Cunninghame Graham, p. 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>696</sup> A reviewer wrote of him, 'Mr. Graham is only a diver into the slums, not a dweller in them.' *Manchester Guardian*, 11 November 1902, p. 4. However, Graham was well acquainted with the conditions in Glasgow's slums. During his Camlachie campaign in 1892, he conducted John Burns around the city streets between 11pm and 2am, entering several tenements. A tearful Burns is reported to have exclaimed, 'My God, does Scotland stand where it did?' *Glasgow Evening News*, 13 June 1892, p. 3.

nostalgia for the pre-civilised.'697 Finally, surveying the ramshackle, Graham, pursuing another common theme from his past, saw 'a picture of the old-world Scotland, which has almost disappeared. Sloth was not altogether lovely, but prating progress worse.'698 Graham obviously reveled in this echo from the past:

What I object to is the assumption that the "douce" and Presbyterian, "pawky" three-percentlings of the kailyard men has quite eclipsed the pre-Culloden type. I say it lingers in spite of Butcher Cumberland, in spite of School Boards, education, kodaks, bicycles, excursion trains, cheap knowledge, magazines and Liberal politics; it lingers if only to disprove Darwinism.<sup>699</sup>

All of Graham's Scottish 'portraits' would focus on those whom he regarded as 'pre-Culloden' types, from whichever strata of society, people whom he believed were a remnant of bygone days, who were principled, heroic, and who had not been seduced by what he considered bourgeois ideas.

Graham's most direct attack on Kailyard cosiness was, however, reserved for his next piece, published four months later, and entitled 'Salvagia' (1896),<sup>700</sup> where again he made his target clear:

Our reverend novelists,<sup>701</sup> 'tis true, have found out much about us, previously quite unexpected by ourselves; but then their works are not for home consumption, but sell in England and America, where, I understand, they touch the cords of the great National Heart, and loose the strings of the great National Pocket.<sup>702</sup>

After a splenetic opening paragraph ranting at the god of Providence, Graham took us to a country described in old Italian maps as "Salvagia," and the reader is lulled into thinking that they are again in an exotic location, but with, 'blear-eyed, knock-kneed young men,' and 'red-haired and freckled, cowhoughed maidens,' we quickly realise that we are back in Scotland, and in a village ("Gart-na-cloich" I think the name') which was his thinly disguised home of Gartmore, with its 'jawbox at the door and midden at the back.'703 It is a bucolic setting, but one that is a direct challenge to cosiness, and a direct assault on Kailyard mannered sentimentality:

Throughout Salvagia "Thank you" and "If you please" are unknown. In railway trains we spit upon the floor and wipe our boots upon the cushions, just to show our independence; in cars

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>697</sup> Watts and Davies, p. 267. An alternative definition of 'structural nostalgia.'

<sup>698</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Survival,' p. 544.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>699</sup> Ibid., p. 543. Darwinism in this case probably did not refer to the theory itself, but to the belief that human progress necessarily followed a logical, smooth, and consistent trajectory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>700</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Salvagia,' *Saturday Review*, 12 September 1896, p. 279.

<sup>701</sup> Undoubtedly a swipe at the Reverend John Watson, who wrote a strangulated Scots under the pseudonym of 'Ian MacLaren.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>702</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Salvagia,' p. 279. Here, the suggestion was that these writers were selling their birthright, and selling Scotland short in the eyes of foreigners, for personal enrichment.

<sup>703</sup> Literally, a 'kitchen-sink' setting.

and omnibuses take the best seats; driving the weaker to the wall like cattle in a pen. In the streets we push the women into the gutters.

Any piety and respectability are false, a hypocritical veneer, which many contemporary readers would have instantly recognised. This was a graceless, vulgar kail-yard, neither dystopian nor lapsarian, but a satirical attempt at exaggerated social realism, in a location that he was familiar with. It is a parody of a Kailyard setting, a stony place, full of stony people, sterile, unmerciful, a place of Holy Willies, where the residents showed little or no emotion, and any gentler qualities were well concealed.

Sardonic wit is at the centre of this piece, however, as the sketch turned into the 'sketch-tale,' something else emerged, a remarkable stoicism in the face of tragedy, as a village woman loses her four sons in a multiple drowning, but it echoes a more ancient past:

Passing the village, I heard the Coronach, which lingers to show us how our savage ancestors wailed for their dead, and to remind us that the step which separates us from the other animals is short. I asked a woman for whom the cry was raised. She answered, "For the four sons of Lilias Campbell." In the stupid way one asks a question in the face of any shock, I said, "What did she say or do when they were brought home dead?" "Say?" said the woman; "nothing; n'er a word. She just gaed oot and milked the kye."

This work was a very deliberate counter-blast against what Graham believed was emasculating and debasing Scotland into the picturesque, but there is something else at work. G. K. Chesterton had observed in Stevenson's Scottish stories, that Stevenson, like many Scots, was proud of the extremities of Scottish landscape, character, and history, which others might find harsh and cruel:

Indeed, stories of this kind are told by Stevenson with a deliberate darkening of the Scottish landscape and exultation in the ferocity of the Scottish creed. But it would be quite a mistake to miss in this a certain genuine national pride running through all the abnormal artistry; and a sense that the strength of the tribal tragedy testifies in a manner to the strength of the tribe.<sup>2705</sup>

There was more of a hint of this in Graham's first published anthology:

Why is it that the races of English and Scotch have never really amalgamated? So close, so like, both wizened by the same east wind tormented more or less by the same Sunday, and yet unlike. St. George for Merrie England. No one in his wildest fits of patriotism ever talked of Merrie Scotland.<sup>2706</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>704</sup> Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>705</sup> G. K. Chesterton, Robert Louis Stevenson (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1927), p. 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>706</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'De Heretico Comburendo,' in *Father Archangel of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1896), pp. 73-4.

This sketch was meant to shock, or at least discomfort the reader, to inject a note of harsh reality, to deliberately de-romanticise Scottish rural life. What effect this had on readers cannot be known, but the dark satire in 'Salvagia' failed to register with the few critics who commented upon it.

As we have witnessed, throughout his literary career, it seemed entirely natural for Graham to cross frontiers, not only alternating his individual sketches between South America, North Africa and Scotland, but also within the sketch itself. His *Notes on The District of Menteith* (1895), for example, contained an incongruous paragraph on a dead gaucho, while his *Introduction* to John Morrison Davidson's *Scotland For the Scots: Scotland Revisited* (1902)<sup>707</sup> was mostly set in Argentina. So it was with the third and final sketch-tale of this set, entitled 'Heather Jock' (1897), which was a flowing, self confident, humorous description of a local eccentric, set in both Scotland and Argentina,<sup>708</sup> which immediately displaces us from any cosy Scottish setting, and the type of work that Pritchett praised, 'it freshened [the 'fug'] for a while and let the foreign air in.' <sup>709</sup> With these words, we are perhaps looking at a unique part of Graham's Scottish heritage; there are occasions when we are transported from the claustrophobia of Scottish rural life as it was depicted, and the blinds are lifted to reveal a wider world.

'Heather Jock' was an extraordinary, lyrical, potage, confidently stirred together with black humour, but any consistent reader would be only too aware that although the subject matter and locations change, his themes, or rather his preoccupations, did not, and that his creative faculty was limited, as was his range and depth of philosophical insights, no matter how well expressed, or, that being underpinned by a political motive, were becoming repetitive. Also, the startling, dislocating juxtapositions, if they were a deliberate technique to maintain the interest of the reader, and not just another failure of the creative faculty, or the result of an undisciplined mind, were now beginning to pall. Cedric Watts said of this, 'He is an idiosyncratic writer, but idiosyncrasies become predictable.'<sup>710</sup> Garnett believed, however, that despite the discords and lack of inventiveness, there was a central unity of purpose and expression:

Everyday, commonplace, exceptional, or vanishing human figures, the Gaucho on the plains, mistress Campbell in Gart-na-Cloich, Heather Jock, or the Bristol skipper, all remote from each other, all part of the great ridiculous common Human Family! . . . that a volume of such Sketches lives through its very diversity, (& through the author's strong Central view) a really connected harmonious picture of life – the sketches fall into harmony & form an artistic whole. The wider the range, the more powerful artistically does the volume become – with each fresh atmosphere the reader yields more & more to the eyes that saw, to the spirit

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>707</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Introduction to John Morrison Davidson's *Scotland For the Scots: Scotland Revisited*, (Edinburgh: F. R. Henderson, 1902), pages unnumbered.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>708</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Heather Jock,' Saturday Review, 30 January 1897, pp. 110-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>709</sup> Pritchett, London Mercury, p. 339.

<sup>710</sup> Watts, Joseph Conrad's Letters, p. 30

that interpreted.<sup>711</sup>

Unity achieved through (broad) diversity? It was not only Graham's intention to demonstrate diversity, but to call on his diverse experiences to make broadly political points, which were highly critical of contemporary attitudes. Perhaps this diversity was also a deliberate attempt by Graham to distance himself from the parochialism that he was witnessing in other contemporary writers.

Like Millar, Graham believed that the Kailyard writers had reduced Scots to sad stereotypes, that their English neighbours were all too ready to accept, another offence against Graham's wish to see the Scot depicted as hero, 'the pre-Culloden type,' albeit that these heroes now seemed confined to the past, and the death of Heather Jock, even although he was a wild eccentric, was the loss of one more unique character. The old Scots had now been diminished, ruined by religion and industry, and in his Father Archangel of Scotland, he wrote of the hero:

He, as a Scotchman, naturally turns to what is most natural in him . . . Take notice, of course, that the modern five-per-cent hypocritical shop-keeping Scotchman was unknown, so that the Scotchmen of that day, mostly warriors or theologians, were as different from the modern Scots as they were from Laplanders.<sup>712</sup>

These sentiments found a more comprehensive expression forty years later in MacDiarmid's book, *Scottish Eccentrics*, which indeed sounded like a direct descendant of Graham's own sentiments and literary intentions. MacDiarmid noted in the Scots character, a 'lightning-like zig-zag of temper [which] exists among us as frequently as ever and is perhaps more insidious and wide-spread in its influence behind the almost impenetrable concealment that has been imposed upon it, or assumed.'713 Ultimately, however, the national spirit had been eroded, until Scotland's survival was in doubt. This MacDiarmid blamed on Scottish acquiescence and indifference; their own lack of historical awareness, Presbyterianism, English-controlled newspapers, and on the education system,<sup>714</sup> all of which figured largely in Graham's philosophy and writings. Again, as if echoing Graham's sentiments, Scott Lyall wrote of MacDiarmid:

MacDiarmid's revolt against what he regarded as the provincialisation of not merely Scottish literature, but Scotland as a cultural and political entity . . . it is indicative of Scottish inferiorisation within a Britain controlled by the metropolitan elites . . . the Kailyard becomes for MacDiarmid an attitude of mind, one entirely at odds with his view of the Scots

<sup>711</sup> Garnett, letter to Graham, 19-24 May 1898. Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>712</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Father Archangel of Scotland, p. 12

<sup>713</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, 'The Caledonian Antisyzygy' in Scottish Eccentrics (London: Routledge, 1936), p. 284.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>714</sup> Ibid., p. 287.

as fearless eccentrics.715

Herzfeld wrote that stereotypes 'serve the interest of power,'716 and the inward-looking, narrow, bucolic passivity of the Kailyard writers, in Graham's home-rule agenda, would have suited the unitary state's agenda very well. Thus, Graham had set about debunking the mythology that had grown around Scotland, by displaying a wide range of Scottish types who defied stereotyping, such as the semi-drunk Highlander, the population of 'Salvagia,' and 'Heather Jock,' by injecting a squalid reality, diversity, but also a stubborn independence into the Scottish character:

Our northern wit runs ghastly and dwells on funerals; our men at drinking parties, dead but quite the gentleman still sitting at the table; sometimes on people drunk in churchyards; but always alternating, according to the fancy of the humourist, from one to the other of staple subjects for jesting, whisky or death."

Neil Munro believed, however, that Graham had not taken his views on Scotland from real life, 'describing his own outdated stereotypes, the Celt who is always admirable, 'touched with old-time graces and courtesies,' and the Lowlander, 'a religious bigot, prone to ardent waters,' which Munro believed had not existed in Scotland for generations.<sup>718</sup> Davies described Graham's Scottish sketches as 'bitter and cynical'<sup>719</sup> and Walker pointed out that 'nationalists of the 1930s . . . have tended to forget that in the early stages of his career . . . Graham had treated with a vitriolic realism the defects of the Scottish character and the abuses and vices of the national way of life.'<sup>720</sup> Stephen Graham fell into line with this view, when he wrote:

For him, reality is Scotland; romance is South America. He is a bitter, sarcastic, even cynical, intellectual Scot, tearing and rending his own country when he thinks of it - but suddenly melted and sentimentalised by Spain. He writes of a decidedly real Scotland, but of an unreal, unearthly, romanticised, golden Spain. It is even touching, he cannot be critical of the Latin.<sup>721</sup>

These views, however, could be interpreted quite differently. Graham's 'reality' (of which 'Salvagia' was the best example) was an exaggerated reality of Scotland *now*, while his reality of South America and Spain, were, by necessity, *then*, and distance, in Graham's imagination, always lent enchantment. When in his future works, Scotland was remembered *then*, his tone was entirely different, and if it was not exactly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>715</sup> Scott Lyall, 'Hugh MacDiarmid's Impossible Community,' in *Community in Modern Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodop, 2016), p. 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>716</sup> Herzfeld, p. 181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>717</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Heather Jock,' p. 111.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>718</sup> Neil Munro, 'A Group of Writing Men,' *The On-Looker* (Edinburgh: The Porpoise Press, 1933), p. 305.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>719</sup> Davies, 'Graham and the Concept of Impressionism,' p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>720</sup> John Walker, 'Cunninghame Graham and the Critics,' Studies in Scottish Literature vol. 19, 1984, p. 113.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>721</sup> Stephen Graham, *The Death of Yesterday* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1930), pp. 39-40.

'golden,' it had a benign and misty, ethereal quality, appropriate to its climate. Also, the only sketches which demonstrated this 'vitriolic realism' are the three discussed above, written at the height of Kailyard popularity, and neither Munro, (Stephen) Graham, Walker nor Davies, have appreciated, that in these sketches, Graham was undoubtedly parodying, or exaggerating for political effect. Graham, however, would continue to pursue the anti-stereotype agenda in his subsequent Scottish sketches and portraits, albeit in a less overtly polemical way. However, according to MacDiarmid, Graham and his works were virtually unknown in Scotland.<sup>722</sup> This may be witnessed by the fact that no contemporary reviews suggested that they were attacks on the Kailyard genre. Much later, however, Andrew Nash described Graham as 'another important critic of the Kailyard, but only used 'A Survival' as his example.<sup>723</sup>

As Editor of Joseph Conrad's letters to Graham, Watts wrote:

after 1899 . . . he [Graham] showed little development as an essayist and short-story writer. The elegiac obituary study, the nostalgic traveller's anecdote, the remembered glimpse of life in a Spanish settlement, the brief character sketch of a soldier, a Spaniard, a Scot or a whore these subjects recur, and so does the mood of pawky wistfulness and almost glib melancholy.<sup>724</sup>

However, neither Watts nor Walker had taken into account the next distinctive group of Scottish sketches that occupied the years immediately after 1900 (what Walker described as Graham's 'middle period'), which were entirely different in subject and character, and which, in their own more subtle way, were an antidote to Kailyard writing. This may be because they were spread out over several years, and never anthologised chronologically.

It may be a coincidence that Graham's more overt and stark anti-Kailyard texts ceased well before the publication of George Douglas Brown's classic anti-Kailyard novel *The House With the Green Shutters* (1901),<sup>725</sup> but no coincidence that his subject matter and style altered in 1900, immediately after Gartmore House was sold to pay off Graham's debts,<sup>726</sup> as noted by Watts,<sup>727</sup> perhaps reflecting ancestral guilt, but more importantly, his own loss of 'mutuality' with the neighbourhood and his past.

<sup>722</sup> Selected Essays of Hugh MacDiarmid, ed. by Duncan Glen (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), p. 121.

<sup>723</sup> Nash, p. 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>724</sup> Watts, Joseph Conrad's Letters, p. 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>725</sup> Ian Campbell wrote that Brown 'created a kailyard novel to subvert its values,' which is exactly what Graham did in 'Salvagia,' and possibly for the same reason, that it was, 'the compliment the author of *The House with the Green Shutters* would have liked to pay his country.' Ian Campbell, *Kailyard: A New Assessment* (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1981), pp. 11-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>726</sup> Lowe, wrote of this period, 'In the turmoil of his impoverished condition, with the dark prospect ahead of having to sell part of his lands, his thoughts hovered lovingly over his ancestral environments.' David Lowe, 'The Old Scottish Labour Party,' *Glasgow Evening Times*, 18 February 1938, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>727</sup> Watts, Cunninghame Graham, p. 23.

Power described them as 'sketches [of] a twilight Scotland, ennobled by tragedy and defeat.'728 However, Neil Munro offered a different perspective. Munro doubted if, in his early years, Graham had much love for Scotland, 'But how unmistakably the soil of Scotland and his ancestry - noble, gallant; always distinguished; sometimes a little daft – had dragged him back to affection became apparent to some of us after 1906.'729 Obliquely, Munro was suggesting that it was the death of his wife that stimulated in Graham his patriotic feelings, that one day would blossom develop into a full-blown nationalism, adding enigmatically, 'On Inchmahome on the Lake of Menteith are always flowers . . .'730

This second of Walker's three groups of Scottish sketches were now exclusively set in Scotland (or more particularly, Menteith) *then*, and were entirely nostalgic descriptions of landscapes, which retained a tincture of the past, or portraits of old-world gentry ('pre-Culloden' types), types who were links to the past, but now, like Graham himself, had gone. <sup>731</sup> Watts noted in his biography of Graham that:

Graham throughout his life was profoundly troubled by the idea that just as an individual may be lost without trace in the jungle, so men of the past, leading worthy lives, may be lost to history by the force of oblivion, and so people of the present may be ignored and forgotten for want of a due memorialist. Thus Graham's socialism was linked, paradoxically, to a profound conservatism.<sup>732</sup>

Graham partially blamed the disappearance of this older world on the railway which was the sworn enemy of such people, and which is breaking the homogeneity of communities,<sup>733</sup> while, simultaneously increasing the homogeneity of the nation. As Robin Gilmour described it:

Railway travel made the metropolitan passenger aware of living in a land of regions, but it also accelerated the process by which those regions were in time standardized to a national norm.

. and more gradually in the loss or decline of regional customs and individuality.<sup>734</sup>

It had been the railway, perhaps more than any other single factor, that had transformed the Highlands from a remote region to one that was accessible to the tourist and the sportsman, where large estates were now viable retreats for the wealthy, and which could produce revenue for the entrepreneur, speeding up depopulation, and harking back to Graham's early campaigns against absentee landordism, and his campaigns for land reform.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>728</sup> Power, Literature and Oatmeal, p. 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>729</sup> Neil Munro, *The Brave Days: A Chronicle of the North* (Edinburgh: The Porpoise Press, 1931), p. 317.

<sup>730</sup> Ibid. Graham's wife Gabrielle's, and later Graham's own burial place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>731</sup> The pathos of Graham and his wife's departure from Gartmore in 1900 was captured in his sketch 'A Braw Day.' *English Review*, November 1911, pp. 609-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>732</sup> Watts, Cunninghame Graham, p. 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>733</sup> Ian Campbell noted the huge impact on the attitude of mind that the coming of the railway imposed on rural communities. Ian Campbell, *Kailyard: A New Assessment* (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 1981), p. 90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>734</sup> Robin Gilmour, 'Regional and Provincial in Victorian Literature' in *The Literature of Region and Nation*, ed. by R. P. Draper (1988), p. 52.

Graham's nostalgia for earlier times found expression in the first of these sketches entitled 'A Veteran' (1900), in which he wrote:

But fifty years ago in windswept, ragged Scottish country houses not a few remnants of prerailroad days still lingered on . . . Scotland alone could have produced, and perhaps only Scotch people could have appreciated such a survival of the youth of the nineteenth century.<sup>735</sup>

This was the very distinctive community, remembered from his childhood and young adulthood, that would be the theme of several of his works of his middle period, and it seems that his regrets and nostalgia persisted for some time. Five years after the leaving Gartmore, Graham returned to the area to unpack some cases of pictures that a friend had kept for him. Later, he told his editor, Edward Garnett, 'As they came out one by one, it seemed that they were alive, and that I was buried.' He continued:

In the Autumn, I went to the Lake of Menteith to get some things I left there, to look at the graves of many of my people in an island there. By the side of the lake, there lived two old sisters, ancient retainers of my family their people had been. The last had died not long ago. The cottage was shut and the garden deserted. I sat down on the doorstep in the evening, and smoked a cigarette. The tobacco was too bitter. I am trying to write about it, and cannot.<sup>736</sup>

Garnett, sensing that at last here was a subject that Graham could use to express these deeper emotions, replied:

Your words about Gartmore, and the island burying place give me all the feeling of the things inside you which you find it so impossible to express. *Write it*, my dear Amigo, in a journal as if you were communicating with yourself.

Garnett believed that if Graham would allow freer access to his emotions and cast them in a more fluid form, then something beautiful and tender would emerge:

You have a great deal in you which as yet you have not fully expressed . . . I want you to express yourself *fully* in literature . . . I want you to think over what there is in yourself and life which you have shrunk from writing. Perhaps you don't see my meaning – but there are always deeper selves within us than we *know*.<sup>737</sup>

Graham eventually wrote down his memoir as 'Ha Til Mi Tuliadh'<sup>738</sup> (I Will Return No More), a name

<sup>735</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Veteran,' The Saturday Review, 14 April 1900, p. 455.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>736</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Edward Garnett, 26 December 1905. University of Texas. Quoted in Helen Smith, *The Uncommon Reader*, p. 108.

<sup>737</sup> Edward Garnett, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 2 December 1905. Cunninghame Graham Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>738</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Ha Til Mi Tualiadh,' Speaker, No.13, 17 February 1906, pp. 473-5.

which carried the double meaning of his departure from Menteith, and, since it was reputedly the name of a song that Rob Roy MacGregor requested on his death-bed, a fact that Graham undoubtedly knew, carrying as it did, portents of death.<sup>739</sup> But Graham was aware that even in this piece, his most nostalgic for his ancestral home, he had failed to fully express his deeper emotions, and replied to Garnett I see I have not done what I feel, but that is impossible.'740 This reticence may have had several causes. Firstly, it might have been fear to express his deeper emotions, a constraint that is not uncommon among men, (and, it may be said, common among Scottish men). It may also have been due to his upbringing, where the display of emotion was frowned upon, or simply that he had no confidence in his abilities, as expressed in his Preface to The Ipané where he wrote, 'Few men know why they write, and most men are ashamed of what they do when once it stares them in the face in moulded type.'741 However, there may be a more tangible reason. Graham remained deeply political, and, as we have seen, certainly during this period he was still fighting campaigns, on and off the page, and no doubt adding new enemies to the old, or at least confirming the bad opinions of certain sections of society. This perhaps did not overly concern him, but any open display of the softer emotions, or a suggestion of weakness, would have displayed a chink in his armour, and undermined his reputation, and the myth that he had so carefully cultivated, of the adventurous, fearless and incorruptible paladin, the 'Prince-Errant, and Evoker of Horizons,' as his eulogist, Richard E. Haymaker, called him.<sup>742</sup>

This fear of emotional exposure eventually found voice in 1932 in his Preface to his anthology *Writ In Sand*, where he wrote 'It is the natural instinct in the majority of men to keep a secret garden in their souls, a something that they do not care to talk about, still less to set down, for other members of the herd to trample on.'<sup>743</sup> However, it was in his final anthology that we can perhaps find the clue to Graham's reserve, and his aversion to narrative 'invention;' that his imagination, which he considered 'the noblest faculty of the human mind,'<sup>744</sup> was so vivid that he deliberately avoided dwelling upon it, 'To anybody cursed with imagination, the gift that makes life sometimes unbearable, it is infinitely sad.'<sup>745</sup> In these two statements we can witness not only Graham's reticence in baring his soul in print, because he would be exposed, but also, that he found his emotions too distressing to dwell upon.

These more ruminative Scottish works, of Walker's 'middle period' were particularly plangent, atmospheric descriptions of landscape and low-country gentry, local lairds, old soldiers, and eccentric relatives, a bygone gentility, links with an heroic past of a distinctly Scottish pattern, the kind of people whom in various articles and letters he called 'old style;' people who occasionally still lingered from a

<sup>739</sup> Graham's wife, who, by this time was seriously ill, would die a few months later.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>740</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Edward Garnett, 9 January 1906. University of Texas. Quoted in Smith, p. 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>741</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Preface to *The Ipané* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), p. vi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>742</sup> Richard E. Haymaker, See passim.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>743</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Preface to Writ In Sand (London: Heinemann, 1932), p. xi.

<sup>744</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Thirteen Stories, (London: Duckworth, 1928), p. 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>745</sup> Cunninghame Graham, *Mirages* (London: Heinemann, 1936), p. 159. The reference is to the imagined fate of many horses in the First World War.

more gracious time. 746 They were descended from ancient local families, and they had rank in their rural communities, and although as landlords they might sit uneasily in Graham's ideal world, unlike the parvenu landowners, their lineage (like Graham's) was predicated on paternalism, not exclusivity in land. They represented the values of tradition, decency, and respect, a type rarely featured in contemporary Scottish writing. They were memories of a particular bygone age, which produced a particular kind of person, just as a unique era was rapidly disappearing in South America, which he grieved for, a past untouched by sordid commerce and industry, a chivalrous past, 'It seems to me, a world all void of grace must needs be cruel, for cruelty and grace go not together." Graham was not only writing a memoir, these were documentaries, recording the disappearance of a way of life, to make a point about change and loss, and this applied to all his work including his writings on South America and Spain, to his Jesuits and Apache, as much as to old world Scots:

The people, too, I treat of, for the most part have disappeared; being born unfit for progress, it has passed over them, and their place is occupied by worthy men who cheat to better purpose, and more scientifically. Therefore, I, writing as a man who has not only seen but lived with ghosts, may perhaps find pardon for this preface, for who would run in heavily and dance a hornpipe on the turf below which sleep the dead?<sup>748</sup>

Moving away from his local gentry, one particular sketch stands out among his Scottish portraits of the period, whereby Graham prematurely took the first tentative step into Walker's third category, which was 'the dream world of mythology.' 'Pollybaglan' (1903)<sup>749</sup> was a description of the landscape around a semi-derelict farm on Flanders Moss, and Graham's tenant who farmed it (in reality a Mr. Mitchell of Polybaglot):

Tall and shocked headed and freckled on the red patches of skin which a rough crop of beard and whiskers left exposed . . . The country people said that he was "afu' soople for his years". . . Withal a swimmer, an unusual thing amongst the older generation in Menteith.

There again follows another demonstration of Graham's ear for local dialect, as the farmer recounted diving into the River Forth:

Ye ken, man laird, whiles I just dive richt to the bottom of the linn, and set doon there; ye'd think it was the inside o' the Fairy Hill. Trooties ye ken, and saumon, and they awfu' pike, a' comin' round ye, and they bits of water weeds, waggin aboot like larich trees in the blast. I mind ae time I stoppit doon nigh aboot half an hour. Maybe no just sae much, ye ken, but time

<sup>746 &#</sup>x27;Laird Wallace' in Graham's 'Miss Christian Jean' is probably the best example of this. His People (London: Duckworth, 1906).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>747</sup> Cunninghame Graham, *Thirteen Stories*, p. ix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>748</sup> Ibid., p. x-xi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>749</sup> Speaker, 28 November 1903, pp. 214-5.

ages awfu' quick when ye're at the bottom o' a linn.

This rustic speech was by no means exaggerated, and Graham seemed very familiar and at ease with it. However, notwithstanding the farmer's exaggerated claim, Graham was pointing to other hidden depths. The first, a small point, was the farmer's address to his landlord, 'Ye ken, man laird,' which, although acknowledging Graham's status, smacks of intimacy, of a freedom to speak. If one removed the word 'laird' it would be two friends having a conversation, perhaps Graham's way of demonstrating an ancient democratic spirit among the locals (and himself) which he admired. The second was the very nature of the description, particularly the simile, exposing a sensitivity of perception, which we might not expect to be exchanged between two Scottish men of differing rank. The last was the most extraordinary (notwithstanding that the farmer is sitting at the bottom of a pool), wherein he described how time has become distended in this alien environment. It had become magical, otherworldly, the farmer comparing it to the experience of the Reverend Robert Kirk, inside Doon Hill (not two miles away). In this, Graham was of course suggesting another depth, the depth of folk belief, and if not actual belief, certainly a spiritual connection to landscape and tradition, a desire to believe, to commune. As Graham recorded elsewhere, 'Faith it is said consists of the belief in something that we know to be untrue.'750 In retrospect, the farmer was a mouthpiece for Graham's interest in the otherworldly, which was starting to find fuller expression. In 1933, he would write an Introduction to Kirk's The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies in which he described the spirit of the place, a place which could engender such feelings, 'Even to-day, in the half-light of autumn evenings, the vale takes on once more an air of an older world." Pollybaglan' was partially in praise of the uniqueness of the farmer, one of 'the real old types which Scott and Galt delighted in,'752 for although he was not the ideal agriculturalist, and although he was often in rent arrears:

He had laid up, so to speak, and quite unconsciously a real treasure for his laird, which, though moth may corrupt, no thief would waste his time by breaking through to steal, as it lies gathering dust on the top shelf of somebody's library.<sup>753</sup>

This reflection not only echoed Graham's cynicism towards own literary significance and longevity, discussed in such works as his Introduction to *A Brazilian Mystic* (1920), <sup>754</sup> it gave priority to cultural memory and tradition, but it was also a rare example among his sketches, where Graham's emotional thoughts were actually heard.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>750</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Introduction to *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (1933) (New York: Dover Books 2008), p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>751</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>752</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Notes on the District of Menteith (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1895), p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>753</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Polybaglan,' Speaker, 28 November 1903, p. 215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>754</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Introduction to A Brazilian Mystic: Being the Life and Miracles of Antonio Conselheiro, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1920) p. xii.

T. E. Lawrence described Graham's sketches as 'the rain-in-the-air-and-on-the-roof mournfulness of Scotch music in his time-past style . . . snapshots - the best verbal snapshots ever taken I believe,' 755 but they were nostalgic rather than sentimental. Many of the people of whom Graham wrote were of his own class, and were not the subject matter of Kailyard novels, and, if he had not emphasized their Scottishness, could just as easily fit into country houses in England. However, when added to the Heather Jocks, inebriated Highlanders, eccentric farmers, and village roughs, Graham had again broadened out the Scottish rural canvas into a recognisable, eclectic, heterogeneous community, and when they died, they left the world 'poorer for a type.' Frederick Watson described more succinctly than Graham himself, the old Scotland that Graham knew:

Old things [in the Highlands] have not decayed – they have collapsed – as when an axe fells the oak in its prime. There still clung, amongst the aged, ancient prejudices whose roots were buried deep in the past. Those silent hills were still haunted by the dim echo of forgotten feuds. These were the days when drovers still lay wrapped in their plaids before a smouldering peat fire, when men of eighty spoke of the tales their grandfathers had quavered about Rob Roy, when the railroad was still struggling amongst the Northern hills. All this is not merely picturesque – it is important. I merely wish to emphasise the strange old world into which he [Graham] was born in the year 1852.<sup>758</sup>

Like Watson, Edwin Muir believed that Scotland's identity was in extreme danger, as he wrote in his *Scottish Journey*, "Though Scotland has not been a nation for some time, it has possessed a distinctly marked style of life; and that is now falling to pieces, for there is no visible and effective power to hold it together." In 1904, the Scottish geologist, Sir Archibald Geikie, had noted 'a gradual decline in national peculiarities," and in 1938, the Scottish P.E.N. met to discuss what was seen as a crisis in national identity. This concern had a long pedigree, and in Walter Scott's words, in his Introduction to *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 'the peculiar features of whose manners and character are daily melting and dissolving into those of her sister and ally." Muir believed that Scott had been part of a process, whereby 'A people who lose their nationality create a legend to take its place," and we can perhaps begin to see that Graham's nationalism, initially through his writings, was developing from the purely

<sup>755</sup> The Selected Letters of T. E. Lawrence, ed. by David Garnett, (World Books, 1941), p. 343.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>756</sup> In dealing with Scotland and things Scotch, one should avoid sentiment, it destroyed those awful McCrocketts, and Larens, and is a snare to the pious chanting, hypocritical, hard, but at the same time sentimental, and whisky loving Scotchman. I am a Scotchman.' Letter from Graham to Edward Garnett, 25 May 1898. Academic Centre Library, University of Texas. Quoted by Davies in 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham: The Kailyard and After,' p. 157-8. <sup>757</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Veteran,' p. 456.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>758</sup> Frederick Watson, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham,' Bookman, March, 1916, pp. 174-6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>759</sup> Edwin Muir, *Scottish Journey* (1935) (London: Flamingo, 1985), p. 25. Muir envisaged the SNP as a vehicle for cultural salvation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>760</sup> Archibald Geikie (Sir), Scottish Reminiscences (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Son, 1904), p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>761</sup> 'Is There a Twilight of the Scots?: PEN Discussion at Stirling,' Scotsman, 17 January, 1938, p. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>762</sup> Walter Scott, The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-3) (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1873), p. cxxxviii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>763</sup> Edwin Muir, Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of The Scottish Writer (New York: Speller, 1938), pp. 160-1.

practical, a means by which urgent legislation could be implemented, to a more outspoken emotional patriotism, an attempt to simultaneously return to, and proceed towards, a more heroic existence, a means by which Scotland's distinctiveness could be reclaimed and developed. Graham had tried to evoke this old world from time to time, to re-conjure that heroic, purer existence, but only in his specific location - The solitude and the wild night seemed to have created the old world, long lost, and changed, but still remembered in that district just where the Highlands and Lowlands meet. This was the real but vanished old world that Graham regretted, and wished to recapture, for himself and his readers.

Graham's Scottish portraits were typically set in grand, musty houses, set amongst enclosed, shadowy landscapes. The contrast in atmosphere between his South American, and his Scottish settings, could hardly be greater; there was little 'sunshine' in the latter,<sup>766</sup> and many critics and commentators have remarked on this contrast:

He seems to belong by right to the red and yellow lands, where the sun marches in burning panoply all day through the brilliant expanse of heaven. But at the back of all this dazzle and heat, rise the wet hills and moorlands which are his home, enshrouded in gleaming mist, or purified with snow. Between the fragrant wantonness of sunny lands and the frigid self-concealment of the North, his sympathies are always divided.<sup>767</sup>

But the chiaroscuro was deceptive. Like his sketches of gaucho life, structural nostalgia was strongly in play, and to paraphrase Herzfeld's definitions, there was a longing for the primordial and self-regulating birthright, to offset the compromising of purity in terms of the corrosion of time and the loss of pristine perfection (particularly cultural continuity and inheritance), which was in danger of disappearing altogether, irreversibly ruptured by the self-interest and material progress of modern times. In addition, Graham's gaucho and his Scottish portraits and sketches have something else in common, they depicted 'hybrid' cultures and locations that were never really pure in any sense. His gauchos were descendants of European incomers who had bred with and displaced the native population, and had become a distinctive group in their own right, and his 'old style' Scots were the descendants or replacements of the even more traditional Lowland Jacobite families who had once dominated this part of Scotland.<sup>768</sup>

In the same way, Menteith had been deforested, farmed and modified by past generations. Graham was only giving us 'a verbal snapshot' of a continuum, for descendants of these semi-aristocrats still

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>764</sup> 'the Southrons, who, impotent to conquer us in war, yet have filched from us our national character by the soft arts of peace.' Cunninghame Graham, 'The Beggar Earl,' *English Review*, July 1913. pp. 569-70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>765</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Fidelity,' Nation No.18, 27 November 1915, p. 323.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>766</sup> True, in the East there generally is sun, and every evil with the sun is less.' Cunninghame Graham, 'Heather Jock,' *Saturday Review*, 30 January 1897, p. 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>767</sup> Nation, 30 March 1912, p. 1065.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>768</sup> 'Born when the echoes of the '45 were ringing (though faintly) through the land.' Cunninghame Graham, 'A Veteran,' Saturday Review, 14 April 1900, p. 455.

occupy country houses in the area today, just as working-class families have continued their family tradition of poverty, rough types still wipe their boots on the cushions, and mists still rise from the Forth, but their onward continuation seemed to be of no interest to him.

Menteith is itself a 'hybrid' land, poised between the Highlands and the Lowlands, with strong resonances of both, but, like many hybrids, it had, and still has, its own, distinctive and separate character, 769 particularly the preponderance of mist, which Graham frequently referred to, and in which his imagination was allowed freer rein. Another noticeable feature of these post-1900 Scottish sketches was that Graham had stopped interrupting his narratives by whisking the reader off to foreign climes and destroying the mood, and mood now became the central feature of all of his Scottish sketches, particularly, when he increasingly turned to environment and landscape. Again, the hybrid nature of the area came into play, its frontier location, where, not far away, there were lonely lochans, and ruined churches, which allowed him to ponder on a deeper past, a past ignored by the Kailyard writers, a past where the Highlands and Lowlands were not so distinct, where 'broken' clansmen and caterans once made incursions, and drovers descended with their cattle on their way to market. Even the present landscape, like the 'old style' people assumed a mantle of the past, of loss, as in this quotation:

Such was the place, one of the last examples of the old Scotland which has sunk below the waves of Time. Perhaps not an example to be followed, but yet to be observed, remembered, even regretted in the great drabness which overspreads the world.<sup>770</sup>

These, indeed, were words that encapsulated Graham's documentary and political motivations. Graham's Menteith was empty, lonely, haunted, or at least these were the places he sought out and recorded. They also take us back to the beginning of his political career where he attacked the monopoly in land ownership and, the extinction of 'our ancient class of sturdy yeomen,' and in the Highlands, the population was 'constrained to live on the salvage of the land.'771

In such rural locations, however, was Graham in danger of falling into what Campbell called 'kailyard traps'? <sup>772</sup> This can be examined through Campbell's 'sketchy definitions' of what constituted the themes of Kailyard writing. Certainly, by his first example, Graham's sketches conformed to the 'Rural' setting, what Campbell called 'limited environment.' However, Kailyard locations might better be described as 'parochial' in the true sense of the word. In contrast, the only parochial setting for Graham's sketches was in 'Salvagia,' which was a deliberate parody on the Kailyard genre. Also, 'Transport is a prominent

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>769</sup> Perhaps the fact that the house stood just at the point where Lowlands end and the great jumble of the Highland hills begins, and that the people were compounded of both simples, Saxon and Celtic mixed in equal parts, gave them all the place an interest such as clings to borderlands the whole world over, for even forty years ago one talked of "up above the pass" as of a land distinct from where we lived.' Cunninghame Graham, 'Miss Christian Jean,' *His People*, (London: Duckworth 1906), p. 217.

<sup>770</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Caisteal-Na-Sithan,' (Castle of the Elves), Saturday Review, 15 April 1911, p. 455.

<sup>771</sup> Airdrie Advertiser, 15 August 1885, p. 6.

<sup>772</sup> Campbell, Kailyard, p. 12.

feature of kailyard – prominent, that is, by its absence,' but, as we have seen, Graham was very aware that the railway was in part responsible for the erosion of his old world. Things changed, however, with Campbell's inclusion of 'Class,' wherein the Kailyard characters 'have a narrow range of social experience, belonging to the comfortable working class.' Graham's portraits, on the other hand, oscillated between people further up the social scale, and those nearer the bottom, such as his description of mourners in his sombre sketch of a farming funeral, 'At Dalmary' (1909), and particularly, his affectionate portrait of his farm-servant in 'A Retainer' (1910).<sup>773</sup> As noted previously, Graham seemed at home with the lowly, unpretentious working classes, and the unpretentious upper classes, with no room in any of his works for the middle class, or the bourgeoisie, the very people at whom Kailyard literature was aimed, and who were lapping it up indiscriminately.

Things become more complex when we have to deal with 'Change,' which Campbell believed could be tolerated in the Kailyard world, but within certain constraints; for instance, self-advancement, or 'getting on.' However, these were individual efforts towards advancement; in rural environments; there was no place for mass action to change the fabric of society. Graham, who had fought for improved wages and social conditions, was all for the advancement of the working classes, but, as we have seen, in such articles as 'China Dogs,' he deprecated the potential for social climbing and bourgeoisie attitudes, which 'getting on' would most likely beget. As for women, Campbell believed that Kailyard writers commonly offered less, 'The distant cities provided domestic service – but they threatened Ruin. Far better the unchanging certainties of the Kailyard.'774 This stood in stark contrast to Graham's views, particularly expressed in his article 'The Real Equality of the Sexes,'775 and his support for women's suffrage and equal rights.

Campbell's next category was 'Christian values,' which played an important part in the values of the Kailyard. Despite Graham's interest 'in religious enterprises pursued under disadvantageous circumstances,' 776 (which demonstrated a curiosity, as much as a sympathy), and although describing himself early in his political career as 'a Protestant,'777 Graham was an atheist<sup>778</sup> who despised Calvinism, the central pillar of Kailyard writing, a creed that he blamed for the deformation of Scottish life.<sup>779</sup> In fact, his attack on Christianity in 'Salvagia,' looked like a deliberate attempt to distance himself from this aspect of the Kailyard. Also, implicit in the Kailyard vision of 'Christian values' was the bourgeois idea of respectability, which Graham also despised.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>773</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Retainer,' English Review, July 1910, pp. 625-30.

<sup>774</sup> Campbell, Kailyard, p. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>775</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The Real Equality of the Sexes,' New Age, July 1908, p. 207.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>776</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Father Archangel of Scotland (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1896), p. 3.

<sup>777</sup> The Coatbridge Express, 7 July 1886, p. 4.

<sup>778</sup> Tschiffely, p. 435.

<sup>779</sup> Faulkner West, p. 125.

The major and over-arching argument against Graham falling into 'kailyard traps,' however, was what Campbell described as 'the passive instead of active' nature of the Kailyard's highly selective depiction of a Scottishness, which ignored the reality of poverty, slums, drunkenness, and sweatshops, portraying instead a Scotland that was self-satisfied, complacent, and backward-looking, 'A gelling of attitude and myth, a freezing of the possibilities of change and redefinition.'780 Theirs was a Scotland in aspic, which ignored a deeper past, and a potential future. This of course, was a denial of Graham's idealised vision of Scotland's heroic, ancient past, and a future that he hoped could reclaim it, and by which it could redefine itself in a better world. William Power, described Graham's works as containing a 'vein of cynical humanism . . . as different as possible from the cosily insular sentiments of the Kailyarders.'781

Graham's means of communicating diversification also found expression furth of Scotland, a diaspora of wandering Scots found in the colonies,<sup>782</sup> crewing ships,<sup>783</sup> or running factories in the Sahara,<sup>784</sup> but, his real fascination, at home or abroad, was where he found the remnants of old Scotland, often surviving, and harking back to the past, because they had been transplanted elsewhere, away from the despoliation of progress. The first such example was set in a monastery in Spain, where students (descendants of Scottish religious refugees) were training under the rector:

Only in *Redgauntlet* and in books of Jacobites does such a priest exist.<sup>785</sup> I fancy the rector of the Scottish Castilian College is the last surviving type. Scotissimus Scotorum, a Scot of Scots. Over the Scottish College hangs an air of Scotland, but not of Scotland of to-day, but of that older Scotland that was poor and furnished soldiers and adventurers to the rest of Europe; that Scotland that vanished after Culloden, and has been replaced by factories and mines, progress and money, and an air of commonplace, exceeding all the world.<sup>786</sup>

However, the most border-crossing tale of hybrid cultures was entitled 'San Andrés'<sup>787</sup> which described Argentinian families whose ancestors had left Scotland after the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion, and who, after five generations, still maintained the traditions of their erstwhile homeland, a knowledge of English and a little Gaelic, and, of course, inevitably, 'a belief in the fairies and the second sight still lingered in men's minds, with many a superstition more consonant with mountains and with mists, than the keen atmosphere and the material life of the wild southern plains.' Although, now physically indistinguishable from their fellows, they had kept apart, joined by a common heritage:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>780</sup> Campbell, *Kailyard*, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>781</sup> Power, Literature And Oatmeal, p. 169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>782</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Pakeha,' Westminster Gazette, 31 January 1899, pp. 1-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>783</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'S. S. Atlas,' Saturday Review, 15 May 1899, pp. 652-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>784</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'At Torfaieh,' Saturday Review, 24 December 1898, pp. 840-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>785</sup> The 'pre-Culloden' type.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>786</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'De Heretico Comburendo,' p. 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>787</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'San Andrés,' English Review, July 1911, pp. 602-9.

The patriarchal manners which their forefathers had brought from the Highlands, joined to the curious old-fashioned customs common in those day in Buenos Aires [province], had formed a race apart, in which Latin materialism strove with Celtic fervor, and neither gained the day.

But tragedy and sudden death are never far away in Graham's sketches, and one of the group, 'Anacleto' (an amalgam of the Scot and Argentine), returned from a cattle drive to find that his wife had died. This involved considerable grief and mourning, but the group retained a belief inherited from their forebears that mourning disturbed the sleep of the dead, and he muttered to himself, "'No, it would be cowardly to break her rest, Don Alejandro says so; he had it from his father, who spoke Gaelico," he slowly lit a cigarette, and in the last rays of light, watched the smoke curl up in the air, blue and impalpable.'788 Here was a beautiful rendering of Graham's abiding interest in the past intruding into the present through the transmission of values and tradition so that the past is kept alive.

Increasingly, peculiar local folk tales and superstitions would enter Graham's mixture, fitting into Walker's third category, particularly, during this later period, in a piece entitled 'The Beggar Earl' (1913),<sup>789</sup> along the infrequent Highland locations, and the use of the Gaelic language.<sup>790</sup> Walker made reference to 'the distant mists of Scotland'<sup>791</sup> in Graham's later works, and Tom Paulin referred to 'some fey Celtic mysticism, and sloppy romanticism,<sup>792</sup> but these are the only observations from any reviewer or biographer that somehow there is a connection between Graham's work and what might be construed as the Celtic Revival. Whether Graham's recurring mists, places them in that canon is difficult to say; certainly, any definition of 'Celtic' in the context of Graham, and the setting of Menteith itself, throws up difficulties, unless 'Celtic' is interpreted and understood in the broadest sense. Graham was not a Celt, and historically (or as historically as is practical), Menteith, although once Gaelic-speaking, was now a frontier territory, a bastion against the Celt, and Graham's local Colonel in 'A Veteran' was no doubt typical among his neighbours in his hatred for 'a Free Churchman, a Tory, or a Highlander.'<sup>793</sup>

There seems to be doubt as to Scotland's significance in the so-called 'Celtic Revival' (1860-1930), and also, whether none but a very few Scots at that time saw Scotland or themselves as a 'Celtic' at all. Ernest Renan's work, *Poetry of The Celtic Races*,<sup>794</sup> first published in English in 1896, hardly mentioned Scotland's Celtic inheritance, while Jackson saw it largely as an Irish phenomenon, and traces the start of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>788</sup> Ibid., p. 609.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>789</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The Beggar Earl,' English Review, July 1913, pp. 569-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>790</sup> Particularly in Graham's final Scottish sketch, a misty-eyed, nostalgic piece entitled: 'Euphrasia,' *Saturday Review*, 25 September 1926, p. 331.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>791</sup> Walker, *The Scottish Sketches*, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>792</sup> Tom Paulin, 'Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography,' in New Statesman, 24 August 1979, p. 274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>793</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'A Veteran,' p. 455.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>794</sup> Ernest Renan, *Poetry of The Celtic Races* (London: Walter Scott Publishing, 1896).

the movement to the publication of W. B. Yeats' first book of poems in Dublin in 1885.<sup>795</sup> Neil Munro wrote that the Scottish Celtic Renaissance was entirely Patrick Geddes's invention, originating in his Outlook Tower in Edinburgh, and ending there.<sup>796</sup> There were, however, many individual attempts to foster Celtic culture and to link Scotland to a Celtic heritage, pursued by historians, folklorists, musicians, and artists. This seems to have stemmed from a renewed interest in Highland culture, encouraged by the crofters bringing their lives to the public consciousness, and stimulated by a flurry of Highland and Gaelic works from the period.

Scotland lagged behind Ireland in its 'Celtic-consciousness,' and behind other parts of Europe at this time, in creating of cultural and patriotic societies, but by the middle of the 19th century, this was changing. Later, among certain groups of Scots, these began to develop a political hue 'as Scots began to realise that Scottish romanticism was not enough,"797 and anger became focused around the neglect of Scottish legislation in parliament, and absentee landordism, particularly English owners of Scottish estates. The earliest example of this re-awakened political spirit, however, took place in an unlikely setting. H. J. Hanham wrote that the first of a growing number of patriotic societies was established in London, 798 and it was there that links developed between exiled Scots and their Irish cousins. The leading light in this development was the Gaelic cultural activist, Galloway-born William Gilles (1865-1932), Vice President of the London Gaelic Choir and Secretary of The London Gaelic Society. He became a fluent Gaelic speaker, and in 1908 he helped found Cumann nan Labannach Lunnain, The Scots National League, London. In 1909, the League adopted new aims, including the development of "Scottish nationality along modern progressive lines, the restoration of Gaelic as the national language of Scotland, and the cultivation of friendship with other Celtic nations.' For the first time, a political clause was included, demanding Home Rule for Scotland on the same basis as other self-governing colonies. By 1910, it was demanding complete separation, with an emphasis on the study of Literature, Music and History of the Scottish nation.<sup>799</sup> Here then, we can witness, albeit on a small scale, and in different guises, diverse interests converging, the land issues that Graham had pursued early in his political career, and a growing cultural consciousness, becoming politicised.<sup>800</sup> This convergence had come from a different direction from the route that Graham had taken, which had been through direct political action, and constitutional means, and which had come to nothing, but now, a more 'cultural' nationalism was arising, gathering new adherents, and beginning to develop a political apparatus, meeting Graham half way.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>795</sup> Holbrook Jackson, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham: The Man and His Work,' *To-day* VII, March 1920, p. 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>796</sup> Munro, The Brave Days, p. 297.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>797</sup> H. J. Hanham, Scottish Nationalism, (London, Faber & Faber, 1969), p. 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>798</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>799</sup> Richard J. Finlay, 'William Gilles,' The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>800</sup> At its foundation in 1920, Gilles became Vice-President of the London Branch of the Scottish National League, the largest branch of the party, with Ruariadh Erskine of Mar (another London Branch member) as its President.

One of the leading advocates of the new Aryan, Indo-European Celticism was Professor John Stuart Blackie, who, as discussed earlier, had been a stalwart of the SHRA, and, according to Kidd:

Blackie provided energetic leadership for Scottish nationalism and other related causes. He was the first chairman of Scottish Home Rule Association, and was also the vice-president of the Highland Land Law Reform Association and a keen critic of administrative centralisation, which he regarded as 'obliterating local types and establishing a uniform monotony of superficial polish.'801

These involvements, and of course, the latter sentiment, coincided with Graham's interests. However, there is no substantiated link between Graham and Blackie, other than they had occasionally met at early SHRA meetings (see passim), and that Graham had no doubt read the printed versions of Blackie's inaugural address to the Gaelic Society, 'Gaelic Societies, Highland Depopulation, and Land Law Reform' of 1880, and his 'The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws' of 1885 which may have inspired Graham's speeches during his first election campaign.

At roughly the same time as Graham was embarking on his new literary career, his near contemporary, the polymath, Patrick Geddes (1855-1905) produced four editions of his review – *The Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal* (1895-6), 802 aided by a small coterie of 'the Geddes entourage,'803 young writers and artists which included the Kailyard author S. R. Crockett, the artist John Duncan (1866-1945), and the work of 'the mysterious personality' Fiona MacLeod (William Sharp, 1850-1905), who co-edited the works with Geddes. Jackson saw Macleod's work as significantly Celtic, however, it carried the proviso, 'The work of 'Fiona MacLeod' possessed all the more pronounced characteristics of Celtic art, with its insistence on mystical aloofness so deliberate as to suggest *a determination to be Celtic at all costs*,'804 which might be said of much of the whole movement. Geddes's four seasonal volumes of *The Evergreen* were poetically, and artistically inspired, 'Ossianic,' and replete with 'mystical aloofness,' and an otherworldly air; what Yeats referred to elsewhere as 'the very innermost voice of Celtic sadness, and that Celtic longing *for infinite things the world has never seen*.'805 Geddes had deliberately set out to carry on the spirit of Allan Ramsay's 'return to local and national tradition and living nature,<sup>806</sup> and despite mostly being taken up with nature's moods, this volumes also included Celto-Christianity, paganism, and loss, longing, and death.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>801</sup> Colin Kidd, Teutonist 'Ethnology and Scottish National Inhibition, 1780-1880,' *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. LXXIV, No.197, April, 1995, p. 64, p. 65.

p.65. Hanham wrote that at this time, only Blackie could have been a creator of a national literature, which had been a weakness in the mid century nationalist campaigns, 'But he preferred to devote himself to the Celtic revival rather than to the lowlands.' Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*, pp. 178-9.

<sup>802</sup> Geddes also published a reprint of James Macpherson's The Poems of Ossian in 1896.

<sup>803</sup> Philip Boardman, The Worlds of Patrick Geddes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 150.

<sup>804</sup> Jackson, p. 150. My italics.

<sup>805</sup> W. B. Yeats, 'A Visionary,' The Celtic Twilight: Faerie and Folklore (London: Prism Press, 1990), p. 9. My italics.

<sup>806</sup> Patrick Geddes, Evergreen: A Northern Seasonal, Vol.2, 1895, p. 2.

The Evergreen seemed decidedly non-political, but in his 'Spring' edition of 1895, there was an extraordinary article by Geddes, entitled 'The Scots Renascence,' which were his impressions of the funeral of Blackie. It began with the common over-egged allusions and imagery found throughout the publications:

For here were interpulsating all the wildness with all the majesty of Celtic sorrow, the eerie song of northern winds and the roar of western tides. The sigh and wail of women, the pride and lament of chiefs, gathered of old into bardic monologue and chorus, were all in this weirdest, wildest, most elemental music. So again pealed forth the chant of Ossian over an unreturning hero amid the undying moan of Merlin for a passing world.

Suddenly, however, something else was revealed, among the hitherto languid, and unremitting self-indulgent fatalism:

What then – save 'Finis Scotiae!' – can remain for us to say? 'Finis Scotiae' indeed: yet in what generation has not this been said? What land, alas! has had oftener cause to say it? For whoso has read her Sagas may well ask if Scotland, rather than even her sister-and mother-isle, be not that 'most distressful country that every yet was seen.' And yet, though age pass away at evening and manhood be reft from us at noon, new dawn ever comes, and with it new youth. To the baser spirits the Saga of their fathers is nought – is as if it never was; to the narrower it is all, [?] but ended; yet to others it is much, and in no wise closed!<sup>807</sup>

Unlike Blackie and other supporters of the SHRA, Geddes did not go on to suggest a direct political solution to Scotland's ills, Scotland was beset by an oppressive historical sense, and the bovine indifference of many of her people, but against enormous odds, there was hope. This piece was, then, a bridge between the fatalism of the Celticists, and those, who would transform these shared sentiments into various movements for political change and cultural renewal.

A select few of Graham's more reflective Scottish sketches allude to a similar 'Celtic' ambience, but his dream worlds were 'lost,' not 'other.' Generally, Graham's work was too detailed, too specific, too personal, and too likely to bring his readers back down to earth, as he undercut his own imaginings. Jackson wrote that Graham's personality could not be separated from his art; he was 'a raconteur, very much a realist.' <sup>808</sup> A good example of this was a piece that Graham wrote for Erskine of Marr's *Guth na Bliadhna* (Voice of the Year), which Erskine described as 'a Catholic bilingual periodical.' <sup>809</sup> For the

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<sup>807</sup> Patrick Geddes, 'A Scottish Renascence,' The Evergreen (Printed privately, Spring 1895), p. 153.

<sup>808</sup> Jackson, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>809</sup> Ruaraidh Erskine of Marr, 'Cas No Bas,' *Guth na Bliadhna*, Autumn, 1905, p. 300. Erskine of Marr (1869-1960) was, like Graham, born in England, from an upper-class background, who became an ardent Scottish (and Gaelic) nationalist, who had, like Graham, been inspired by the cause of Irish independence. Graham, however, seems not to have been part of Erskine's circle, and there is no record of any correspondence between them, nor any references to Erskine by Graham, nor in any of Graham's biographies.

edition of May 1905, a sketch by Graham was published, entitled 'Tobar Na Reil' (The Well of the Star),<sup>810</sup> which had magical properties, and the work displayed a romantic wistfulness that could be described in some ways as 'Celtic.' Interestingly, it is set only a mile or so north of what is technically Menteith, in a mountainous 'Highland' area,<sup>811</sup> reminding us just how close the lands of 'Celtic' Scotland lay.<sup>812</sup> It featured a lyrical description of a small spring and its environs, where Graham related a fanciful legend, but then he undercut it:

No one remembers the lone well among the heath or cares for it, but to smile scornfully at the old simple legend of the past. In all the district where it lies, few know its bearings, and for the name, refer to it "as a sort o' Gaelic fash about a star; I mind my feyther kent the meaning o' it," dismissing it at once as "juist a haver, auncient but fair redeeklous, an auld wife's clishmaclaver," beneath the notice of an "eddicated man."

Not only did this piece display Graham's recurring themes of the past, and a heritage and knowledge lost, typically, we are brought back to ourselves by the earthy words of sceptical, practical, humanity, emphasised by Graham's insertion of demotic Scots, which was a deliberate device for deflation, while, at the same time, ironically casting doubts on the education of the speaker. There is more than a hint here that Graham pulled himself and his readers back from being seduced into a romantic, Celtic netherworld, so beloved by the revivalists.

Walker described this third category of Graham's Scottish stories, as being part of his 'dream world.' However, many of these works were more specific to the 'daydream,' idealised reconstructions from his memories and emotions, from his subconscious. In his book *The Principles of Psychology*, Graham's contemporary, William James, unlike Freud, had surprisingly little to say about dreams, but there is one statement that seems particularly relevant to Graham, 'But if a dream haunts us and compels our attention during the day *it is very apt to remain* figuring in our consciousness as a sort of sub-universe alongside of the waking world.' 813 Graham's Scottish sketches, have a strikingly similar ambiance, particularly those set around his old home of Menteith, as if drawn from such a sub-universe, an otherworldly quality of an idealised landscape and of a past time, the accumulated products of powerful, early memories, which he could not dispel.

Graham's imaginative faculty was usually confined to his experience, and his skill was the effective translation of this experience to the reader, which frequently took on a fantastical quality, but a real, not an invented one, a fantastical quality which was often found in the environs of Menteith. It is no

<sup>810</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Tobar Na Reil,' Guth na Bliadhna No.2, May 1905, pp. 155-6.

<sup>811</sup> At the summit of 'The Duke's Pass,' which linked Menteith with the Trossachs.

<sup>812</sup> Although Graham's works rarely crossed the Highland Line, he was familiar with Highland history. In his 1925 book 'Doughty Deeds' the story of his Great grandfather, Robert Graham of Gartmore, he added as an Appendix 4, his earlier ancestor, Nicol Graham's: 'An Inquiry into the causes which facilitate the Rise and Progress of Rebellions and Insurrections in the Highlands of Scotland, etc., (1747).

<sup>813</sup> William James, The Principles of Psychology II (1890) (New York: Dover Books, 1950), p. 294. My italics.

accident that were we to seek one word which permeated his Scottish sketches and casts out the uncomfortable world of modern reality, it would be his very common use of the word 'mist,' and when he was aware that he is over-using it, he would find some other word combination to express it. 'Mist' is a word and phenomenon that not only cast an atmospheric pall over his sketches, it is also a device that provided him with a key to his subconscious, and is a realistic (non-invented) vehicle to express his imaginings to his readers,<sup>814</sup> because its presence blurred the difference between the present and the past, reality, and unreality.

The first sketch to use this device was 'The Grey Kirk' (1906) which described an un-named ruined church and its environs, 'shut out from all the world by mist and moors,' but Graham was still not ready to abandon reality quite yet, and 'civilisation' has imposed itself on nature and on the past:

Dark, geometrical plantations of black fir and spruce deface the hills, which nature evidently made to bear a coat of scrubby oak and birch. Wire fences gird them round, the posts well tarred against the weather, and the barbed wire so taut that the fierce winds might use them as Eolian harps, could they but lend themselves to song.<sup>815</sup>

Here of course, like his Argentinian pampa, man's presence had defaced nature, and even though the church itself had been built by the hands of men, its age had given it a venerable place in Graham's idealised past.

Lochan Falloch (1908) was yet another evocation of place, very similar to Tobar Na Reil, (1905), but this time, a small lake to the west of Flanders Moss (again), 'an ancient sea [again], which even yet appears to roll in the white mist [again] of evening.' On this occasion, unreality is further evoked when the fairies are alluded to:

If fairies still exist, they come, no doubt, from the Sith Bruach<sup>816</sup> which guards the Avon Dhu at Aberfoyle, and sail their boats of acorn-cups and leaves on the black lakelet. Upon the little beach they run their craft ashore and dance on the broad ribbon of smooth sand which rings the lake, as a black mezzotint is edged around with white. But if the fairies come, they come unseen, leaving no token of their passage but a few turned-up leaves which they have used for boats.<sup>817</sup>

The piece was the beginning of Graham's more consistent literary engagement with Walker's reference to 'mythology,' and was entirely concerned with 'the wondrous world of fairies,'818 but fairies that were

<sup>814</sup> Walter Scott alluded to 'mist' many times while writing of Menteith in his novel A Legend of Montrose (1819).

<sup>815</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The Grey Kirk,' Guth na Bliadhna, February 1906, p. 25.

<sup>816</sup> Walter Scott's 'The Fairy-Knowe' (Rob Rop) which was Doon Hill, between Gartmore and Aberfoyle.

<sup>817</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Lochan Falloch,' Saturday Review, 4 January 1908, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>818</sup> It is perhaps relevant that Arthur Rackham's fairy illustrations were enjoying great popularity at this time, and 1906 was a particularly fruitful year for the genre, following from J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904).

very specific to the myths and legends of Menteith. If fairydom can be seen as a part of the Celtic Revival, then Graham had certainly moved into this territory. The question remains, however, was it a conscious decision to be part of a popular genre, or was he simply reflecting on the folk traditions of his native area?

Mist makes no appearance in the next notable sketch. 'At Dalmary'819 is the description of the funeral of a ploughman, worthy of Lewis Grassic Gibbon, and as usual, with all his pieces, roughly half is taken up with detailed descriptions of sights, sounds and smells of the countryside. Here though, given its length, more intricately, in a crystal clear account. The fairies make their increasingly familiar appearance, and the past is ever present, the farmer-mourners are relative newcomers, 'holding their property but on suffrance [sic] from the old owners, who named every stone, and left their impress even in the air' (my italics). Again, the creed of the mourners comes under scrutiny, for while the landscape in which they lived and worked had bred an interior softness, 'their black, narrow, anti-human faith could not have given it.'820 The awkward, abbreviated conversations between these men of the land, about the weather, their crops, their beasts, and the state of the market, and their hesitant platitudes about the deceased, were expertly observed and related, and like Graham's observations on William Morris's cortege in With the North West Wind (1896), and of Keir Hardie's funeral in With the North-East Wind (1915), reminding us of the observation made by a critic that 'he seems to have been everywhere and observed everything with the eye of a lynx and the memory of an elephant.'821 Both of these tributes by Graham had political and social overtones, and some meditations on greatness. 'At Dalmary,' however, was an evocation of the ordinary, a scene without cynicism, a scene without sentimentality or tendentiousness. 822 What was missing from this sketch, however, and all of Graham's vivid observations, was any deeper reflection on a wider community of relationships, of mutuality, of social intercourse, which, if he was aware of such relationships, might have mitigated his generally pessimistic view of the rural community. Perhaps this was because of his social position and distance, that Graham was excluded from any such intimacies or participation, and that his sojourns in Scotland, particularly after the sale of Gartmore House, were increasingly episodic. Davies wrote that Graham was by nature, 'a good observer but a poor participator,'823 and in consequence, he remained an outsider, who has given us a very limited view of the reality of rural Scotland. Or was it Graham's strategic expression of his observations and inner emotions, that he left the reader to interpret in their own way; a democratic fallibility of iteration?

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<sup>819</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'At Dalmary,' Saturday Review, 4 December 1909, pp. 687-9.

<sup>820</sup> Ibid., p. 688.

<sup>821</sup> Saturday Review, 29 April 1899, p. 533.

<sup>822 &#</sup>x27;The author [Graham] is a realist of the realists . . . His subtle compassion for his fellow men, his indignant tenderness for the weak, and his utter lack of sentimentality is, however, at the root of his charm.' *Academy & Literature*, 25 October 1902, p. 437.

<sup>823</sup> Davies, Concept of Impressionism, p. 3.

Paradoxically, mist can be obscuring and revelatory, and both, simultaneously. Inside it, the normal world disappears, it blurs reality, both the physical and the temporal, and with our senses disarmed, we are thrown back on our own imaginations, and Graham's ghosts could assume a more substantial form as in 'At the Ward Toll'824 (1908). But also in that sketch, the mist was a white board onto which he could project his visions. It was also revelatory when one is above it (as one often is at Gartmore); the vista is transformed, all traces of human activity are blotted out, roads, fences, houses are submerged, and the landscape becomes either a sea (which he never tired of telling us it once was), or we might suspect, to his mind, a primordial landscape, where the marks of civilisation were erased, and where the boundaries between past and present had been obliterated. Thus, the past could live again, and become more accessible. 'At the Ward Toll' is so typical of his work at this period, that it could be a self-parody, and it opened with the words 'The mist had blotted out the moss, leaving the Easter Hill, Gartur, and the three fir trees above Sannochil, rising like islands out of a dead sea.' In this piece, set of course in his home territory, the word 'mist' was used five times, along with 'veil', 'a shroud of steam' (twice), 'billowy vapours,' 'waves of vapour,' 'gloom,' and 'white dew.' In these mists (which gave Menteith a 'double darkness'):

The spirit of the north was in the air, intangible, haunting and vague, that make the dwellers of the north vague and intangible, poetic and averse to face the facts of life, yet leaves them practical in business, with a rind of hardness and a heart of sentiment.

As Graham rode through this miasma, he was surrounded by shadowy forms, people of the past, earls and warriors, 'Highlanders, driving the "creagh' towards Balquhidder,' appearing then vanishing, a cavalcade of history, like the one he imagined as he sat on the step of the dead spinster's house, in 'Ha Til Mi Tuliadh' (1906), while the 'spirits of the hills,' long oppressed by man's dominance, 'had resumed their sway.' However, this would be no mere ghostly impression; it turned into a companion piece to his Introduction to Morrison Davidson's Scotland and the Scots (1902), in which Graham met a fellow Scot on the Argentinian pampa, for, out of the mists (again perhaps to break the other-worldly spell), there is an even more remarkable encounter, with the sudden appearance a flesh-and blood Spaniard, who addresses him in Spanish, 'shivering in his light southern clothes,' and the conversation that ensued (in Spanish), in these peculiar circumstances (to say the least), was as casual as the one on the pampas. After a brief exchange, and a gift of cigarettes to 'Ildefonso,' the traveller, disappeared off through the mists to "walka Glasco". . . singing a tango in a high falsetto voice' - a repeat of his common motif I liked the manner of his going off the stage.' Again, there was no explanation, no explicit mutuality, no sentimental claim on the other, but of course, nostalgia for place was there, as Graham reciprocated his own emotions and identity, and imagines that through the mists he was entering the Spaniard's home town of Vigo, where he had lived for two years with Gabrielle twenty five years earlier, just before

<sup>824</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'At the Ward Toll,' Saturday Review, 7 November 1908, pp. 574-5.

returning to Britain. It concluded (predictably in this fantastical, otherworldly, dislocating piece) with the words, 'I almost wondered whether Ildefonso Lopez had been a real man or but an emanation from the mist from which he issued out so suddenly, and which had swallowed him again almost as suddenly, upon his lonely way.' Interestingly, when he envisaged Vigo, it was not like the 'drucken folk a-stotterin' from the public house,'825 but a fantasy of colour and gaiety. His Scotland was a place of some squalor in the cities at worse, and at best, a land of mists, shadows, and emptiness, of dour, stolid inhabitants, and an unforgiving creed, a place where the past hung heavily in the present.

We have to wait for five years until Graham revisited his fairy domain, and his mists, in a sketch referred to previously, entitled 'The Beggar Earl'. Based on a real 18th century character, we are straight back to the Fairy Hill near Aberfoyle, with, 'Pixies, trolls, and fairies, the men of peace,'826 but those humans, like the Reverend Kirk<sup>827</sup> and True Thomas,<sup>828</sup> who, 'remained as flies embedded in the amber of tradition,' untouched by the pressures and traps of modern life. The Beggar Earl did not seek success, 'the most vulgar thing that a man can endure . . . for men resent success and strive to stifle it under applause, lauding the result, the better to belittle all the means,'<sup>829</sup> a repeat of his first words in his essay, 'The Failure of Success,' 'Success, which touches nothing that it does not vulgarise, should be its own reward. In fact, *rewards of any kind are but vulgarities*.'<sup>830</sup> Despite this, the beggar had claimed to be, and had papers which he believed proved, that he was the rightful heir to the Earldom of Menteith, but the claim had been rejected, so he had published a pamphlet in which he wrote 'that there can be no true unity without religion and virtue in a State,' on which Graham commented, 'This marks him as a man designed by nature to be poor, for unity and virtue are not commodities that command a ready sale,'<sup>831</sup> a comment that is undoubtedly self-referencing.

Perhaps, this was Graham's most complete 'Scottish' sketch, a touching portrait of eccentricity, without sentimentality, set in Menteith, it was tangibly historical, without the fantastical (or most of it). Even the scenes and atmospheres we are by now so used to, feel like old friends, or at least, not out of place. In April 1913, Graham had published 'Mist in Menteith,'832 which drew us back into the Celtic realm, where the mists were swirling again, and transforming the landscape:

825 Cunninghame Graham, Introduction to *Scotland For the Scots: Scotland Revisited* (Edinburgh: F. R. Henderson, 1902), p. ii.

 <sup>826</sup> A reference to the name of the fairies. When his characters pass this very hill, Walter Scott wrote in Rob Roy:
 "They ca' them . . . Daoine Sith, quhilk signifies, as I understand, men of peace," which is an inaccurate translation.
 827 The Reverend Robert Kirk (1644-1692), minister at Aberfoyle, author of The Secret Commonwealth (1692). In local

folklore, Kirk was held captive by the fairies in Doon Hill, near Aberfoyle.

828 Sir Thomas do Ergildova "Thomas the Phymar" (1220 1208). Pagestally held captive by the Oyeon of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>828</sup> Sir Thomas de Ercildoun, 'Thomas the Rhymer' (1220-1298). Reputedly held captive by the Queen of the Fairies for seven years.

<sup>829</sup> Ibid., p. 570

<sup>830</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The Failure of Success,' Saturday Review, 17 May 1902, p. 630. My italics.

<sup>831</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The Beggar Earl,' English Review, July 1913, p. 571.

<sup>832</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Mists in Menteith,' Saturday Review, 5 April 1913, pp. 420-1.

When all is ready for them, the mists sweep down and cover everything . . . Inside the wreaths of mist another world seems to have come into existence, something distinct from and antagonistic to mankind. When the mist once descends, blotting out the familiar features of the landscape . . . So through our mists, a shepherd's dog barking a mile off, is heard as loudly as if it were a yard or two away, although the sound comes slowly to the ear, as when old-fashioned guns hung fire and the report appeared to reach one through a veil. Thus does the past, with its wild legends, the raiders from the north the Broken Men, the Saxon's Leap, the battles of the Grahams and the MacGregors, come down to us veiled by the mists of time.

This immersive quality, as we have seen, became a *tabula rasa* onto which Graham could project his imaginings, whether present or past, a medium through which he could free his desires. However, this device, this excuse, was rarely used by the 'Celtic' writers. Graham seemed unable to free himself from the documentary form, unable to invoke the past, laden as it was with supernatural ambience, without invoking some transformative medium.

Death and its mystery also stalked the mist, and probably always did in Graham's mind. As in 'Inch Cailleach,' the spirits of the past rise up from beneath the earth, and within the mist is another world, composed of mist, a world of the past, which can, at any time, when conditions were right, re-impose itself on the present. This sketch is probably the most significant and revealing piece of all Graham's Scottish works, for it clarifies his nostalgic preoccupations both at home and abroad. Civilisation, and man's works were an imposition, now like the pampa, 'cut into squares, riddled with railings,' like the barbed wire in 'The Grey Kirk,' a stain on the past, which is still present, but hidden. Memories like mist were ethereal so must be documented. Life was transitory, but there were occasions when the past presented itself to those who have eyes to see. In her review of Graham's anthology *Brought Forward* (1916), 833 Amy Wellington succinctly summed this up when she wrote, 'His thought ends in a philosophical mist - in the poetic invocation of Mist in Menteith, a study in lyrical prose which reveals, above all others, the quality of his literary genius.'834

At a political level, it may have been no coincidence that the popularity of 'Kailyard' genre was homologous with 'The Celtic Revival,' occupying almost exactly the same timeframe, and that industrialised Scotland found identification with, and an expression of, its individuality, more readily in this localised, demotic form, rather than the higher 'Celtic' form beloved by certain academics, poets and writers. Harvie agreed that there had been an upswelling of localism during this period, including in England, due to growing centralisation, and where:

<sup>833</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Brought Forward (London: Duckworth, 1916).

<sup>834</sup> Amy Wellington, 'An Artist-Fighter in English Prose: Cunninghame Graham,' Bookman, April 1918, p. 157.

Patriotic agitation legitimised fringe groups - Jacobites, Gaelic enthusiasts, Catholics, even Tories – who could tap emotions which the ruling consensus neglected . . . which enabled the Scots to run with the ethnic hare and hunt with the imperial hounds.<sup>835</sup>

If this was in fact the case, then in their own way, ironically, the Kailyard novels, which Graham so despised, were an attempt to stem loss of individuality, of specialness, against the decay of rural communities and traditions, that Graham so cherished, and that agitation for home rule, and parochial literature, were part of the same uncoordinated reaction. The difference was, that the Kailyard authors (and their readers) were conservative and sentimental, while Graham, though nostalgic, was both a conservationist and a radical, who grew to believe that the only solution to stemming the decay of Scotland's individuality was some form of political independence.

The question remains, however, whether Graham was influenced by the resurgent interest in Celticism, in these particular works, or were his themes and moods merely co-existent and coincidental to the prevailing fashion? Perhaps, W. B. Yeats' words (if taken at face value) might simply sum up Graham's impulses, as someone else who despised the encroachment of ugliness:

I have desired, like every artist, to create a little world out of the beautiful, pleasant, and significant things of this marred and clumsy world . . . I have therefore written down accurately and candidly much that I have heard and seen, and, except by way of commentary, nothing that I have merely imagined.<sup>836</sup>

There were parallels between Graham and Yeats. Declan Kiberd pointed out that Yeats spent a large part of his boyhood in England, 'a fact which may have allowed him . . . to reinvent his Irish childhood in a more pleasing pattern.' Kilberd then remarked on the number of commentators who had 'marvelled at just how many years Ireland's national poet managed to spend outside his native land,' and that those who did so were more 'starry-eyed about the place than those living in it. So Yeats, too, is inventing Ireland, as he employs his autobiographer's art to remake his life.' <sup>837</sup> The quarter-Spanish Graham also

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<sup>835</sup> Harvie, p. 24.

<sup>836</sup> W. B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight: Faerie and Folklore*, p. 1. By Graham's definition, Yeats' imagined' would be his 'invented.' Graham and Yeats had a passing acquaintance; Frederick Niven recalled seeing them talking at The Court Theatre in London's Sloane Square. Frederick Niven, *Library Review*, Winter 1932, p. iii. Yeats's published letters did not include any to Graham, nor was Graham mentioned, but Watts published one (undated, but between 1913-16) concerning Grahams submission of a 'little Spanish play' (authorship unknown, but possibly by Graham's wife, Gabrielle) for consideration at The Abbey Theatre, which Yeats considered unsuitable. Cedric Watts, 'A Letter from W. B Yeats to R. B. Cunninghame Graham,' *Review of English Studies* (1967) XVIII, pp. 292-3. Yeats's letters did make a reference to meeting Graham's wife Gabrielle, 'a little bright American.' *The Letters of W. B Yeats*, ed. by Allan Wade (London: Hart-Davis, 1954), p. 62.

<sup>837</sup> Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of a Modern Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), p. 107. Kilberd added that 'behind such an aphorism lies a familiar strategy of the Irish Protestant imagination, estranged from the community, yet anxious to identify itself with the new national sentiment,' who, faced with 'a painful accusation against their own people . . . turned to geography in an attempt at patriotization.'

spent much of his boyhood in England, and was educated at Harrow School, and in Belgium, 838 before emigrating to Argentina at the age of seventeen, and particularly after 1900, he spent part of the year abroad, and divided his time in Britain between Scotland and London. This 'hybrid' Graham, who was continually reinventing himself, was also reinventing his hybrid countries, for, as Kiberd continued, 'the past is irrecoverable, that paradise is always by very definition lost,' and has to be 'reborn as an idea.'839 Graham's cosmopolitan and international experiences, and his periodic distancing both from Scotland and South America, leant a unique perspective on matters both political and cultural. As Hayward stated above, the perspective of the outsider, who can at times see things clearer and more distinctly, or at least differently, from those inhibited by commonly held perceptions, habituation and accustomedness. Wittig, discussed this topic while referencing himself as an outsider who analysed Scottish literature, and described his position as:

Somebody from outside enjoys a happy detachment. He has the advantage of seeing things from both outside and inside, so that he can distinguish between the typical (often, from inside, taken for granted) and the specific. And finally there is a better guarantee that he will be impartial, no matter how much he loves the country and its people.<sup>840</sup>

But Graham was neither happily detached nor impartial; Graham was passionately attached, but, attached to what? Industrial Scotland, beset by poverty and enormous social problems, was something he had witnessed, had railed against, and had attempted to find a cure for through the political process, but from his perspective had so far failed to do so. Now, his reflections were of a lost Scotland, a Scotland of the past, of his daydreams, which could still be re-invoked in the rural ambiance of Menteith. Neil Munro, while reflecting that Graham's writings were 'mainly the natural naïve expression of a whimsical, unconventional mind,' gave a singular and illuminating perspective on Graham's relationship with his so-called home. Munro stated that Graham spent most of his time furth of Scotland, and that his visits were 'what may have been a sort of exile,'841 further observing:

It may be absurd to say so of Graham of Gartmore, but I once doubted if he knew Scotsmen, and felt the conviction that he had taken many of his most pronounced views on Scotsmen from bookish conventions . . . he may occasionally have missed the character of the modern Scot, he has a quick remembering eye for Scotland herself.<sup>842</sup>

This is perhaps overstatement, Graham was already in exile, but it may also point to his emotional distance, which never allowed him to fully understand the day-to-day lives of ordinary folk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>838</sup> Graham's mother lived permanently in London, and he maintained apartments in Mayfair throughout his later life.

<sup>839</sup> Kiberd, p. 108.

<sup>840</sup> Wittig, p. 7.

<sup>841</sup> Munro, The On-Looker, p. 306.

<sup>842</sup> Ibid., p. 305

Several of these sketches were anthologised in Graham's *Scottish Stories* (1914),<sup>843</sup> and garnered accolades. *The Academy* gave the finest, 'This is a mature work of a master of words, a brilliant achievement in literature, taking that word in its highest sense,' adding, prophetically 'the world will be richer for such a little volume as this, though the work is too fine and delicate to attain to popularity.'844

This latter point may be true, but it may also be true that very few people, even in Scotland, had experienced or understood the specific, unique, and deeply historical ambience and moods of the land and people about which Graham wrote, and because they were so separated and distanced in his anthologies, and when they were eventually gathered together by Walker, it was not done chronologically. Harvie wrote that the reason why realism had failed in Scottish writing of the period was because contemporary authors failed 'in probing individuality.'845 English novelists could span the classes, and were, more often as not, at home in the houses of the rich, and the eccentric, whereas Scottish writers and poets had, by and large, focused on the lives (not necessarily the character) of lower-class country people, leaving a yawning gap in the Scottish literary canon. Graham's Scottish portraits, in contrast, did probe individuality, and spanned the classes, as a means of displaying diversity, but their real uniqueness were their descriptions of the individuality of an ancient upper middle class, and the often quirky and robust individuality of the lower orders. Graham is mostly now remembered for his adventurous life and his portrayal of exotic peoples and locations, but these portraits, which documented the bygone characters and graces of the Forth Valley and southern Perthshire, are a unique contribution to Scotland's heritage.

Graham, at this stage, was moving towards a more nationalist position, both politically and culturally, but this was part of a growing *zeitgeis*t, although only pursued politically by a small minority of the population, which would be temporarily interdicted by the First World War. However, this international nationalist still saw potential dangers, if this new nationalism was self-regarding and inward-looking, which he summed up in the following sentence, 'The rational pride of all men in their native land is praiseworthy, but he who sees only his native land, is blind or bourgeois, or at most a tyrant who has not come into his rights, by reason of the stronger tyrants who control the State.'846 These sentiments were very prescient, considering what, ten years later, lay ahead for Scotland and the world.

# **CONCLUSION**

Pritchett was correct in his conclusion that Graham had been squeezed out of parliamentary politics, and he would never be allowed back, but despite many disappointments, he remained unabashed. He would also be squeezed out of any significant role in the ILP due to his personal demeanour, and a

<sup>843</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Scottish Stories (London: Duckworth, 1914)

<sup>844</sup> Academy, 20 June 1914, p. 795.

<sup>845</sup> Harvie, p. 99.

<sup>846</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Introduction to Ida Taylor's, Revolutionary Types, (London: Duckworth, 1904), p. xiii.

change in political fashion, whereby the patronage and legitimacy he had once offered was no longer seen as relevant or necessary. What separated Graham from the typical political activist was not only his class, his oratorical skill and passion, and his life experiences, but much more significantly, his political insight. Graham believed that he understood the causes of societal ills, and he had little or no patience with those whose vision did not match his own, and who set about dealing only with the effects. This was the source of his elitism, and it was this that had generated anger in parliament, and against his own party, when he came to believe they were ineffective in dealing with, to him, glaring social disparities.

Graham was not a team player; he was a champion of the people, but not a man of the people, and his continuing criticism of what he saw as a lack of outspoken radical fervor from his colleagues, blighted his position in the Labour movement. At the other end of the social scale, he would remain toxic to the British establishment, and would receive no honours or patronage. Graham was a 'loner,' positioned between two armed camps, belonging to neither, thus, he had an extraordinary ability to divide opinion, not along class lines, but between conservative and bourgeois elements in all classes, whom he in turn despised and criticised, and those who admired his charismatic and heroic qualities, whether they agreed with his political views or not. He thus remained a class and political outsider, for whom the fight was the thing, as a means of satisfying a deep emotional urge to put the world to rights. It is also fair to assume, moreover, on Watts and Davies' assessment, and Eagleton's general aesthetic postulation, that the concerns of these others (although perhaps hurtful) were irrelevant to Graham, and that their mutual class and ideological disparity would inevitably have led to misunderstandings and schism.

In 1893, Graham took his first tentative steps in another solitary craft, that of a writer for middle and upper class non-political publications, where he employing more subtle ways of communicating his views. However, with limited story-telling ability, and the inappropriateness of polemic, by necessity, Graham was obliged to adopt, or rather adapt and develop the colourful foreign experiences that he had begun to explore in his socialist journalism. They seldom contained a story in the true sense, and since there was rarely a denouement, they were obliged to simply stop, which some readers and critics found perplexing and unsatisfactory, and which undoubtedly contributed to their lack of wider popularity. Garnett had encouraged Graham to extend himself by becoming more emotionally expressive, but Graham either lacked the confidence, or the emotional apparatus to do so. It may simply have been that his creative faculty was lacking, but there are alternative explanations. The first is, that for the image that he was creating for himself, of the distant aristocratic adventurer and committed radical, emotionally expressive writing would not have been appropriate. Also, great artists commonly displayed a passionate focus, an overwhelming single-mindedness towards their chosen art or subject, which often resulted in a negative impact on other areas of their lives, particularly relationships. In

<sup>847</sup> An obituary described Graham as 'a splendid firebrand,' but his personality as 'radio-active' and 'not likely to meet with official recognition.' *Observer*, 22 March 1936, p. 28.

contrast, Graham's drives remained fundamentally moral and political, which had often negatively impacted on his political relationships, particularly with people who did not share his vision and beliefs.

Both Graham's South American and Scottish memories were of vanished worlds, but when he came to describe them, the marked difference was that his foreign works were settings for some unfolding drama that he had witnessed. In his Scottish works, however, there was no drama, the days of drama had gone, and he was obliged to rely only on descriptions of nature, and portraits of diverse local characters. Ironically, after attempting to de-romaticise Scotland, on departing Gartmore, he began, unconsciously, to re-romanticise it, but in a realistic, non-sentimental fashion, which avoided stereotyping.

Graham's portraits broadened out the Scottish character in what might have been his attempt to counter the cosy complacency of the Kailyard writers. We can perhaps begin to see that Graham's nationalism had now developed from the purely practical, a means by which legislative anomalies could be cured, to a more emotional patriotism, an attempt to simultaneously return to, and proceed towards, a more heroic existence, a means by which Scotland's distinctiveness could be rescued from the erosion of progress and cultural absorption, reclaimed, and developed. However, without much action, his Scottish works were often strained and repetitive. Taken individually, however, they had a quiet sad beauty, and captured the atmosphere of a unique hybrid location, and of a gentler, more harmonious, settled, hierarchical world. At this intermediate stage, Graham's socialism and nationalism can be linked directly to his writing, and may simply have been a desire for respectful reciprocity both in terms of class and culture, in a more ordered and equitable society, which he believed existed in former times, among the peasantry, and even in the paternalism between landlord and tenant. There are doubts, however, as to Graham's understanding of the lower orders he depicted. Frank Harris, in another context, wrote of him 'Graham had always had a silver-gilt spoon in his mouth; he had always had money and position and had learned what he liked and left unlearned what did not appeal to him, and that privileged position has its inevitable drawbacks.'848 Thus, Graham's vision and depiction of the Scottish population remained romantic, where he sought out those with individualistic and heroic qualities in his own time, and evoked idealised figures from the past. To achieve this, Graham's vivid impressionistic prose, regularly wandered into landscapes where he perceived that the past was still present, particularly when climatic conditions wiped out the traces of man's presence, and which at times overlapped with the precepts for a mystic Celticism. The preoccupations of the Celtic Revival were, however, concerned with a hazy longing for an imaginary, otherworldly, fundamentally unachievable past, aimed at reinforcing (or inventing) a separate, mystical, cultural heritage. Graham's sketches were a longing for a real past,

<sup>848</sup> Harris, Contemporary Portraits, p. 50.

which he imagined, or had glimpsed in his youth.<sup>849</sup> This suggests a form of self-obsession, dominated by the daydream. Watts analysed this as:

His pervasive and almost narcissistic conservatism, for he is attempting persistently to conserve against times corrosion of memory of experiences of his own past, the sights, smells, conversations and chance encounters.<sup>850</sup>

As he grew older, Graham, it seems, became increasingly stuck in his nostalgic, 'heroic,' twodimensional past, and his writings, showed little or no sign of development, and it is possible, also, that his political ideas increasingly began to reflect this.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>849</sup> 'that magic period, youth, when things impress themselves on the imagination more sharply than in after years.' Cunninghame Graham, *Thirteen Stories*, p. x.

<sup>850</sup> Watts, Joseph Conrad's Letters, p. 30.

## 05. CHAPTER 3, 1914 - 1936.

INTRODUCTION

LAND and LABOUR

EMPIRE and COLONIALISM

IRELAND and SCOTLAND

CONTINUING LITERARY WORKS

OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS.

CONCLUSION

# **INTRODUCTION**

Following the sale of *The Saturday Review*, Frank Harris and Graham did not meet for almost fifteen years. When they did meet, in 1912, Harris noted that, 'he [Graham] had altered indefinably . . . the fine colouring had faded, and the light of his eyes was dimmed. He had grown old, the spring of hope had left him.'851 However, this was not entirely borne out by Graham's activities. He had been politically active from the start of the new century, attacking imperialism, particularly the international intrigues in Morocco; he had lost none of his fire in defending the unemployed, and was a platform speaker in support of socialist candidates, where he missed no opportunity to promote the Labour party, while simultaneously criticising its parliamentary representatives. For example, he supported the 'Labour and Socialist' candidate, W. G. Leechman at the Springburn by-election in Glasgow in 1912, but he also accused Labour M.P.s of 'a lack of courageous action on behalf of those whose money sent them to the Commons,'852 a theme that had also been common from his very first days as a Liberal M.P.

Up to the beginning of the First World War, Graham, it seems, was still strongly motivated to speak out against injustice, and to support radical causes. The war, however, would have the double effect of revitalising him by giving his life renewed energy and purpose, but it would also precipitate a political watershed, wherein he became more cynical over the direction that socialism was taking, both nationally and internationally. This part of the thesis will examine the possible causes of his cynicism, and his reactions. It will also examine the roots of Graham's surprising bellicosity over the war, wherein his previous anti-imperialism was silenced, and he developed a negative attitude towards political events in Ireland. However, an unexpected outcome of his ill-conceived attempt to re-engage with post-war parliamentary politics, and despite his support for Britain's role in the recent conflict, Graham would find a new position as a political figurehead in a reborn Scottish national consciousness. This remains another landmark in Graham's current reputation in the world of Scottish politics, as one of the founders of modern Scottish nationalism, but an attempt will also be made in the thesis to establish his true role and significance.

<sup>851</sup> Harris, Contemporary Portraits, p. 55.

<sup>852</sup> Glasgow Herald, 27 September 1912, p. 8. Thomas Johnston was also on the platform.

During this latter period, there would be a marked diminution in the frequency of Graham's writings, which may have had a simple explanation, but the subject matter of nostalgic recollections of South America, and to a lesser extent, Scotland, remained unchanged. What did change was the vibrancy and tone, becoming even more reflective. We are, however, entering a phase when Graham became even more politically detached and independent, but where Scotland would play an increasing part in his political, if not his literary life.

### LAND and LABOUR

In January 1914, several newspapers announced Graham's selection as the 'socialist' candidate for the Rectorship of Glasgow University, 853 which, if nothing else, indicated that he was still considered, and considered himself, a socialist. Soon after, an article in *The Manchester Guardian*, seemed to confirm that he had lost none of his kudos, nor his enthusiasm for radical change:

He is a well-known figure in the West End of London, not only in the clubs, but also in Trafalgar Square, where he has probably made more speeches than any other living man... and is always in the middle of any revolutionary movement. He does not favour the moderate groups of Socialists, but is generally to be found associated with the extremists.<sup>854</sup>

At this time, Graham was a political freelance, taking a statesman-like stance, estranged from many within the ranks of the ILP, and generally disillusioned by what he saw as their lack of radical zeal. It is also possible that he had become affiliated with the loosely constituted British Socialist Party, led by Hyndman, but the only reference to this was in *The Manchester Guardian*, where he was described as 'a leading member' of the BSP, and that he had signed a pro-war manifesto.<sup>855</sup> This was an involvement that was never mentioned by Graham himself, nor by his biographers, but it was now a recurring pattern in Graham political career that he felt and acted above party politics, and that his political affiliations were fluid, attached only to political ideologies, rather than party labels.

MacDiarmid would later write that 'the Labour and Socialist Movement in Scotland was unaccompanied by any counterpart of the slightest consequence in literature and the arts and failed even to yield any book that influenced the general development of British, let alone European Socialism,'856 but this was a typical overstatement. Hardie had published a well-argued and influential propagandist essay *From Serfdom To Socialism* in 1907,857 and a year before that, in October 1906, a young pretender to

<sup>853</sup> Glasgow Herald, 28 January 1914, p. 11. By September, Graham had asked that his name be removed, because of the war. Ibid., 16 September 1914, p. 9.

<sup>854</sup> Manchester Guardian, 23 February 1914, p. 7.

<sup>855</sup> Manchester Guardian, 22 April 1916, p. 7.

<sup>856</sup> MacDiarmid, Centenary Study, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>857</sup> See passim. Stewart described it as 'the most compact and vivid statement of the case for Socialism that has ever been written.' Stewart, p. 240. However, Benn conceded that 'Hardie as ideologue has never commanded respect from intellectuals.' Benn, p. 243.

the radical journalistic crown of Scotland, emerged in the person of Thomas Johnston, who co-founded, and edited the ILP newspaper, *Forward*,858 with the stated intention 'to rouse Scotland, to stir the lethargic, to waken the dead.'859 *Forward* was presented in an accessible and occasionally humourous style, and followed a left-wing, republican, pacifist, and home rule agenda, mainly reporting on disputes etc., with regular features on socialist doctrine, not dissimilar to the pieces that Graham had written twenty years earlier. It was surprising, therefore, that Graham appears not to have directly contributed to it, apart from the very occasional letter.860 In the context of Scotland, this seems like a missed opportunity, but *Forward* was the house publication of the ILP in Scotland, and despite being admired by Johnston, Graham may have felt that his involvement was inappropriate.

Although Johnston and Graham shared the same political agenda, and both would be dubbed 'The Uncrowned King of Scotland,' Johnston, who came from a relatively comfortable middle-class background, could hardly be more different from Graham in his demeanour. According to Emanuel Shinwell, Johnston was 'awkward and shy,' and that he preferred writing to oratory.861 In 1909, Johnston published his scurrilous, but hugely influential Our Scots Noble Families, 862 written on the basis that, 'A democracy ignorant of the past is not qualified either to analyse the present or to shape the future.'863 Although Johnston would later describe it as 'historically one sided and unjust and quite unnecessarily wounding,'864 Robert Middlemass described it as 'the most caustic arraignment of the Scottish aristocracy ever committed to print,' 865 and it apparently sold over 120,000 copies. 866 Johnston was no less passionate than Graham, but unlike the older man, he was politically focused, and attacked the institutions, particularly Scotland's aristocracy, which he believed sustained a deformed society, through their monopoly of land. This view had of course originally formed an integral part of Graham's early parliamentary campaigns, using the same language and critiques. For example, in his Introduction, Johnston took a similar 'Georgist' view to Graham that exclusivity in land was the basis of all Scotland's social ills, 'so long as half the race is compelled by dire necessity to kneel cap-in-hand before the Lord who "owns" the soil, so long will our rural populations be cast in an unmanly and spiritless mould,'867

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>858</sup> The two major shareholders of Forward Printing & Publishing Co. were Johnston, and fellow socialist and ILP member, and later Scottish nationalist leader, Roland Muirhead, who would be Graham's supporter and encouragement in later years.

<sup>859</sup> Thomas Johnston, Editorial, Forward, 13 October 1906, p. 4.

<sup>860</sup> Graham's piece 'The Imperial Kailyard' which had first appeared in *Justice* in 1896 was reprinted in *Forward*, in 31 August, 1907, p. 2, and his speech on women's suffrage in the St Andrew's Hall (see passim) was also reported, *Forward*, 12 October, 1907, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>861</sup> Quoted in Russell Galbraith, No Quarter Given: A Biography of Tom Johnston (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1995), p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>862</sup> Thomas Johnston, *Our Scots Noble Families* (Glasgow: The Forward Publishing, 1909). Compiled from articles that had previously been regular features in *Forward*. Confusingly, the book cover simply read, *Our Noble Families*.

863 Johnston, *Scots Noble Families*, p. xii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>864</sup> Johnson, *Memories* (London: Collins, 1952), p. 35. Johnston only halted publication when he joined Winston Churchill's Coalition cabinet in 1939, as Secretary of State for Scotland.

<sup>865</sup> R. K. Middlemass, The Chydesiders (London: Hutchison, 1965), p. 47.

<sup>866</sup> Johnston, Memories, p. 35.

<sup>867</sup> Johnston, Scots Noble Families, p. ix.

echoing Graham's complaint that the peasantry had been robbed of their independence. This exclusivity, and the extortion of rents, which was a grievous wrong, had driven the people from the land, had withheld land required for public improvements, and shut out the people from the beauties of nature, and herded them in smoky cities.<sup>868</sup> These criticisms had long since fallen away from Graham's campaigns, but Johnston went on to extrapolate his researches into land ownership into his famous book A History of the Working Classes in Scotland (1920), 869 which was a 'first reader' for many socialists. In Our Scots Noble Families, Johnston claimed that Scottish history had been 'inverted to fan their [the landowner's conceits, '870 but in his new work, he set about correcting that inversion. In the process, both books 'weaponised' Scottish history. Although fundamentally socialist arguments, they provided valuable ammunition for both socialists and nationalists, by transforming the nation's history into an easily understood cavalcade of greed and oppression, easily transmitted from enthusiast to enthusiast, to be 'weaponised' again and again, a propagandist success that Graham never came close to emulating.

Johnston, who was almost 30 years Graham's junior, certainly admired Graham, and it is possible that he copied Graham's personal style. Galbraith wrote that, 'Patrick Dollan<sup>871</sup> testified . . . that next to R. B. Cunninghame Graham, he [Johnston] was the biggest swell in the [socialist] movement,'872 and despite Graham being a scion of the very landowners that Johnston attacked in his books, Johnston wrote of him:

Those who have the personal friendship and acquaintance of the intrepid Socialist leader, have often hugged themselves as they visioned [. . ] the occurrences that would of surety arrive, were the Stuarts to return to the Scottish throne in the person of the man who wrote "Success" and who went to gaol for the unemployed.873

Johnston had chaired a meeting in Glasgow in 1913, to which Graham had brought the Irish transport strike leader, 'Jim' Larkin, 874 and Johnston campaigned for Graham during Graham's aborted Glasgow University rectorship bid in 1914, but post-war, their views would come into conflict.

Like Graham, Johnston was a man of action, but unlike Graham, when he became an MP, he worked within the political system, preferring persuasion to confrontation, and he eventually achieved high political office and great power. According to the historian Tom Devine, Johnston was a giant figure in Scottish politics and is revered to this day as the greatest Scottish Secretary of the [twentieth]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>868</sup> Ibid., p. ix-x. Johnston, however, repeatedly criticised George's economics from the pages of Forward, between 1907 and 1936.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>869</sup> Johnston, A History of the Working Classes in Scotland (Glasgow: Forward Publishing, 1920).

<sup>870</sup> Ibid., p. viii

<sup>871</sup> Patrick Dollan (1885-1963), socialist activist, later, knighted. Lord Provost of Glasgow, 1938-41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>872</sup> Quoted in Dollan's unpublished biography. Galbraith, No Quarter Given, p. 8.

<sup>873</sup> Johnston, Scots Noble Families, p. 98.

<sup>874</sup> Glasgow Herald, 11 December 1913, p. 10.

century.'875 Graham, by his very nature, attacked rather than compromised, and studiously avoided any executive or managerial involvements, ending up with no power, except the power to influence. These fundamental differences not only go a long way in highlighting Graham's weakness as a serious politician but also as a serious historian and writer. In his earlier, overtly polemical writings, Graham, the dilettante, displayed an imaginative whimsy, flitting from subject to subject, delivering short, but little-read, swipes at politicians and magnates. In contrast, Johnston's works, although partial, and showing no desire to present a balanced view of Scottish social history, involved a huge amount of laborious, detailed research and cogent argument, that added up to a damning indictment of Scotland's ruling class. As for Graham's 'historical' writings, which began in 1901, and at last began to display a story-telling ability, they lacked historical rigour.

On Sunday 2 August 1914, two days before Britain declared war on Germany, Graham, together with Hardie and other socialist leaders, addressed a tumultuous socialist rally of an estimated 20,000 in Trafalgar Square. According to Hardie's biographer, William Stewart, Graham's speech 'was said to have made the most profound impression, and to have been the best he had ever delivered, which was saying a great deal. "Do not," he implored, "let us do this crime, or be parties to the misery of millions who have never done us harm." 1876 It seems that Graham who had long held an anti-war viewpoint, had invited Joseph Conrad to a pacifist meeting in London in early 1899, 1877 and had described uniforms as 'a thing to be ashamed of. 1878 Within two weeks, however, Graham at the age of 62, had volunteered for military service, and in November 1914, The Glasgow Herald reported that he had been given a commission by the War Office. 1914 On 20 November, a letter from Graham appeared in The Daily News Leader in which he said that Britain had been forced into war by Germany, and that 'we, perhaps by accident, have been forced into the right course, and that all smaller nationalities as Montenegro, Ireland, Poland, and the rest, would disappear on our defeat. 1880 Shortly afterwards, Graham departed for Montevideo where he spent six months buying horses for the war effort on behalf of the Government. 1881 Despite only spending a total of fifteen months overseas during the conflict, until the

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<sup>875</sup> T. M. Devine, The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000 (London: Allen Lane, 1999), p. 521.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>876</sup> Stewart, p. 344. There was no record of this speech published in contemporary newspapers. However, in his biography of Graham, Tschiffely, presumably under Graham's direction, said the direct opposite of what Stewart claimed, stating, 'Instead of denouncing the war, as everybody expected he would, he said that England, the mother of freedom and the home of liberty, must throw her weight in the crises into the scale of humanity.' Tschiffely, p. 360. This is perhaps another example of Graham adapting the past to suit how he wished to be remembered.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>877</sup> This letter is not extant, but Conrad replied on 8 February declining the invitation, with the words, <sup>1</sup> am not a man of peace, nor a democrat.' Watts, *Joseph Conrad's Letters*, p. 116.

<sup>878</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Futurism,' p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>879</sup> Glasgow Herald, 4 November 1914, p. 6. Graham stated that he had been offered the grade of Colonel, which he refused, 'thinking it ridiculous for a private citizen not a military man to hold such a title.' *Stirling Observer*, 2 December 1918, p.3. Tschiffely wrote, however, that Graham had accepted the rank of colonel, but had refused to wear the uniform. Tschiffely, p. 361.

<sup>880</sup> Daily News & Leader, 20 November 1914, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>881</sup> Glasgow Herald, 11 August 1917, p. 4. Graham returned to South America on 17 February 1917 to report to the British government on cattle resources, staying until 31 March, but he did not arrive back in Britain until the

end of the war, newspaper reports of his activities at home were few.

Thorpe suggested in 1997 that the Labour party managed to retain cohesion and consistency throughout the conflict, 882 as, more recently, did Matthew Worley, 883 but not without many difficulties. Individual disputes continued within the socialist ranks, including for Graham. In a personal example of the animosity that now existed between erstwhile comrades over the war, in November of 1916, the Scottish socialist, Bruce Glasier, recorded in his diary that he had confronted Graham in the House of Commons lobby over his anti-German stance. Graham had wished to be friendly, but Glasier snubbed him, and accused him of using William Morris's name to defame Germany:

Was it fair, was it manly to do so in order to further influence the blind hatred of the British public against Germany?' I repeated the question again and again. He then confessed that 'perhaps he had made a mistake.' I then spoke my mind to him about his wheel-around to 'patriotism', reminding him of his speech (when I supported him) at the Labour Conference upstairs on the very day that war was declared.<sup>884</sup> He shuffled, and just as it was getting rather warm . . . Graham said finally, 'But Glasier, we must not allow a thirty-year friendship to be broken by this stupid war' – or words to that effect. He is a poor creature.<sup>885</sup>

In 1915, Graham had published his sketch on Keir Hardie's funeral, With the North-East Wind. This work is full of nostalgic memories of more hopeful and inspiring times, as he gazed upon the mourners, many of whom had been at the forefront of the early socialist cause; 'They were all young and ardent, and as I mused upon them and their fate, and upon those of them who had gone down to the oblivion that waits for those who live before their time, I shivered in the wind.'886 Graham's métier of nostalgic documentaries of past times, of vanishing peoples and landscapes, seem to find a deeper resonance when he wrote of funerals; of Morris, Parnell, Wilde, Scawen Blunt, Conrad, and even Queen Victoria, but here, it seems more personal. Although he and Hardie had suffered partial estrangement in later years, still the memories of better times lingered on, and the piece is filled with regret for missed opportunities, for a loss of idealism, and for an ultimate and futile passing. It is worth noting, however, that he believed that his own political views, and the views of his old comrades had been too prescient, and this would also be a common theme in the later obituaries of Graham himself, that politically, he was born before his time.

beginning of August. Only one report appeared in the newspapers that year, describing Graham's investigations in Columbia. *The Glasgow Herald*, 11 August 1917, p. 4.

<sup>882</sup> Andrew Thorpe, A History of The British Labour Party (London: MacMillan Press, 1997), p. 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>883</sup> Matthew Worley, Labour Inside the Gate: A History of the British Labour Party Between the Wars (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2005), p. 31.

<sup>884</sup> It was in fact held the day after, on 5 August 1914.

<sup>885</sup> Laurence Thompson, The Enthusiasts: A Biography of Bruce and Katharine Glasier (London: Gollancz, 1971), p. 209.

<sup>886</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'With the North-East Wind,' Nation, No.18, 12 October 1915, p. 148.

Three days after the Armistice, on 14 November, 1918, Prime Minister, Lloyd George called a general election, the first in eight years, and Graham was approached by the West Stirlingshire Liberal Association to stand as the 'Liberal Coalition' candidate, which, considering his previous record and experience with the party, is rather surprising, as was his acceptance, considering his oft-stated disillusionment with party politics and parliament. That said, the late war, which had been brought to a successful conclusion under the leadership of Lloyd George, had itself changed the political landscape, with the premier proclaiming that his task was to make Britain 'a fit country for heroes to live in.'887 On 6 February 1918, for example, the Representation of the People Act was passed, enfranchising women over the age of 30 who met minimum property qualifications, to vote for the first time, and it no doubt seemed to many, including Graham, that the war would usher in a new dawn in which far-reaching reforms could take place, and he wished to be part of it. However, he qualified his support for Lloyd George by saying that he would support him so long as he introduced progressive legislation. 888 Also, by now, the Liberals would have been Graham's only available option. In his book 60 Years of World-Mending, Graham's friend and sometime publisher, James Leatham, explained, 'Graham, having no trade union connection or Labour Party backing, allowed himself once more to be nominated as a Liberal candidate for West Stirlingshire. '889 Apparently, Graham still retained kudos in the political arena, The Stirling Observer referring to him as 'an outstanding personality in the political world,'890 and as a local figure who had supported the late war, he obviously carried some weight in and around the garrison town of Stirling itself, where he drew large audiences.

Graham's stated aims were virtually unchanged from his original parliamentary campaigns, the nationalisation of the mines, shipping, and eventually of all the means of production,' but he made no mention of the nationalisation of land, Home Rule for Ireland, or the abolition of the House of Lords. He did, however, restate his support for women's suffrage, and that 'He looked forward to the time when all sex disabilities would be removed, and women might aspire to the highest positions in the State.'891 The Stirling Observer reported, at the beginning of Graham's campaign at Bannockburn:

He in common with many other members of the community loyally supported the Premiership of Mr Asquith, and afterwards, that of Mr Lloyd George, and it was his opinion to-day that it would be wise and well considered to entrust the Government which had been so successful in carrying the war to a victorious issue with the reconstruction and the dealing with the vast problems which would beset us in the immediate future. (*Applause*.)<sup>892</sup>

Obviously, Graham saw himself taking part in the shaping of this new post-war world.

<sup>887</sup> Lloyd George, speech at Wolverhampton, 23 November 1918, reported in Times, 25 November 1918, p. 13.

<sup>888</sup> Stirling Observer, 2 December 1918, p. 2.

<sup>889</sup> Leatham, 60 Years, p. 159.

<sup>890</sup> Stirling Observer, 23 November 1918, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>891</sup> Ibid., 26 November 1918, p. 5.

<sup>892</sup> Ibid.

Despite plaudits and assurances, it appears that the Liberal hierarchy had longer memories than those of Stirling, and Graham's position as the official candidate was unceremoniously usurped by the war-time 'Citizen's Coalition' with the imposition (or 'couponing') of a Coalition 'Unionist' candidate, Mr. (later, Sir) Harry Hope, without the agreement of the two local party branches, nor, apparently had the local party been consulted, which Graham obviously resented.<sup>893</sup> Graham's other opponent, representing Labour, was his erstwhile supporter, the 37 year-old Thomas Johnston, and Leatham justifiably asked the question, 'Why did Graham stand as a Liberal against a good Labour man?' Leatham's explanation was that there was 'a streak of wayward willfulness about him. By this time, Graham had no status within the Labour party, and had claimed that Liberalism was in no way a limiting factor, and had been, Socialist or even Communist as the occasion seemed to demand.'894 This was an informative affirmation of how Graham viewed political parties, but ignores the fact that the war had changed the political landscape. The ILP had made little electoral progress, Hutchison stating, that 'Before 1914, the ILP never became a mass or even moderately popular party,'895 while the Liberals had seen a swing towards social radicalism, and that 'Socialists on the eve of the war were left complaining that too many Scottish Liberal MPs were at least as far to the left as Labour, so that no breakthrough was achievable.'896 Also, at a more immediate level, at an election meeting in Plean, Graham stated that despite Johnston standing on a platform that was 'almost identical to his own,' he opposed him because he [Johnston] was a pacifist. (Applause.)897 For his own part, Johnston seems not to have borne any resentment that Graham should oppose him, believing that the seat was unwinnable for him anyway. 898 In his memoirs, Johnston claimed that he never wanted to be an M.P., 899 although he won the seat for Labour four years later, but retaining it for only for two years.

Graham was received by large and enthusiastic audiences during his campaign, 900 but like his experiences in North-West Lanarkshire, although his policies appealed to rank-and-file Liberal members, and the working classes, particularly the miners, the senior members of the Association seemed to have been less enthusiastic, perhaps because he still espoused radical views, but more likely because he still insisted on standing, against the official Coalition candidate, with little chance of success, in the post-war euphoria. On 4 December 1918, immediately after his nomination, Graham wrote to the Liberal Association withdrawing his candidacy because off the 'scant courtesy' extended to him. 901 This elicited a letter to *The Glasgow Herald* from the vice president of the local Association stating that they

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<sup>893</sup> Ibid.

<sup>894</sup> Leatham, p. 160.

<sup>895</sup> Hutchison, Scottish Politics, p. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>896</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>897</sup> Stirling Observer, 2 December 1918, p. 2. Johnston had repeatedly attacked the war through the pages of Forward.
<sup>898</sup> Their combined vote would still not have beaten the Tory 'coupon' candidate.

<sup>899</sup> Johnston, Memories, (London: Collins, 1952), pp. 46-7.

<sup>900</sup> Stirling Observer, 26 November 1918, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>901</sup> Stirling Observer, 7 December 1918, p. 5.

had asked Graham to reconsider, as they believed that 'the Liberal prospects were never brighter in the constituency than under his candidacy.'902 On the same page, the newspaper reported that Graham had changed his mind, and had withdrawn his withdrawal and would go to the poll. The Liberal Association claimed that it had been a 'misunderstanding.'903 Despite his strident support for the war, in Lloyd George's 'coupon election' Graham came third, behind Johnston, both defeated by Hope.<sup>904</sup>

# WEST STIRLINGSHIRE GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS. 21 December 1918.

Harry Hope (Unionist) 6,893
Bailie Thomas Johnston (Labour) 3,809
R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Liberal) 2,582

Undoubtedly, Graham regretted standing, even before the election result was announced. Neil Munro recalled a letter from Graham, sent from Stirling, on the eve of the poll, stating that he was sick of 'this infernal folly of elections.'905

Consequently, while he would periodically refer to himself as a socialist, 906 the General Election of 1918 marked the end of Graham's personal parliamentary campaigns, and his engagement with socialism in general. There seems to have been two main reasons for this, one national, and the other international. Not only had the demeanor and attitudes of the country changed as a result of the war, so too had the nature of governmental bureaucracy. In June 1918, the Labour Party adopted Sidney Webb's programme entitled Labour and the New Social Order which committed the party to full employment, a comprehensive system of benefits, the nationalisation of land, the railways, electricity, and coal, and a wealth tax to pay for the war. This could be seen as the fruition of Graham's socialist dreams, but ironically, for Graham, it was not. Thorpe wrote that Webb's programme was aimed at preserving the extended wartime state; that socialism could be 'an agent of national efficiency,' offering 'bureaucratic top-down socialism,' and the possibility of bringing about socialism by state action alone.907 William Knox and Alan MacKinlay wrote about the changes within the Labour party, whereby, the radicalism and idealism that had inspired the early adherents, like Graham, 'was to be dissipated as electoral success and governmental responsibility shifted Labour to a pragmatic political course, and to reliance on the bureaucrat and the planner rather than the people." In later years, particularly during the Depression years of 1929 and 1932, they believed that:

<sup>902</sup> Glasgow Herald, 6 December 1918, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>903</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>904</sup> Johnston believed that Hope won because he was even more bellicose over the war than Graham, and had a platform of hanging the Kaiser, and that the electorate believed that Graham 'would not pull the rope tight enough.' Johnston, *Memories*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>905</sup> Munro, The Brave Days, p. 316.

<sup>906</sup> Glasgow Herald, 30 October 1928, p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>907</sup> Thorpe, pp. 45-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>908</sup> W. W. Knox, A. MacKinlay, 'The Re-Making of Scottish Labour in the 1930s', *Twentieth Century British History*, (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 174.

Ethical socialism and a belief in working people's right to control their destiny gave way to belief in a strong, technocratic state . . . It was the task of the experts and technocrats to deliver the socialist commonwealth via planning, science, and technology.<sup>909</sup>

This was not Graham's idea of socialism. Graham apparently still believed that socialism should be a 'bottom-up' process whereby the workers and the poor themselves would bring about their own enlightened emancipation. On 11 December, 1919, in a letter to the English dramatist Henry Arthur Jones, Graham wrote that he had hoped that socialism would have produced the demise of selfishness and a better feeling between man and man, adding, rather forlornly, 'You will admit, I think, that my ambition was not a low ambition. That I was deceived, and that all the golden dreams of Morris have vanished in nine bestial and inarticulate years . . . has not been my fault. <sup>2910</sup> MacDiarmid recalled an undated speech in which Graham said that the Labour party was 'merely a third party struggling for place, for office, and for the fruit of government, all their high ideals lost, and all their aspirations locked away in some dark corner of their souls. <sup>2911</sup> These sentiments would seem to confirm the belief that fundamentally, the basis for Graham's socialism was moral, and not a little idealistic.

The late war fundamentally changed Graham's attitude in another way. Graham, who had been at the forefront of disputes and conflict only a few years earlier, now, having witnessed the bloody results of 'bottom-up' socialism in Russia, saw its influence threatening to spill over onto the streets of Britain. There had been no comment from Graham on the Rent Strike in Glasgow of 1915 (at which time he was back in Scotland), and there was a marked silence during the General Strike in Glasgow in January 1919, in which the 'Bolshevik' John MacLean was prominent, nor the 'Bloody Friday' riots in George Square. He may have regarded the Rent Strike as justified, but at that time, unpatriotic, and a distraction from the war in France. As for the General Strike, there was undoubtedly a revolutionary aspect to these agitations. In his 1918 election speeches he had expressed a strong antipathy to Bolshevism, and in that context he expressed strong views on the imprisoned MacLean:

for whose cause he had no sympathy, nevertheless he thought he should be set at liberty (*Applause*.). M'Lean [sic] he considered a harmless visionary, he believed a good citizen in private life, but with a super-abundant dose of vanity in his composition.<sup>912</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>909</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>910</sup> Reprinted in Taking the Curtain Call: The Life & Letters of Henry Arthur Jones, ed. by Doris Arthur Jones (London: Gollancz, 1930), p. 304.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>911</sup> MacDiarmid, *Centenary Study*, p. 29. Graham repeated this sentiment at a speech on behalf of the National Party of Scotland in Kings Park, Stirling on 21 June 1930. *The Scots Independent Supplement*, July 1930, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>912</sup> Stirling Observer, 26 November 1918, p. 5. Graham's view of MacLean may also have been coloured by MacLean's pacifism, as amply demonstrated on MacLean's letter to *Justice* of 17 September 1914, p. 5. It is not recorded whether the two men ever met; MacDiarmid doubted it, stating 'If they had met it is unlikely they would have got on together.' MacDiarmid *Centenary Study*, p. 9.

In January 1918, MacLean had been appointed Bolshevik Representative in Scotland, and at the election meeting in Plean, a member of the audience asked if Graham would vote for recognition of Soviet Russia? Graham replied 'that the only recognition he would give the miserable blood-stained wretches, Lenin and Trotsky, would be at the end of a piece of hard rope on the gallows. (*Laughter and applause*.)'913 This, at first hearing, sounds as if the war had radically changed Graham's views of socialism, but recent events in Russia, seem to have had the effect of confirming his own political pacifism, and perhaps further souring his attitudes to socialism generally.

# **EMPIRE and COLONIALISM**

In parallel to his views expressed above, we now come to what his later biographers saw as Graham's *volte face* over his attitude to Empire, with his enthusiastic support for what many on the Left saw as a capitalist war between the major European powers for imperial dominance. The consensus among historians was that the suddenness and unexpectedness of the war took many on the Left by surprise, and created dilemmas both for political parties and individuals, including the consequential alliance with Czarist Russia. 914 Joseph Clayton, writing in 1926, believed that the majority consensus was that:

The actual declaration of war settled the matter as far as the majority was concerned. Hyndman and Cunninghame Graham . . . sought peace while it endured, but now that war had come, well, Socialists and Trade Unionists, like other people had got to see it through.<sup>915</sup>

Despite Graham's distaste for what he called 'oceans of false sentiment at home,' 916 a later commentator, writing under the pseudonym 'Histronicus,' wrote that Graham had been motivated by a sense of honour:

Graham strongly opposed the government's attitude to war. In 1914, however, convinced that this was a war against tyranny, and because of his passionate love of liberty and keen sense of honour, he volunteered to go to South America on a horse-buying mission.<sup>917</sup>

In a similar fashion, Helen Smith wrote that Graham had 'protested vigourously against the prospect of conflict, but once it had commenced, he lent his support in the hope that the fighting would be brought to a swift conclusion.'918 However, she added that Graham's mother had upset his editor, Edward Garnett, for 'as good as calling me [Garnett] pro-German,'919 which indicated strong prejudices within Graham's immediate family circle. Perhaps H. M. Hyndman summed up the position of many, 'as

<sup>913</sup> Stirling Observer, 2 December 1918, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>914</sup> Graham had protested the Czar's visit to Britain in 1909, due to his imprisonment of Socialist and Liberals. Cunninghame Graham, letter to *Forward*, 1 May 1909, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>915</sup> Clayton, p. 166.

<sup>916</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Cartagena on the Banks of the Sinú (London: Heinemann, 1920), p. xi.

<sup>917</sup> Methodist Times, London, 1 July 1937, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>918</sup> Smith, p. 246.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>919</sup> Ibid.

matters stand to-day, it is a choice of evils in all the affairs of life. When a man is called upon to act, he must put up the shutters on one side of his intellect. The victory of Germany would be worse for civilization and humanity than success of the Allies.'920

Graham's change of heart had been swift, and as early as 29 August, 1914, his own prejudices were expressed in a letter in *The Glasgow Herald* headed 'A Strange Patriot', in which he attacked a previous letter signed 'JFS' which supported Germany against the French. In this letter, Graham referred to the Germans as 'blood thirsty murderers of defenseless women, children, and non-combatants.'921 His full support for the war, however, was demonstrated in a letter to *The Nation* in August 1915, in which he attacked the press, particularly *The Times* and *The Daily Mail*, for their lack of support for the British war effort.'922 After the war, during his election campaign in 1918, he stated:

He had with his own eyes seen evidence that placed the Boche outside humanity . . . These barbarous murderers must be made to pay to the uttermost farthing for all the misery and bloodshed they have brought upon the world . . . This was not a war of capitalists, it was the working men of Germany who sang the hymn of hate, tortured prisoners, and cheered on the Army so long as they were winning. 2923

Graham appears to have regarded the war, not as a capitalist war, like many of his erstwhile comrades, but as a people's war. In one of only two sketches which referred to the conflict, 'Brought Forward' (1915),924 set in the Parkhead Forge, a lively dialogue between workmates who are concerned about the conflict, and the news of the death of one of their fellows at the Front, resolved itself when one of the workers donned his jacket and set off to seek personal, but noble revenge.

Keir Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald, and many within the ILP, remained adamantly opposed to war; in Stewart's words, 'What they were doing now was to clear themselves and their Party from responsibility for the crime, and, if possible, hold the Labour movement of this country true and faithful to the spirit and pledge of International Socialism.'925 By the end of August, however, the Labour party had agreed an electoral truce, and it was soon supporting the war effort. Thorpe identified a 'patriotic surge, and most Labour leaders would not have been immune from it,' but even the sceptics among them realised, 'Labour might cause itself great damage by going against the tide of patriotism sweeping the country.'926 According to Clayton, the large majority of British socialists and trade unionists were as patriotic as the

<sup>920</sup> Rosalind Hyndman, The Last Years of H. M. Hyndman (London: G. Richards, 1923), pp. 82-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>921</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to *Glasgow Herald*, 29 August 1914, p. 3. Four days later, Graham had another letter published in *The Glasgow Herald*, calling the Germans 'Huns,' and accusing them of being 'murderers of children, and violators of young girls.' 'Abuse of the White Flag,' 2 September 1914, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>922</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to *The Nation*, 14 August 1915, p. 643.

<sup>923</sup> Stirling Observer, 2 December 1918, p. 2.

<sup>924</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Brought Forward,' *English Review*, February 1915, pp. 285-89. Graham's second wartime sketch was 'Elysium,' *Nation*, 26 February 1916, pp. 759-60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>925</sup> Stewart, p. 345.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>926</sup> Thorpe, p. 33.

rest of the nation, the minority pacifist.<sup>927</sup> This seeming paradox was addressed by G. K. Chesterton in an article in *The Illustrated London News* in 1915:

It is the moderate Socialists who are Pacifists; the fighting Socialists are patriots. Mr. Ben Tillett who would have been regarded by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as a mere firebrand; but it is precisely because Mr. Tillet was ready to go on fighting Capitalism that he is ready to go on fighting Krupp. It is precisely because Mr. Macdonald was weak in his opposition to domestic tyrants, that he is weak in his opposition to foreign ones.<sup>928</sup>

Boiled down, Chesterton was putting forward the claim that it was not simply a matter of moral or political principle, but a matter of mental attitude towards oppression, from whichever direction it came. In addition, there was often a sentimental patriotism, even among the most hardened anti-war socialists. Graham's erstwhile socialist colleague, Robert Smillie, wrote of his own conflicting feelings, 'in spite of all my misgivings, there was part of me that was so completely British that I could not help but hope that, whatever happened, we would be on the winning side." Claeys claimed that 'proimperial attitudes were much more wide-spread among socialists than is usually assumed, to the degree that 'socialist imperialism' may be described as a leading trend in the early twentieth century.'930 This obviously had not applied to Graham, but at the outset of the conflict there may have been something else in Graham's character that fed his prejudices, and changed his mind, the aesthetic aspect to warfare. In his sketch 'Mudejar,' in which a soldier spared the destruction of an ancient tower, a literary critic wrote, 'For here he [Graham] admits that the soul of man expressed in art may be even more sacred than the body of man. The Germans who destroyed Rheims are worse sinners than the Germans who shot peasants.'931 The past had created beauty as well as folly and ugliness, and this beauty was a precious link to that civilised past. To Graham, perhaps, anyone who had instigated its destruction, in what would be an ugly mechanistic struggle, was therefore a barbarian, outwith the bounds of common humanity. Added to this, was something that Compton Mackenzie spoke of later, a fear that Graham no doubt shared, 'We desired to delete [sic] Germany not because Germany was an Imperial rival, but because a prepotent Germany seemed to us a menace to what was left of individual freedom. To us the triumph of Germany meant the triumph of bureaucracy.'932 This was the same bureaucracy that was creeping into the state socialism envisaged in Webb's programme.

<sup>927</sup> Clayton, p. 164.

<sup>928</sup> G. K. Chesterton, 'Our Note Book,' The Illustrated London News, 3 July 1915, p. 3.

<sup>929</sup> Cowan, p. 205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>930</sup> Claeys, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>931</sup> Observer, 12 November 1916, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>932</sup> Mackenzie, 'Safety Last.' Address delivered in the St Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, on 29 January 1932, on his installation as Rector of the University of Glasgow. Reprinted in *Scotland In Quest of Her Youth*, ed. by David Cleghorn Thomson (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1932), p. 48.

After the war, Graham's anti-German rhetoric was in no way modified. During his election campaign, Graham made several extremely bellicose remarks not only about Germans, but also about pacifists. At an election meeting in Banknock, when asked what he would do with conscientious objectors, he replied that he would release them, 'and give them each a petticoat at the national expense.' (*Laughter*.)933 He amplified this at Plean, when he said he would give 'the conchies' a pair of openwork silk stockings each.934 At Cambuskenneth he added 'suspenders to the fit out.'935 This intemperate and rather squalid use of language, if not simply an appeal to populism, seems unworthy of a man who had previously expressed contempt for the empire he now upheld, and who himself had opposed the conflict at the outset, but it appears that Graham did feel very strongly about the war, and the moral position of those who opposed it, and it may indeed have been another motivation to stand for election.

Graham's political career was replete with passionate involvements and prejudices, and he himself alluded to a tendency towards extreme views, and an all-or-nothing approach to these passions, 'for all of my life I have loved bread, bread, and wine, wine, 936 not caring for half measures, like your true Scot, of whom it has been said, "If he believes in Christianity he has no doubts, and if he is a disbeliever he has none either." A reviewer wrote in response, 'We fear that no half measures may be looked for from a Scot.' 938 This may have dictated Graham's attitude towards the war; having decided that Britain's role was just, 939 and that the Germans were pursuing a mechanistic, un-chivalrous aggression, Graham, who despite his extreme views, deprecated violence and brutality, threw himself wholly into supporting it. Also, his views on the significance of the British Empire's role in the conflict appears to have overridden his previous imperial scepticism. This was expressed at the launch of his electoral campaign in 1918, and *The Stirling Observer* reported these new sentiments:

For four years they had been engaged in a war the influence of which had been felt all over the world, and the Empire had made an effort so colossal, so heroic, and so self-sacrificing that when the history of the war came to be written [,] all that Britain, all the Empire had done, would be a household word that the generation which came after them should enjoy that peace and those blessings for which this generation had suffered and endured and shed

933 Stirling Observer, 10 December 1918, p. 5.

<sup>934</sup> Ibid.

<sup>935</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>936</sup> An allusion carried forward into his essay on Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. 'Bread was bread, verily to him, and wine was wine; the two could never mix their essences and become the potch-potch dear to politicians. Cunninghame Graham, 'Wilfrid Scawen Blunt,' English Review, December 1922, p. 488.

<sup>937</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Preface,' Brought Forward (London: Duckworth, 1909), p. vii.

<sup>938 &</sup>quot;Adieu!' He Cried," Nation XX, 21 October 1916, p. 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>939</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre defined a 'just' war as 'one in which the good to be achieved outweighs the evils involved in waging war and in which a clear distinction can be made between the combatants and non-combatants,' which Graham would have agreed with. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (1981) (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), p. 7.

Here, it is necessary to draw a distinction between the imperialists, the instigators and exploiters of empire, particularly in the remoter and undeveloped areas of the world, whom Graham had railed against, and the products of empire, ie., the sons and daughters of what Bell called 'the *second settler empire*'941 in Canada and the Antipodes, who had come to the motherland's aid during the conflict, and whose actions and sacrifice had outweighed the negative aspects of localised imperial abuses.

Subsequent to his electoral defeat in 1918, Graham made no recorded statement on imperial matters; the war had ushered in many political changes, both nationally and internationally, and Worley highlighted a general mood in the country subsequent to the conflict, 'For some, the war had marked the end of the "old order," paving the way for alternative political ideologies that would range from communism to socialism to fascism to syndicalism to overt nationalism.'942 It would be to nationalism, albeit with a socialist complexion, that Graham would increasingly turn.

# IRELAND and SCOTLAND

At the beginning of his 1918 election campaign, Graham made his first statement on Irish Home Rule for several years. He reminded his audience at the Town Hall in Bannockburn that he had stood on 'a thousand platforms' with Michael Davitt, and Parnell, promoting Irish Home Rule, and had been the only British M.P. to attend Parnell's funeral. He contended that it was wrong to suggest that Ireland had not done her duty in the recent conflict, 'There were nearly half a million gallant Irishmen from Ireland, the United States, and the colonial dominions who had fought and bled for the common cause;' the question of Ireland's status, which had been a disgrace to Britain for a hundred years should be settled quickly. Again, in this immediate post-war period, all of Graham's political statements were predicated on his support for the war, and Britain's military might, which was a complete reversal of his previous position. Included in this was a threat to Sinn Fein, wherein they would be faced with that might if they threatened separation by force, 'they could not have separation without bloodshed.' Other Portion of View. Soviet Russia, events in Ireland had, in Mackenzie's words, prejudiced him against the Irish point of view.

As we have seen, Graham had not always criticised the use of political violence as a means of gaining freedom from what he regarded as tyranny, but now the late war and its aftermath seem to have changed not only his views of empire, but he began to justify British actions against Irish Republican Army attacks. On 21 November 1920, a team of undercover British intelligence agents, working and

<sup>940</sup> Stirling Observer, 26 November 1918, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>941</sup> Bell, p. 266.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>942</sup> Worley, p. 31.

<sup>943</sup> Stirling Observer, 26 November 1918, p. 5.

<sup>944</sup> Ibid.

<sup>945</sup> Ibid.

<sup>946</sup> Mackenzie, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham Scottish Nationalist,' Outlook & The Modern Scot, May 1936, p. 21.

living in Dublin, were murdered by Irish republicans, quickly followed by British reprisals. Graham sent a letter to R. E. Muirhead, deprecating these events, as if linking the aspirations of the recently reformed Scottish Home Rule Association with the methods of the IRA. Muirhead did not reply until a month later (blaming his company's stocktaking), assuring Graham that the SHRA also deprecated the killings on both sides, but reminding him of other acts of repression carried out by the British government in Ireland.<sup>947</sup> In previous times, Graham would have no doubt agreed, but in his reply, on 27 December he stated that these reprisals had been nothing compared to republican outrages, and defended British actions. In closing, an obviously angry Graham wrote that the SHRA should not 'fall into the mistake of meddling in the affairs of others.'948

Graham seems to have been genuinely disturbed by assassination, and in a letter of November 1927, he wrote to the war correspondent and journalist H. W. Nevinson criticising Nevinson's praise for Sir Roger Casement in his recent book, *Last Changes, Last Changes*, "The shooting men by batches revolted me. The exploits of the two bands of scoundrels, the Gunmen and the Black and Tans (*Arcades ambo*), filled me with disgust." <sup>949</sup>

During his 1918 election campaign, Graham had continued to express the Scottish Home Rule sentiments that he had maintained throughout his political career as reported in *The Stirling Observer*, 'Mr Graham as a strong Scottish Home Ruler specially resented all dictation from London.' <sup>950</sup> At Cambuskenneth, for example it was reported:

that as a Scotsman he was in favour of Home Rule for Scotland, and the restoration of the Parliament in Edinburgh. He resented very much the influence of London as to who should be their candidates, and said that it might do well in England and Wales, but as regards Scotland he should say with all the force at his command, "Hands off Scotland"! <sup>951</sup>

This sentiment was repeated four days later at Lennoxtown, where he described London's interference in Scotland's electoral process (which included his own) as 'the mailed fist of political Prussianism.'952

With Graham's failure to win Stirlingshire West, he temporarily disappeared from the pages of national and local newspapers as a political activist for 20 months, except for occasional letters on cruelty to animals, but reviews of his anthologies still appeared regularly. However, in what looks like yet another unintended outcome, his name began to reappear as an advocate for Scottish Home Rule, and

<sup>949</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to H. W. Nevinson, dated 27-28 November 1927. Quoted in Tschiffely, pp.391-3. Since this letter appeared in Tschiffely's biography, it appears that Graham, a Scottish nationalist, wished to clarify his stance regarding such actions.

<sup>947</sup> Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 23 December 1920. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>948</sup> Ibid., 27 December, 1920.

<sup>950</sup> Stirling Observer, 26 November 1918, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>951</sup> Ibid., 2 December 1918, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>952</sup> Ibid., 30 November 1918, p. 5.

we now move into what is considered a major part of his role in Scotland's political heritage.

On 3 August 1920, Graham had written to R. E. Muirhead, the founder and the foremost promoter by the reformed Scottish Home Rule Association, declining an invitation to address a forthcoming rally, 953 but Muirhead persisted, and replied:

During your campaign in Stirlingshire at the last election you delivered some very effective speeches in favour of Scottish Self-Government, I take it therefore that you are strongly convinced of the necessity of the establishing of a Parliament in Scotland, that being the case I felt that if you could afford the time at all you could be willing to do something to obtain Self-Government if for no other reason that it would enable you to feel more self-respect.<sup>954</sup>

This cleverly worded response contained the suggestion of a rebuke, and it seems to have been sufficient to convince Graham to change his mind, and to speak at the Wallace Day commemoration at Elderslie on 21 August. Muirhead, wrote many years later that Graham's change of mind had occurred in Glasgow, 'as a result of some talks with him that he expressed his desire to join the Scottish Home Rule Association and he did so in August 1920.'955 This initial correspondence established the pattern of address between the two men for the next fourteen years. Muirhead's letters were business-like, containing exchanges on the weather, news items, and latterly, the National Party of Scotland's travails at elections, plus small blandishments, intended to encourage the now peripatetic Graham to speak at rallies. 956 Undoubtedly, Muirhead and the other SHRA members, regarded Graham with some reverence, and saw him as a major asset as a crowd-puller, but the tone of their correspondence remained formal.

Leading up to World War I, there had been a growing sense of re-awakened Scottish national identity, manifesting itself, as stated above, in an interest among certain individuals in Scotland's Celtic past. This was very slowly becoming politicised through various small groups, such as The Young Scots Society from 1900, the rebirth of the Scottish Home Rule Association in 1918, and Erskine of Marr's Scots National League from 1920.957 Graham may have avoided involvement with Erskine because of his avowed insistence on a religious element to his nationalism, which Graham, despite his sentimental interest in Catholicism in his youth, would have found anathema in the context of a projected consensual new nationalist movement. Graham's scepticism may also have been rooted in Erskine's attachment to what Finlay described as 'romantic notions of Celticism,' which were eventually rejected

<sup>953</sup> Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 5 August 1920. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>954</sup> Ibid., 5 August, 1920.

<sup>955</sup> Muirhead, 'Foreword' to MacDiarmid's Centenary Study, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>956</sup> Graham spent three months abroad every Winter, three months at his Scottish home at Ardoch, and the remainder of his time in London's Belgravia. Tschiffely, p. 390.

<sup>957</sup> Finlay, Independent and Free, p. 29.

by the SNL itself.<sup>958</sup> Finlay described the SNL as 'the most important of all the interwar nationalist groups,' which was established for the sole purpose of obtaining Scottish self-government, through the establishment of a new party which would run candidates at local and general elections, whereas the SHRA advocated autonomy within the existing structure of Britain, and cross-party co-operation.<sup>959</sup> These varying objectives would plague the nationalist movements for most of the 1920s, and later when the various groups amalgamated into the NPS and the SNP.

Again, a major motivating factor in this new nationalism seems to have been cultural, <sup>960</sup> or perhaps the voices in what was seen as a new Scottish renaissance, had the skills to express the various 'national' emotions more clearly, or perhaps commentators found it easier to refer to these more recognisable adherents. In 1929, John Barbour launched an attack on this aspect of the nationalist case in the *Edinburgh Review*:

A Scottish literary renaissance is in the air, fighting hard to break through the long mists of national self-denial. Scotland today swarms with minor poets – heralds, let us hope, of some new 'surpassing spirit.' Mr Cunninghame Graham, Mr. C. M. Grieve, the Hon. Erskine of Marr – these are typical figures in the Scottish literary renaissance. Their chief weakness is their *impatient versatility* – best exemplified in the work of the ubiquitous Mr Grieve. <sup>961</sup>

While it is problematic to place Graham among the leaders of any literary 'renaissance' (he had been writing similar material since at least 1900), he had certainly displayed an impatience throughout his political career. This general impatience, according to Barbour, stemmed, not from purely economic and social reasons, but from a shared belief that Scotland was in danger, 'All the tendencies reveal a nation slowly waking to the fear of being about to lose its soul, and striving to convince itself, with the aggressiveness of self-distrust, that it still has a personality of its own.'962

Graham's first speech for the re-formed SHRA was at the commemoration of the death of Sir William Wallace at Elderslie, on 21 August, 1920, where he was described as 'the leading speaker," and it was the first recorded speech on Home Rule for Scotland since he spoke in parliament in support of a Scottish Home Rule Bill on 9 April 1889, (although, as we have seen, he made pro-Home Rule statements during his 1918 election campaign). Like that speech (after the usual nationalist tropes about Bruce and Wallace, and Graham's assertion that he was a direct descendant of Wallace's 'bosom friend' Sir John de Graham), Graham declared that wished to see a Scottish parliament that would make up for what he saw as a democratic deficit in the way that Scotland was governed. According to Graham, it

959 Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>958</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>960</sup> I. G. C. Hutchison, Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>961</sup> John Barbour, 'Scotland - The New Dominion,' The Edinburgh Review, April 1929, pp. 325-6.

<sup>962</sup> Ibid.

<sup>963</sup> Glasgow Herald, 30 August 1920, p. 9.

was 'a scandal the Scottish members were not allowed to debate and finish for themselves. He wanted to see this altered and done away with. There were many things a Scottish Parliament could do,'964 however, in what was a departure from previous statements, Graham added, 'it could bring again the feeling of and sentiments of nationalism.'965 What Graham meant by this, would find fuller voice later.

No further correspondence seems to have been exchanged with Muirhead until July 1923, when Muirhead replied to Graham's letter of 20 June, sent from Graham's home in Elizabeth Street, Belgravia, where Graham was spending much of his time between trips abroad. Muirhead again asked him to speak, on this occasion at a 'Scotland's Day' rally on Glasgow Green, to be held on 25 August. Graham replied, accepting the invitation, but asking for a copy of the guest list, as he would not share a platform with 'anyone who has taken money from any foreign government for subsidising propaganda in favour of the foreign government, or was pro-German during the war. Any Irishman who has murdered an unarmed man, Catholic or Protestant.'966 As it transpired, Graham did not attend, due to an attack of rheumatism. It was, however, a large event, described by The Glasgow Herald as being attended by 'many thousands of people,' who witnessed a large historical pageant.967 The main speaker was the socialist M.P. James Maxton who acknowledged that 'hitherto there had been no real support for the demand for Scottish Home Rule,' but added, 'this is probably the beginning of a movement for Scottish self-determination.'968 A well known firebrand speaker, Maxton concluded his speech with the words 'When we get back [to parliament] we are going fight tooth and nail for them; we mean to tell them that they can do what they like about English children but they are not to suffer Scottish children to die and thousands of Scotsmen to suffer unemployment (Applause.)' He then urged his audience 'to carry on the agitation for an independent Parliament in Scotland, even though it meant a fight like that of Ireland's, '969 a statement with which Graham would have profoundly disagreed.

At this stage, according to Finlay, members of the SHRA still pinned their hopes on the Labour Party; with the Liberals in irreversible decline, and after the general election of 1923, when Labour, with almost 30% of the votes edged the Liberals into third place, it was believed that Ramsay MacDonald's minority government, with the tacit support of the Liberals 'would enact the necessary legislation.' <sup>970</sup> The situation reached a watershed with the Glasgow Labour M.P. George Buchanan's proposed Government of Scotland Bill, which was similar to the pre-1914 Liberal bills on Home Rule. It received

964 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>965</sup> Ibid.

<sup>966</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Muirhead, 7 July 1923. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>967</sup> Glasgow Herald, 27 August 1923, p. 5.

<sup>968</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>969</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>970</sup> Finlay, *Independent and Free*, p.3. At its original inception, MacDonald had been London Branch Secretary of the SHRA.

its second reading on 9 May 1924, seconded by Johnston, 971 but it was talked out by the Tories, causing an uproar in the chamber, and leading to the suspension of three Labour M.P.s, including Maxton and David Kirkwood.<sup>972</sup> MacDonald's minority government was removed from power before any further legislation could be enacted. Finlay believed that the SHRA, which had been dominated by Labour party members and trade unions, was now at an impasse after the defeat of Buchanan's bill, and 'there were increasing calls for some new form of activity in order to circumvent the stranglehold of the Labour Party's British interests.'973 Despite this, Muirhead was still writing to Graham in August of that year, expressing his optimism that the Labour government would enact a Home Rule Bill, and making no mention that the SHRA was deeply divided over its future. Muirhead, and other members of the SHRA were now prompted to consider an alternative strategy, 974 and on 17 June 1925, Muirhead again wrote to Graham, expressing frustration, that since none of the other parties had put Scottish Home Rule first in their programme, 'I am of the opinion that it will be necessary to run Scottish National Candidates in order to bring the other parties up to the point of making it the chief issue at Scottish parliamentary elections.<sup>2975</sup> Simultaneously, the Labour party turned cool over the whole issue of Home Rule, as outlined by Hutchison,976 and Fraser.977 A Scottish National Convention was held in 1926, sponsored by the SHRA, in an attempt to bring the various parties together, and it drafted a further Home Rule Bill which was proposed in parliament by the Labour M.P., the Reverend James Barr on 13 May, 1927, again seconded by Johnston, but was again talked out.<sup>978</sup>

Muirhead, who was the main promoter of the SHRA, like Charles Waddie before him, which had hitherto been a loose confederation of cross-party enthusiasts, and political groups, was now beginning to see its diminution, as attendances at rallies declined. He also saw the need for parliamentary action, if only, at this stage, to put more pressure on the other political parties, and this marks a significant milestone in the formation of a potentially viable nationalist parliamentary force. On 9 March, 1926, Muirhead informed Graham that 'The question of the formation of a Scottish National Party is one which may be discussed at the Annual Meeting,' having failed to reach a decision at the previous one.<sup>979</sup>

What was referred to as 'the inaugural meeting of the National Party of Scotland' was held on 24 March, 1928, with the object of 'Self Government for Scotland with independent national status within the British group of nations together with the reconstruction of Scottish national life.' The

<sup>971</sup> By this time, Johnston was the MP for Stirling and Clackmannan West, but would lose the seat five months

<sup>972</sup> Government of Scotland Bill, Hansard, 9 May 1924, Vol.173, cc.789-874

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>973</sup> Finlay, Independent and Free, p. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>974</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>975</sup> R. E. Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 17 June 1925. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>976</sup> Hutchison, Scottish Politics, p. 83.

<sup>977</sup> W. Hamish Fraser, Scottish Popular Politics: From Radicalism to Labour (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2000), p. 160.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>978</sup> PP. Government of Scotland Bill, Hansard, 13 May 1927, Vol.206, cc.865-7. Barr at this time was president of the SHRA.

<sup>979</sup> Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 9 March 1926. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

representative of the Scottish National Movement (Mr. Lyon) congratulated the Glasgow University Scottish Nationalist Association upon 'the successful culmination of effort to establish a united national front.' 980 Almost immediately afterwards, on 2 April 1928, Muirhead again wrote to Graham, who had very recently returned from South America:

Some of us have been working during the winter with the object of getting the Scottish National Movement focussed into one body. Last week a provisional Committee of Scottish nationalists was set up. A Constitution is being prepared and very soon I anticipate a Scottish National Party will take the field.<sup>981</sup>

He added, that despite the Executive Committee being in favour of such a new body, the majority of the SHRA membership was not. However, he shared some information that would prove extremely important to the final stage of Graham's political involvement:

A particularly hopeful side of the movement which has developed during the last few months is the Glasgow University Scottish National Association. It is already some three hundred strong and is co-operating in the formation of a National Party . . . I understand that the Glasgow University Scottish National Association have decided to approach you to invite you to stand as a Scottish National Candidate at the forthcoming Rectorial Election. I hope that you will be able to consider the proposal favourably. 982

It is apparent that Muirhead was easing the way for the students; it is also apparent that much of the initiative was coming from the students themselves, under the leadership of 23-year-old John MacCormick, but the choice of Graham as candidate for the Rectorship, against the sitting Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, appears to have been arbitrary. After a refusal from J. M. Barrie, MacCormick recalled, 'It was then that the name of R. B. Cunninghame Graham came vaguely into my mind, but when I mentioned him to my student colleagues they all confessed that they knew nothing about him, and therefore, turned down my choice.'983 This is at odds with a statement in the 1927 gossip column of *The Sunday Post* that 'There are few men nowadays so well known as Mr R. B. Cunninghame Graham,'984 and that Graham had been regular speaker at nationalist gatherings since 1920, and that his name had

982 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>980</sup> Minutes of National Party of Scotland Inaugural Meeting. 24 March 1928. James Halliday Papers, NLS., Acc.13417/1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>981</sup> Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 2 April 1928. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>983</sup> John MacCormick, *The Flag In The Wind* (1955) (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), pp. 26-7. MacDiarmid concurred, and was horrified, 'when I addressed the students supporting Cunninghame Graham's candidature for Lord rectorship of Glasgow University [. . .] and found that they knew nothing or next to nothing of his writings.' MacDiarmid, *Centenary Study*, p. 19. Also MacDiarmid, 'The Significance of Cunninghame Graham,' in *The Selected Essays of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. by Duncan Glen (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), p. 122.

<sup>984</sup> *Sunday Post*, 13 November 1925, p. 15.

gone forward for Rectorship of Glasgow University in 1914.985 MacCormick, however, persisted, and took out Graham's anthology, *Hope*, from The Mitchell Library, and became convinced that Graham should be their candidate:

As I read I became fascinated both by the man and his writing. Here was really a great Scotsman and, although his name was unfamiliar to my own generation, I was sure we could soon remedy that. But what were his politics? I knew that in his young days he had been a Radical and had later taken part with Keir Hardie in the formation of the Labour Party. But, for many years, he had been missing from the political scene altogether and, seemed to have spent most of his time in South America. 986

MacCormick convinced his fellow student nationalists that Graham was a good choice, and they approached Graham, who, after meeting MacCormick's colleague James Valentine in Glasgow, agreed that he would stand. Valentine reported to his fellows, 'we've got a candidate – and I think he's the greatest Scotsman alive!'987

MacDiarmid later wrote, 'At that time the Scottish Nationalist Movement was largely led by writers – Lewis Spence, Neil M. Gunn, the Hon Ruaraidh Erskine of Marr, William Gilles, Eric Linklater, and others, above all, a little later, Compton Mackenzie. 988 Mackenzie would occupy an important position of a literary go-between, and on occasions stood in for Graham, when Graham was in London, or increasingly on his foreign trips. On 10 May, Mackenzie and MacDiarmid met for the first time at a conference organised by MacCormick to discuss the amalgamation of the various nationalist groups, and The Glasgow Herald announced that following conversations between delegates of the Glasgow University Student Nationalist Association, the Scots National League, the Scottish National Movement, and The Scottish Home Rule Association, the National Party of Scotland had been formed. It was expressly stipulated, however, that the Party would contest parliamentary and local government elections, and would not lend its support to candidates other than those put forward under its auspices.<sup>989</sup> The report then went on to detail the new constitution and rules, particularly the aim of its promoters to obtain such powers of self-government as will ensure Scotland independent national status within the British group of nations. It also stipulated that elected members would not take positions in any Westminster government; that Scotland would withdraw from Westminster after gaining a majority of parliamentary seats; and that prominence would be given to the reconstruction of Scottish national life. Among those

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>985</sup> Malcolm Petrie wrote that at this time, MacCormick was 'apparently unaware of the Scottish Home Rule Association.' Malcolm Petrie, 'John MacCormick,' Scottish National Party Leaders (2016), p. 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>986</sup> MacCormick, p. 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>987</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>988</sup> MacDiarmid, *Centenary Study*, p. 10. Mackenzie, who was obviously a great admirer of Graham's, and like Graham he was born in England, with wide international interests. He claimed that he had first met Graham in May 1903, at a garden party in Worcester College, Oxford, but they did not meet again until the formation of the National Party of Scotland in 1928. Mackenzie, 'Don Roberto,' *Listener*, 29 May 1952, p. 868.

<sup>989</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 14 May 1928, p. 9.

who had already joined the party were, 'Mr R. B. Cunninghame Graham, Mr Compton Mackenzie, the Hon. R. Erskine of Marr, Mr Lewis Spence, Mr William Gilles, Mr R. E. Muirhead, the Rev. Walter Murray B. D., Mr C. M. Grieve, amongst other prominent nationalists. 990 By 16 May, Muirhead wrote to Graham expecting that Graham would speak at a rally at King's Park, Stirling, on 23 June, and that 'this meeting would be the first Public Demonstration in support of the National Party of Scotland."991

The day after the 10 May conference, Mackenzie addressed the Students Union at Glasgow University and informed them that Graham was intending to stand at the Rectorial election. Mackenzie recalled the background and the event in his autobiography:

At this date a law student at the University [Glasgow], J. B. MacCormick, had parted company with the Labour Party and founded the Glasgow University Nationalist Association with the intention of putting up R. B. Cunninghame Graham as their candidate in the Rectorial election next October. This remarkable young man, seconded by James Valentine, another remarkable young man, had been able to convince various seniors like Lewis Spence and R. Muirhead that if the National movement was to make real headway it was vital to amalgamate the various Home Rule associations already in existence into what should be called the National Party of Scotland. A conference was held in Glasgow at the beginning of May at which this amalgamation became an accomplished fact. I was appointed a member of the Council, and John MacCormick asked me to make the announcement of Cunninghame Graham's candidature for the Rectorship in the Glasgow University Union. 992

On 16 May (1928), Muirhead, who always tried to put a gloss on events, wrote to Graham in London, 'The Glasgow University students were very highly pleased with the Compton Mackenzie meeting last week at which your name was put forward as Scottish Nationalist candidate for Lord Rectorship."993 However, The Glasgow Herald's report of the meeting alluded to the fact that the students had given Mackenzie, initially at least, a rough reception. 994 Later, Graham wrote to Muirhead, I feel my chance for the university is not good for Baldwin is heavy metal. 995 It was obvious that Muirhead saw part of his role to placate and encourage Graham, if this sometimes meant not being entirely forthright and honest.

990 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>991</sup> Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 16 May 1928. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>992</sup> Mackenzie, My Life and Times, Octave Six 1923-1930, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), pp. 132-3. MacCormick made no mention of Mackenzie taking this initial role, stating instead, When we came to announce our candidate's name at an open meeting at the Union (the tradition being that it should be held secret until then) we could find no sponsoring speaker from outside and I, therefore, undertook the task myself.' MacCormick, p. 28. This was incorrect, as reported in The Glasgow Herald next day. The Glasgow Herald, 11 May 1928, p. 11. Mackenzie was however mentioned by MacCormick as attending a later meeting in the Union in support of Graham. MacCormick, p. 31.

<sup>993</sup> Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 16 May 1928. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>994</sup> Glasgow Herald, 15 May, 1928, p. 9.

<sup>995</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to R. E. Muirhead, 22 July 1928. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

MacCormick later claimed that he and his colleagues ran 'the greatest Rectorial campaigns ever known in Glasgow University,' adding, 'we coolly commandeered the platform of all our opponents and ultimately by various devices took over their social functions as well.'996 On the day of the poll, 27 October, 1928, the National Party held a demonstration in The Usher Hall, Edinburgh, and Graham was the principal speaker, where he said, 'there has been too little bitterness in Scottish politics. Bitterness was the root of politics, and without it, nothing could be done.'997 Afterwards, Mackenzie met Graham in the Caledonian Hotel, to await the result, which arrived by telegram; 'only sixty-six votes behind Baldwin,' he [Graham] murmured, 'well, in the circumstances I think that is as good as a victory, better indeed because I shall escape the boredom of having to prepare and deliver a Rectorial Address.'998

# UNIVERSITY of GLASGOW RECTORIAL ELECTION RESULTS. 27 October 1928.

Stanley Baldwin (Conservative)	1,044
R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Scottish Nationalist)	978
Sir Herbert Samuel (Liberal)	396
Rosslyn Mitchell (Labour)	66

Despite Graham coming second, *The Observer* commented:

Glasgow University Rectorial Election took place yesterday and resulted in the return of Mr. Baldwin... The result was considered a triumph for Scottish Nationalists. The voting of the men students showed a clear majority for Mr. Cunninghame Graham, but the women's vote turned the scale in favour of the Premier. 999

MacCormick believed that Graham had the majority of the men's vote 'across four "nations," but that the women's vote from the "flappers" had gone to Baldwin because he had given them the franchise earlier that year.'1000 From Graham's account, Tschiffely confirmed this, stating 'After the election, several delegations consisting of young ladies, called at "Ardoch" House to explain that although they would normally have voted for Don Roberto, they felt it was their duty to elect the Prime Minister who had supported and put through women's suffrage.' Tschiffely, however added a note, 'As we have seen, Don Roberto was one of the first supporters of women's suffrage, before Mr. Baldwin came on the political scene. Obviously the students didn't realise this.'1001

<sup>997</sup> Scotsman, 29 October 1928, p. 11.

<sup>996</sup> MacCormick, pp. 28-9.

<sup>998</sup> Mackenzie, 'Don Roberto,' p. 869.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>999</sup> Observer, 28 October 1928, p. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1000</sup> MacCormick, p. 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1001</sup> Tschiffely, p. 395. *The Scotsman* stated that of the male vote, Graham beat Baldwin by 712 to 501. *The Scotsman*, 23 March 1936, p. 10. Graham made a miscalculation when he again stood for the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University two years before his death, as remembered by Mackenzie, I was rather distressed to learn in 1934 that he had allowed himself to be nominated as the Nationalist candidate for the rectorship for the second time,

After Graham's Rectorial defeat, there occurred the most significant 'unexpected outcomes,' certainly in Graham's later life, for his near success had stimulated much-needed enthusiasm among the Scottish Home Rule supporters, who regarded the result as a victory, and very quickly a meeting was arranged for two days later at the St Andrew's Hall. *The Glasgow Herald* reported that a gathering of almost 3,000 Glasgow citizens attended the demonstration, presided over by the Duke of Montrose, and Graham was another of the speakers. The audience was very enthusiastic, and 'any pithy claim for Scottish self-government aroused great applause.'1002 Graham's speech repeated his previous practical preoccupations; that Scotland was poorly governed, that unemployment and housing was worse than in England. He also focused with identity politics, and included statements such as, 'There has been a tendency in Scotland for us to become pale copies of our Southern brethren. That is a tendency that I have always deplored.' He asserted that he was still a socialist, but believed that a Scottish parliament would provide a better theatre in which socialists could 'ventilate their grievances and with a better chance of being heard,' but believed that Scottish politics had become too tame, and that 'The Predominant Partner has always looked upon Scotland as a Cinderella not worthy of consideration.'1003

The Scotsman, typically, dismissed the new party, 'Mr Cunninghame Graham's position in the Glasgow Rectorial election has no political significance whatever.' It saw no need for Home Rule, and turned the tables on the nationalists, inverting their claims:

Are we Scotsmen not able to hold our own in union with England? Is the union with England sapping our independence, robbing us of our national heritage in language and literature, making us poor, mean spirited creatures, without a home or country of our own?<sup>1004</sup>

Obviously, a number of people did believe that Scotland had been, and was, the inferior partner, and that national life was endangered, but, they were still few in number, and MacCormick's autobiography is a catalogue of high ideals and hopes, amateurish political organisation, and lost deposits, as the party failed to make any electoral headway. However, at the beginning at least, the main protagonists of the new party seemed in no way abashed. Fresh from his near victory, *The Scotsman* reported that Graham would be one of the National Party candidates in Paisley at the general election, and in the same report, Graham had written in the Glasgow student's magazine that 'he has advocated the restoration of the ancient Scottish Parliament for forty years,' adding, 'rather than face another forty years of my speaking,

because he was in his eighty-third year, and there was a long tradition that a Rectorial candidate never succeeded at the second time of standing. To my grief he was beaten.' Mackenzie, 'Don Roberto,' p. 869. This is disingenuous. In his 1936 appreciation of Graham, Mackenzie claimed that he had persuaded the 'most unwilling' Graham to stand. Mackenzie, C., 'Cunninghame Graham Scottish Nationalist,' p. 22.

<sup>1002</sup> Glasgow Herald, 30 October 1928, p. 9.

<sup>1003</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1004</sup> Scotsman, 31 October 1928, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1005</sup> Finlay, 'Pressure Group or Political Party?: The Nationalist Impact on Scottish Politics, 1928-1945,' 20<sup>th</sup> Century British History, 3, 1993, p. 275.

the youth of Scotland has risen up in self-defence, and insisted in taking the words out of my mouth.'1006 Graham did not stand at Paisley; he had already written to Muirhead in July of 1928 that:

I cannot see my way to allow my name to be put forward as a parliamentary candidate. I am too much occupied in literary work to think of politics and the last thing in the world I should like is to see myself elected. Believe me I can do far better work outside <u>direct</u> politics. To go forward as a candidate would be I feel sure to forfeit any little influence I may have. Moreover the dunghill of active politics is a young man's game . . . It is a dunghill I know for I have been on (or in) the hill.'

This statement is another confirmation of Graham's belief that he was somehow above party politics. However, his near success at Glasgow University had re-inspired him, and he was active in promoting NPS candidates, including in January 1929 Lewis Spence 1008 at a by-election campaign in North Midlothian, 1009 although he himself declined an invitation to stand in North Lanark. 1010 During April 1929 a nationwide recruitment campaign was launched, in which Graham spoke between foreign travels, and several new branches had been founded. 1011

Graham would be a regular speaker at the NPS's annual 'Scotland's Day' rallies at Kings Park in Stirling, and at Elderslie, but by 1932 it was obvious that his views on independence had hardened, when at Elderslie he declared that he would repeal the Union, and then make a solemn declaration of Scotlish sovereignty, followed by a treaty between Scotland and England. In his brave new world, Scotland would have its own military forces, its own coinage, postage stamps, and power to send ambassadors overseas. It would also have the power to institute its own fiscal system. He asserted that that the king was King of Scotland, and should be crowned in Edinburgh. 1012

In 1928, Graham had been elected President of the National Party, and a member of the Executive of the National Council, 1013 but it is clear from the Minutes, that despite initial enthusiasm after its foundation, its high aspirations, and unrealistic demands, the new party was suffering from the an inherent factionalism between the various component groups that had come together to form it. 1014

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1006</sup> Ibid., 22 November 1928, p. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1007</sup> Cunninghame Graham, letter to Muirhead, 22 July 1928. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>1008</sup> Lewis Spence (1874-1955). Journalist and folklorist. Founder of The Scottish National Movement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1009</sup> Scotsman, 12 January 1929, p. 12. Spence had been the first NPS parliamentary candidate. Graham wrote to Muirhead from Tenerife, regretting Spence's poor result at the polls. Cunninghame Graham, letter to R. E. Muirhead, 8 February 1929. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1010</sup> Scotsman, 14 February 1929, p. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1011</sup> Scotsman, 13 April 1929, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1012</sup> Glasgow Herald, 22 August 1932, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1013</sup> Muirhead, letter to Cunninghame Graham, 18 April 1928. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1014</sup> Finlay stated that was due to the lack of consensus over 'the kind of relationship a self-governing Scotland would have with the British Empire and Commonwealth, and hence with the rest of the United Kingdom,' with each side 'struggling to establish their own particular version of home rule as the accepted orthodoxy.' Finlay, 'For or Against?,' pp. 184-5.

There were frequent resignations, and continual financial crises. Even in August 1932, it was running on an overdraft of £50.<sup>1015</sup> It is also clear from the Minutes, that like his previous political involvements, Graham took very little interest in day-to-day matters. There is no mention of him attending any National Executive meeting until 18 April, 1931, <sup>1016</sup> and not again until 29 September 1932, when he chaired an Extraordinary Executive Meeting to discuss unemployment, but he left half way through <sup>1017</sup> There is also no record of him attending an executive meeting subsequently. However, Graham was not alone in his impatience with discussions on internal policy and the squabbles that beset the party. As early as 28 December, 1928, Mackenzie wrote to Grieve (MacDiarmid), "The last Council meeting nearly sent me off my head." <sup>1018</sup> It is not clear whether this was the result of factionalism, or the tedium of committee work, but it indicated that the 'men of letters' within the NPS, which included Graham, were a different breed from the committee men who were attempting to hold the party together, and Graham's actual contribution to its survival was small, apart from his by now traditional role of a figurehead. <sup>1019</sup>

The party's financial tribulations continued, and in July 1933, a letter was sent to all the branches, requesting a donation of £5, the outcome of which would determine 'the stand or fall of the party.'1020 In May of that year, however, there had been a request for 'an interview' from the right-of-centre Scotland's Party, led by the Duke of Montrose, which MacCormick had been delegated to arrange.<sup>1021</sup> Over the next months, various discussions were held in an attempt to resolve policy differences.<sup>1022</sup> Matters were resolved by the end of 1933, and Muirhead wrote to Graham on 23 December stating that 'yesterday a joint committee met and agreed to amalgamate the National Party and Scotland's Party. They agreed to call it The Scottish National Party,<sup>1023</sup> and a joint conference was proposed for 7 April 1934.<sup>1024</sup> At this conference, Graham was apparently involved in discussions to amalgamate both parties, and despite there being no published records, these were successful. The Duke of Montrose was elected

<sup>1015</sup> Minutes of the National Executive of The National Party of Scotland, 4 August 1932. James Halliday Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1016</sup> Ibid., 18 September 1931.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1017</sup> Ibid., 29 September 1932.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1018</sup> Mackenzie, letter to Grieve (MacDiarmid), 28 December 1928. Edinburgh University Library, MS2954.8. In 1932, Mackenzie again wrote to Grieve suggesting that he attend the NPS conference, 'Even if you have to go out of it immediately afterwards, possibly in my company.' Mackenzie, Letter to Grieve, 10 October 1928. Ibid. At this time, Grieve worked for Mackenzie in London, as editor of Mackenzie's radio review magazine *Vox*, and later they were both involved in setting up the secret organisation, Clann Alba.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1019</sup> Much later, MacDiarmid wrote about how he saw the relationship, 'Cunninghame Graham and Mackenzie in council with the officials and branch delegates of the Scottish Nationalist Party were like a pair of golden eagles, with their wings clipped, in a crowded poultry run, full of poultry far gone with the "gapes." MacDiarmid, Selected Essays, pp. 127-8. On 19 May 1933, MacCormick who had written to MacDiarmid, 'explaining that the NPS had no room for extremists. Party policy was to present a moderate front to the Scottish people by getting rid of men like MacDiarmid.' Alan Bold, MacDiarmid (London: Paladin, 1990), pp. 331-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1020</sup> Minutes of the National Executive of The National Party of Scotland, 13 July 1933. James Halliday Papers. <sup>1021</sup> Ibid., 11 May 1933.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1022</sup> Graham was invited to chair such a meeting, but did not attend. Ibid., 17 August 1933.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1023</sup> Muirhead, letter to Graham, 23 December 1933. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1024</sup> James Halliday Papers, 1 February 1934.

President, and Graham, Honorary Vice President. 1025 MacCormick recalled Graham's participation:

I well remember the final meeting of the joint negotiating committee when we gathered to celebrate the success of our endeavours. Cunninghame Graham, who had throughout encouraged us in the policies which we had followed, entertained us all to dinner at the Central Hotel.<sup>1026</sup>

This impression of consensus, however, runs contrary to Mackenzie's statement in his appreciation of Graham in 1936, that Graham had regretted the amalgamation, but thought it his duty to avoid the appearance of disruption within the nationalist ranks, 'and out of regard for him I abstained from denouncing what I held to be disastrous policy of reconciliation; an opinion which has been strengthened by events of the last two years.'1027 Mackenzie did not explain why Graham opposed it, but it is likely that Graham felt uncomfortable that the NPS, whose promoters like himself, MacCormick, Muirhead, and MacDiarmid, who had formerly been members of the ILP, should merge with a right of centre party, thus losing its distinctly socialist identity. We are left to conjecture that if Graham had been younger, and had not died only two years after the party's foundation, how long it would have taken him to publicly criticise it, as he had done in previous years, within the ranks of the Liberals and the ILP. However, although Graham stopped speaking at rallies after 1932, after the formation of the SNP, he had volunteered to help at the general election of 1935,1028 and as Honorary President, he had sent a message of encouragement to the Bannockburn Day Celebration stating that he believed that the party was moving towards victory. However, electorally, the SNP fared no better than the NPS, Finlay describing its performance as 'a dismal failure.'1030

# **CONTINUING LITERARY WORKS**

In early 1914, a review of Graham's anthology A Hatchment<sup>1031</sup> appeared in The Spectator in which the reviewer described Graham as:

very singular, and very hard to classify, this Scots laird, poet, Socialist and Centaur. But above all, he is a hater of civilisation, prosperity, commercial success, and the big battalions. He is always on the side of the small races, dying nationalities, or the savage tribes extruded or absorbed by the expansion of Empire. For one thing, civilisation, especially on its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1025</sup> This was undoubtedly a gesture by the executive of the NPS to help secure Scotland's Party into the new alliance. However, in May 1935 the Duke announced opposition to SNP policy, and his allegiance to the Liberals. Letter to *Glasgow Herald*, 4 May 1935, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1026</sup> MacCormick, p. 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1027</sup> Mackenzie, 'Cunninghame Graham Scottish Nationalist,' p. 21.

<sup>1028</sup> Muirhead, letter from to Cunninghame Graham, 26 October 1935. R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1029</sup> Leaflet, R. E. Muirhead Papers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1030</sup> Finlay, 'Pressure Group or Political Party?,' p. 275.

<sup>1031</sup> Cunninghame Graham, A Hatchment (London: Duckworth, 1913).

commercial side, eliminates picturesqueness and the primitive virtues. 1032

Herein lay another of Graham's general view of humanity: it was not simply a hatred of civilisation, but civilisation's demands for conformity, not only across cultures, but on the individual, and those who lived outside these strictures, who above all are self-reliant in their apparent non-conformity, like MacDiarmid's 'Scottish eccentrics,' were his real heroes. It is also, in the Scottish context of his portraits that these subjects are not stereotypes, and like the half drunk crofter in 'A Survival,' they lived their lives on their own terms.

Also in 1914, sixteen of his Scottish works, mostly portraits, were collected in his *Scottish Stories* <sup>1033</sup> some of which had been included in previous anthologies (which perhaps explains why the book was hardly reviewed), and which contained many of the sketches referred to earlier. *The Academy* briefly reviewed it thus:

This is a mature work of a master of words, a brilliant achievement in literature, taking the word in its highest sense . . . Not only is the spirit of the work good, but the form is also exquisite; the world will be richer for such a little volume as this, though the work is too fine and delicate to attain to popularity.<sup>1034</sup>

This latter sentiment was quite common among reviewers of Graham's works. In fact, earlier that year, a reviewer expressed his surprise that someone who gave such extreme speeches, and wrote on matters political, could preserve such impartiality in his literary works, concluding, 'The truth is, Mr. Cunninghame Graham on the platform is an impatient idealist; Mr. Cunninghame Graham in the study, is to a great extent, a patient realist.'1035 This seems to suggest two sides to Graham's personality, a duality, but the reviewer seemed unaware of Graham's earlier political works, written when he was much more idealistic. Also, now writing for 'respectable' publications it would have been politically unwise to express extreme views in print, whereas, speeches, which were no longer printed in newspapers, were only heard by those who were present, and who took an interest. There may, however, be another element in play that Graham's behaviour was in fact 'studied,' which found expression in his South American and Scottish works. In this context, Crawford wrote that the prime source of Modernism in Britain at the end of the 19th century was not metropolitan, but 'resolutely provincial.' Referencing Hardy, Crawford continued, 'It is as important for Hardy to demonstrate the full panoply of Greek tragedy can be played out in provincial Wessex as it is for Joyce to revoice the Odyssey in Dublin.' He added, 'To ignore the voice of the provincial in nineteenth-century writing in England is to distort and

<sup>1032</sup> The Spectator, 'A Hatchment,' 10 January 1914, p. 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1033</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Scottish Stories (London: Duckworth, 1914).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1034</sup> Academy, 20 June 1914, p. 795.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1035</sup> Nation, 24 January 1914, p. 718.

oversimplify the development of the country's literature.'1036

In Graham's anthology, *Brought Forward* (1916) which contained sketches originally published in 1914 and 1915, we see can see a more melancholy strain, a critic commenting that the war 'has cast a gloom upon this last volume,'1037 The theme of death was illustrated in a sketch entitled 'Fidelity,'1038 which concerned a wounded bird near death, and its mate's devotion, which may have reflected on Graham's loss of his wife in 1906. As he put it, in another sketch in this anthology, 'When a man's lost his wife it leaves him, somehow, as if he were like a 'orse hitched on one side of the wagon-pole, a-pullin' by hisself.'1039 Perhaps of even more relevance was the tale in which an idealistic lay preacher addressed a small and diminishing audience:

"Love suffereth all things, endureth all things, createth all things." He paused, and looked round, saw that he was alone . . . The speaker sighed, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead with a soiled handkerchief. Then, picking up his hat and his umbrella, a far off look came into his blue eyes as he walked homewards almost jauntily, conscious that the inner fire had got the better of the fleshly tenement, and that his work was done. 1040

It is difficult not to draw parallels between the subject of this piece and Graham's own political situation, where he was still motivated to speak out, but the world was no longer willing to listen in the current political climate of war fever, nor, at this period, did he have any serious political attachments or influence. It also carried strong echoes of a 'jaunty' moral and aesthetic conciliation, as commented on by Watts and Davies (see passim) and that, perhaps, at this stage in his life, Graham considered that his work, particularly in literature, was indeed done.

Graham had announced in the Preface to *Brought Forward* that this was to be his last book, 'Tis meet and fitting to let free the horse or pen before death overtakes you, or before the gentle public turns its thumbs down and yells, "Away with him." A reviewer for *The Observer* included another sentence, 'So I shall write no more of these short stories, tales, sketches, or what you like to call them, for I perceive that in the writing of them I have written my life's story, and it can never be recalled. This sentence did not appear in the original 1916 edition or the 1917 reprint, but may have appeared in a review copy, which might indicate that Graham thought it too final to be included in the published version. In 1927 he wrote, 'Thinking upon a vow I registered eleven years ago (Postume, Postume!) not to write any more short stories. This confirms that this was indeed his intention in 1916. Graham concluded his

<sup>1036</sup> Robert Crawford, Devolving English Literature (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 217.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1037</sup> English Review, 'Essays and General Literature,' November 1916, p. 476.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1038</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Fidelity,' Nation, 27 November 1915, pp. 323-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1039</sup> Cunninghame Graham 'In A Backwater,' English Review, October 1914, p. 280.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1040</sup> Cunninghame Graham 'A Minor Prophet,' English Review, July 1915, p. 401.

<sup>1041</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Brought Forward, (London: Duckworth & Co, 1916), pp. x-xi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1042</sup> Observer, 24 September 1916, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1043</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Preface to Redeemed (London: Heinemann, 1927), p. 12.

Preface with the word *Vale* (Farewell), but he was still physically active, and it is not clear why he decided to stop at this point.

Of the few reviews of *Brought Forward*, each critic regretted Graham's decision to lay down his pen. Amy Wellington, for example, wrote in 1918 about the intended conclusion of Graham's literary career:

With the North-East Wind [his sketch of Hardie's funeral] seems to close the book of Cunninghame Graham's own long and chivalrous fight for the despised and rejected of this earth; just as, a little later, he attaches his formal farewell as a writer to the preface of his final volume, *Brought Forward*. Both artist and fighter have grown a little cynical and very weary. 1044

It was by no means his last book; however, his articles for journals greatly reduced between 1916 and 1925, apart from his obituaries of the Colombian writer and campaigner, Santiago Pérez Triana, 1045 Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, 1046 and Conrad, 1047 and a piece on the London grave of the Ogallala Sioux, Long Wolf. 1048 No new anthology of his works, appeared until 1927, although eight individual history books were published during the period, most on South American subjects, 1049 however, Graham's political intent remained clear in all of them. As early as 1904, a critic had written about Graham's history Hernando De Soto, 'A careful reading . . . shows that it is not modern life or modern men that against which the author shoots his shafts of wit so much as against the modern man's cant about all our superior motives, actions, and ideals, 1050 and in 1921, another critic wrote, 'Mr. Cunninghame Graham is fonder than ever of annotating his narrative with satirical jibes at modern European civilization, but he writes so well that his pungent digressions season the dish. 1051 Graham's political and moral preoccupations continued in his writings, but his political activities slowed considerably, apart from annual addresses at nationalist gatherings, and his letters to the press, which mostly concerned animal welfare, and references to him in newspapers, reduced to a trickle.

1925 saw Graham's re-engagement with *The Saturday Review*, with five pieces, rising to six the following year, then a final piece in 1931. His first, 'ambient' Scottish sketch for twelve years was 'Inch Cailleach,'1052 and it appeared to follow the same pattern as before, descriptive nostalgia. Here the graves of ancient warriors, long dead, but still, in some way, present. This, and subsequent Scottish sketches, encapsulated Graham's later nostalgic daydreams and desires, a preoccupation with death and burial, the

<sup>1044</sup> Wellington, p. 487.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1045</sup> Hispania: Politica, Comercio, Literatura, Artes y Ciencias, London, 27 June 1916, pp. 1617-9. Triana had founded this publication.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1046</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Wilfrid Scawen Blunt,' English Review No.35, December 1922, pp. 486-92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1047</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Inveni Portam,' Saturday Review, 16 August 1924, pp. 162-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1048</sup> A member of 'Buffalo Bill's Wild West.' Cunninghame Graham, 'Long Wolf' *Scribners Magazine* (New York), June 1921, pp. 651-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1049</sup> The major exception was his biography of his great-great grandfather, Robert Graham of Gartmore. Cunninghame Graham, *Doughty Deeds*, (London: Heinemann, 1925).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1050</sup> Speaker, 23 January 1904, p. 412.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1051</sup> Ibid., 1 January, 1921, p. 25.

<sup>1052</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Inch Cailleach,' Saturday Review, 5 September 1925, pp. 253-4.

closeness of the past, and its permeation of the present, including a Celtic mythology. Again, however, it harked back to Graham's fascination with mist (vapour), which embodied the ethereal past, and brought it into the present. These themes continued in his next, and final Scottish sketch (and second last for *The Saturday Review*), 'Euphrasia,' which was a short, sentimental meditation on a war grave on Skye.<sup>1053</sup>

The reason for this slowing in Graham's productivity may simply be attributable to his age, which was undoubtedly a factor, but there was, perhaps, a less conspicuous cause. After his early polemical essays, which were no longer appropriate to his statesman-like literary persona, Graham had relied almost entirely on the memories of his youthful experiences abroad, with very occasional ventures into his fanciful imagination. Latterly, however, these memories may have become exhausted, or perhaps too insubstantial or fleeting to be turned into sketches, and that his life's story had in fact been written. There was, perhaps, simply no more material to draw upon, and even his Scottish sketches no longer drew on portraiture, but increasingly only on the evocation of atmosphere, and were now becoming somewhat tired and repetitive. Increasingly, Graham turned to more factual works, obituaries, and biographies, particularly of South American historical figures wherein he could still engage his Hispanic interests, and express his political biases.

Another more 'factual' literary outlet was his contributions to the works of others. Between 1897 and his death in 1936, Graham had written almost fifty Prefaces and Forewords, which, when the subject of the book engaged him, were opinion pieces. These were mostly to books on travel, but in the Scottish context, four pieces stand out. The first, written in 1902, was an Introduction to John Morrison Davidson's book, *Scotland for the Scots: Scotland Revisited*. Though mostly dealing with Graham's chance encounter with a fellow Scot in Argentina, the last three paragraphs were taken up with Davidson's Scottish nationalism, and as such, were an early manifestation of Graham's growing national sentiment, that the Scotland that they both wished to see, was not a Scotland of the Enlightenment, but a 'return to a more national spirit and a revival of the ancient Scottish Type which ruled the roost before the Ten per Centlings rose, making poor Scotland stink before the world with their base peddling ways.' The next short Foreword was to a book entitled *Inchmahome and the Lake of Menteith* (1933), by John A. Stewart, which was unremarkable, except for overt nationalist sentiments, with a reference to the signatories of the 'The Ragman's Roll' by which the nobility and gentry of Scotland gave their allegiance to King Edward I of England. Scraham described them as 'false loons, no true Scots but henchmen

<sup>1053</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Euphrasia,' Ibid., 25 September 1926, p. 331.

<sup>1054</sup> Cunninghame Graham, Introduction to John Morrison Davidson's Scotland For the Scots: Scotland Revisited, (Edinburgh: F. R. Henderson, 1902), pages unnumbered. Davidson (1843-1916), a left-wing Scottish patriot, barrister, journalist and campaigner, was a regular contributor to Forward. Davidson claimed that he had established that Graham, as a direct descendent of King Robert II, was de jure monarch of the United Kingdom. Edinburgh Evening News, 18 September 1895, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1055</sup> Perhaps also a reference to a declaration signed in 1932, by members of Scotland's nobility and business leaders, opposing Scottish Home Rule.

of the Southron enemy.' 1056 and the fact that Inchmahome, 'in which so many of our ancestors – their life's crusade achieved – await our coming.' 1057

Graham's Foreword to Thomas Dick Lauder's *The Wolf of Badenoch* (sixth edition) was also brief, but contained similar overtly nationalist sentiments:

For a century Scotsmen have been content to remain pale copies of our "ancient enemy" from beyond the Tweed. Some denigrate sons of Scotia, even today, attribute the economic progress of Scotland to the Act of Union and forget their own share in the job. A new generation of race-conscious Scotsmen is arising, and to it the republication of a Scottish novel will be a boon. 1058

This concept of 'race consciousness' would be repeated by Graham two years later in his overtly nationalist article 'The Awakening of a Nation,' where, after describing the things that others would describe as peculiarly Scottish, he regarded as 'as admirable in themselves as flies in amber, are a poor substitute, for me, at least, for race consciousness.' It was by far his most ethnocentric expression to date, but by now, Graham was firmly entrenched in the NPS, and was its president.

The most relevant piece, in his later years, and in the context of this thesis, was Graham's 1933 Introduction to Robert Kirk's *The Secret Commonwealth* (circa 1691). 1060 Graham, of course, was following in the footsteps of Andrew Lang's extensive introduction to his own 1893 edition, though he was no scholar like Lang. That said, he was admirably suited to the task, being at one time very local to the setting ('a descendent of men long domiciled within sight of the Fairy Hill'); since childhood infused with the legends ('though an infrequent worshiper of any kind of Gods'); and, as we have seen, in later years, interested in fairy lore. It also appears that Graham, like Lang, had 'stood sponsor' for this edition, 1061 and like Walter Scott, who had sponsored its original publication in 1815. 1062

The great enigma surrounding Kirk was, that as a Christian clergyman, he had produced a reasoned argument for the existence of another world, a magical world that mirrored our own, which was not dissimilar to Graham's own mist-shrouded imaginings of another Scotland, a parallel world easily accessed by those who wished to, or had the ability to imagine it. Gregory Smith believed that this was a distinctive quality of Scottish writing, 'this strange combination of things unalike, of things seen in the

<sup>1058</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Foreword' to Thomas Dick Lauder's *The Wolf of Badenoch*, (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1930), p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1056</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Foreword' to John A. Stewart's, *Inchmahome and the Lake of Menteith* (Printed Privately, 1933), p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1057</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1059</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'The Awakening of A Nation,' Scots Independent, October 1932, p. 184.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1060</sup> Cunninghame Graham, 'Introduction' to Rev. Robert Kirk's *The Secret Commonwealth* (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1933), pp. 11-18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1061</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1062</sup> Scott had described the locale and traditions in *Rob Roy* (1817), and the beliefs and misfortunes of Kirk[e] in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830).

everyday world and things which, like the elf-queen herself neither earth nor heaven will claim.'1063 Graham wrote that he had sponsored the book because it was 'a style of literature that long has disappeared, and had "a curiosa felicitas" [a felicity of expression] that shows the writer to have been a man of parts and a believer "quia impossibilis" in all he writes about.'1064 However, Kirk's descriptions had little of the ethereal childlike feyness, and late Victorian wistfulness; they had a primitive reality, very much part of the history of Graham's own locality, which appealed to the same desire to evoke the past, and perhaps even a rebellion against conformity and the bourgeois norm.

Crawford wrote that the early growth of Scottish nationalism, was 'closely enmeshed with artistic production' and certainly the new movement included many writers, and the growth of 'national sentiment' was to find expression in a cultural expression as much as a political one. The early roots of this literary reawakening were complex, but the Scottish author and editor, George Blake, put it simply:

A "consciousness of Scottishness" came to us after the War. We began to see – or believed we saw – that the Scottish spirit had been misrepresented in literature by kailyard pawkiness on the one hand, and whaup-and-leather romance on the other.<sup>1066</sup>

According to Blake, something was stirring, but the use of the words "Renaissance" was to him (writing in 1932), premature, and led to the assumption 'that the actual products of the movement were numerous and substantial, whereas they were, and are, not.'1067 In contrast, Crawford described the 'National Renaissance' as 'erupting,' orchestrated by MacDiarmid, 'making Scotland rather than London the focus of Scottish writers' activities.'1068 MacDiarmid wrote that he had first met Graham in the early 1920s, it was from this first meeting that he decided 'to make the Scottish Cause, cultural and political, my life-work dates from that moment,'1069 and that he had 'lamented Cunninghame Graham's long absences from Scotland,'1070 writing in 1926 in his *Contemporary Studies*:

He began well: but for those of us who are connected with either the Scottish Nationalists or the Socialist movements he has become like a curious and unseizable dream by which we are tantalizingly haunted but which we can by no means effectively recall.<sup>1071</sup>

<sup>1064</sup> Cunninghame Graham, *The Secret Commonwealth*, p. 12. This phrase may have been Graham borrowing an early Christian doctrine of faith, *Certum est quia impossibile est*, inferring that something is certain because it is impossible, which also reflected Kirk's concerns over sadduceedism; ie., if one did not accept the existence of the supernatural, it was a step closer to denying the existence of God.

<sup>1063</sup> Gregory Smith, p. 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1065</sup> Crawford, Devolving English Literature, p. 569.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1066</sup> George Blake in Scotland In Quest of Her Youth (Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1932), p. 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1067</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1068</sup> Crawford, Devolving English Literature, p. 544.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1069</sup> MacDiarmid, Centenary Study, p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1070</sup> Bold, p. 267.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1071</sup> Grieve, p. 54.

The sources of MacDiarmid's attraction to Graham were obvious, Graham's radicalism, his elitism, his polemicism, his anti-bourgeois sentiments, his socialism, 1072 his internationalism, and his nationalism. Bold described MacDiarmid's personality in terms which could equally be applied to Graham, 'His problem was not duality, but plurality. When his intellectual elitism clashed with his socialism he felt that the only sure synthesis was his own personality,' 1073 in other words, an original, 'an artefact,' but even MacDiarmid, who greatly admired Graham, both politically, and artistically, found him an enigma. 1074 Above all, it was perhaps the 'zig-zag of contradictions,'1075 the contrary nature of Graham's character that Grieve found so interesting. This 'Caledonian antisyzygy' was the bedrock of a book that greatly influenced MacDiarmid, 1076 G. Gregory Smith's *Scottish Literature* (1919), but perhaps MacDiarmid found it in Graham's writings, the 'strange combination of things unalike,'1077 which Smith defined as defining the uniqueness of Scottish literature.

MacDiarmid used his book, *Contemporary Studies*, as a platform to attack almost every aspect of Scottish life, literature and contemporary attitudes. Neil Munro was demolished as a poor writer, at best, 'a respectable craftsman,'1078 while R. L. Stevenson was virtually ignored. Socialists and nationalists like Graham, and the journalist William Power<sup>1079</sup> were, however, widely praised, but Graham's neglected position was used by MacDiarmid as an example of what he considered fundamentally wrong with Scottish life and letters, and in retrospect we are impressed only by MacDiarmid's outspoken, but often unqualified, personal political biases. MacDiarmid described Graham as a man of 'exceptional brilliance,'1080 but despite this plaudit, MacDiarmid also described him as 'the only Scotsman of his generation to win to the second rank of as an imaginative artist – the second rank, be it remarked, in the British, not in the European or World, scale,'1081 but who, 'calculated to open the windows of most of his countrymen's minds for the first time and let in the pure air.'1082 MacDiarmid believed moreover that Graham was the subject of bias, 'the Anglo-Scottish press were dead against him, as were the stuffy yesmen of the status quo of the university authorities. He was never given his due in Scotland.'1083 We might be forgiven for thinking, however, that MacDiarmid was trying to co-opt Graham into his otherwise rather threadbare Scottish renaissance, even though Graham had been writing on the same

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<sup>1072</sup> Grieve had been an active member of the ILP in South Wales, where he had sought out Keir Hardie in 1911.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1073</sup> Bold, *MacDiarmid*, p. 77. Bold also pointed out, perhaps counter-intuitively, MacDiarmid's attraction to aristocratic titles. Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1074</sup> MacDiarmid, Centenary Study, p. 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1075</sup> Gregory Smith, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1076</sup> Grieve, Contemporary Scottish Studies, p. 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1077</sup> Gregory Smith, p. 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1078</sup> Grieve, Contemporary Scottish Studies, p. 49.

<sup>1079</sup> William Power (1873-1951), journalist, socialist, and Scottish nationalist. Power was another eulogist and uncritical 'eager champion,' mightily impressed by Graham's personality and charisma. William Power, *Should Auld Acquaintance*, (London: Harrap, 1937), p. 166. Power became the leader of the SNP, between 1940 and 1942.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1080</sup> MacDiarmid, The Company I've Kept (London: Hutchinson, 1966), p. 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1081</sup> Grieve, Contemporary Scottish Studies, p. 51.

<sup>1082</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1083</sup> MacDiarmid, Selected Essays, p. 122.

subject matter, and in the same way, for the previous thirty years.

## **OBITUARIES and APPRECIATIONS**

Graham died in Buenos Aires on the 20 March 1936, at the aged of 83. His death was widely reported at home, and dozens of news items and obituaries appeared in national and provincial newspapers. Any judgment of Graham's legacy, however, must be seen in the context of his long life, during which time political fashions changed, and the inherent eulogistic nature of the newspaper obituary. *The Glasgow Herald* reported:

He was a political freelance . . . He was not made of the docile stuff essential in the good party politician . . . the party managers were not loth to be rid of so disturbing an element . . . at this period he was regarded merely an eccentric figure in public life, a political farceur. Later, all sections came to recognise as a man of splendid personality and brilliant talents. He was an idealist who chased his ideals in a specious world of his own. The constitution of this country and the temperament of its people afford no scope for giving realisation to the views he so strenuously preached.<sup>1084</sup>

The Scotsman opined that Graham could not be said to have achieved what the world counts success, but he was:

unique in an age which cannot boast too many outstanding men. His far sighted views made him appear to have been born a century before his time; but, on the other hand, there was a certain touch of the crusader about him – the word seems most appropriate – which made one feel whilst listening to him that he was born three centuries too late.

The obituarist believed, however, that Graham's distinctive style marked him out as one of the foremost present-day exponents of the art of essay writing. 1085

The Times described Graham as 'the most picturesque Scot of his time . . . In him Spain and Scotland met.' He was 'a cowboy dandy,' but he was neither an essayist nor a historian.' The Observer stated that 'his countrymen were proud of one who so brilliantly revived in this commercial age the chivalric feelings of the past,' but only in the Clydeside area, where 'he was known as a splendid fire-brand, he meant little to the working classes. His appeal was rather to the educated, who could favour the magnificent prose and place his picturesque valour in its true setting. Probably, too his later self-dedication to Scottish nationalism withdrew him further from working class politics.' 1087 The Manchester Guardian obituarist believed that Graham was better understood in the last years of his life 'since our

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1084</sup> Glasgow Herald, 21 March 1936, p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1085</sup> Scotsman, 23 March 1936, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1086</sup> Times, 23 March 1936, p. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1087</sup> Observer, 22 March 1936, p. 23.

more stirring century began, than before.' In keeping with the change in political fashion, it added, that in the previous century he was regarded as something of a 'freak' or 'phenomenon,' but again found it difficult to describe him as a success.<sup>1088</sup> Most acerbically, Malcolm Muggeridge wrote that:

Graham was one of those humanitarians to whom adventure seemed the greatest good. Like Don Quixote he needed a crusade; hence his adherence to the socialism of William Morris. He hated the unheroic, abstract, calculating world of the capitalists against which he set an "heroic world, full of richness and colour, with proud values." Since men were not as heroic as he would like to think, he had to "content himself with dreams, and self-dramatisation and heroic episodes." 1089

In Argentina, many reports appeared in the newspapers. *The Buenos Aires Herald* reported the day after his death that, 'Graham could claim to be the greatest stylist in the English language during the last half century. A month after his death, Graham's friend, Fernando Pozzo wrote, 'Graham was perhaps the Englishman imbued with the spirit of the Argentine plains, which helped him to realise his youthful dreams. The Argentinian cultural magazine *Nostoros*, ran several articles about him, 'Graham knew and loved the Argentine pampa. His work, which reveals a nostalgia for types and customs now dead, is, above all, descriptive and pictorial. On his final visit he no longer found the visions of his youth. In the following month, the Argentinian writer and diplomat, Emilio Lascano Tegui (1887-1966) wrote that Graham probably 'died of disillusionment when he saw the results of the new, improved, "civilised" country, with its railways, telegraph wires, tall buildings, etc., a country despoiled, its innocence and purity gone forever.

The most comprehensive and informed assessments of Graham came in three consecutive articles in Outlook & The Modern Scot, in May, 1936, by Henry Nevinson, Compton Mackenzie (quoted above), and George Scott Moncrieff. Nevinson believed that Graham was 'a "throw-back" – to the age of romance and unselfish devotion. Bonnie Prince Charlie in his best years of his youth may have looked like that, and have exerted the same kind of personal attraction upon all who came under his charm.' Graham's personality, he believed was finer and more influential than his writings, 'but all his writings strike the same high note of genuine sympathy with the depressed and those who have never enjoyed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1088</sup> Manchester Guardian, 21 March 1936, p. 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1089</sup> Malcolm Muggeridge, Time and Tide, XVII, 28 March 1936, pp. 440-1.

<sup>1090</sup> Buenos Aires Herald, 21 March 1936, p. 4.

<sup>1091</sup> Fernando Pozzo, La Literatura Argentina, No.88, April 1936, p. 79. Translated from Spanish. In an article entitled 'Una Semblanza de Hudson,' Pozzo believed that Hudson was 'born to late,' and Eva-Lynn Alicia Jagoe wrote that it was 'Only through the memory of some more primitive time, either childhood or imagined origins can he [Hudson] find a place,' which has strong resonances of Graham himself. Eva-Lynn Alicia Jagoe, The End of the World As They Knew it: Writing Experiences of the Argentine South (Bucknell University Press, 2008), p. 152

<sup>1092</sup> Carlos Ibarguren, 'Un Gran Espiritu' (A Great Spirit), Nosotros, April 1936, p. 26. Translated from Spanish.

<sup>1093</sup> Vizconde de Lascano Tegui, Nosotros, May 1936, p. 122. Translated from Spanish.

<sup>1094</sup> Henry Nevinson, 'A Rebel Aristocrat,' Outlook & The Modern Scot, May 1936, p. 18.

the opportunity for the fullest life of which their nature was capable.'1095 Mackenzie, approaching Graham's life from a political angle, and no doubt reflecting his own current disillusionment with the SNP, wrote that Graham's death might prove a mortal blow to Scottish Nationalism, and that nationalists must recognise that Graham was 'one of the few leaders of the movement able and willing to confront the full implications of the political and economic freedom at which he aimed [. . .] It was tragic that Graham was already so old when with such hopes the National Party of Scotland was formed,'1096 and that the present SNP possessed neither the spiritual, nor moral, intellectual, nor the political force it possessed eight years earlier.<sup>1097</sup>

Moncrieff's, article was a rebuttal of Muggeridge's critique above, and he believed that any study of Graham's writing 'is less a study of his literary style than of the bone and the philosophy of his work.' Critics might find fault with Graham's grammatical lapses, but to Graham 'the substance of the work was of so much greater importance than the manner of its presentation,' and his work 'is worthy of the consideration when modern works so much of which are 'scrimpet and vapid.' In his attempt to differentiate between the short story and the sketch, Moncrieff believed that there was never a satisfactory distinction, 'mainly depending on the individuals requirement for a plot,' and he tried to sum up the intrinsic philosophy in Graham's writings:

It is a philosophy that takes the utmost pleasure obtainable from the many-coloured shadows of life, yet is perpetually aware of, at once humbled by, and exalted by, the underlying substance of a conscious or unconscious immortality: one that can find consummation in failure.<sup>1098</sup>

Finally, Edward Garnett, the man who at this late period probably knew Graham and his works best, wrote an appreciation in *The London Mercury*, which, although, eulogistic, had some valid insights. Garnett stated that Graham's main traits were his 'trenchant philosophy and his pulverising contempt for worldly humbug,' 1100 his interest in practical matters, 1101 his sense of human drama, 1102 his keen eye for character (although he had no power to create it), 1103 and his challenge to Victorian shibboleths of the white man's burden. 1104 Garnett also discussed Graham's unpopularity as a writer, which Graham was aware of; none of his books "sold," as publishers put it, and only one reached a second edition. His

1095 Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>1096</sup> Ibid., p. 21

<sup>1097</sup> Ibid., p. 22,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1098</sup> George Scott Moncrieff, 'Cunninghame Graham and A Contemporary Critic,' Outlook & The Modern Scot, May 1936, pp. 25-8.

<sup>1099</sup> Edward Garnett, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham: Man and Writer,' The London Mercury, June 1936, pp. 125-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1100</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1101</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1102</sup> Garnett introduced his own drama by telling his readers of Graham's presentiment that he did not expect to return alive from Argentina. Ibid., p. 125. <sup>1103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1104</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

works, according to Garnett were 'devoid of "moral uplift" and sentimental camouflage,' and lacked an appeal to women, all of which Garnett considered "fatal in the ordinary reader's eyes," but there is enough artistic beauty to preserve their human interest.' 1105

# **CONCLUSION**

Graham had stopped writing overtly propagandist material, presumably because it would have compromised his position as an elder statesman, while younger men, like Johnston, so far, suffered from no such inhibitions until he too gained a position of influence. Despite their differences, in the long term, the fundamental contrast between Graham and Johnston was that Johnston was an optimist, who believed that 'there was very little wrong with Scotland that her sons and daughters might not speedily put right,'1106 while Graham, increasingly became mired in pessimism, since the old brave, romantic world that he had cherished was increasingly being swept away.

Graham's volte face over the empire and the war was, like his other crusades, based on a moral revulsion, for which, in this instance, he blamed Germany, but also, having been obliged to choose sides, for a man for whom 'bread was bread, and wine was wine,' as usual, he took an uncompromising stance, giving him another cause for which to strive. However, it was undoubtedly also a major watershed in Graham's political views, and his silence over post-war demonstrations at home and civil unrest, certainly stands testament to this. Graham increasingly looked like an isolated figure, a 'nonparty' man, at a time when 'party-men' would predominate. He had distanced himself further with the Labour Party by standing against Johnston on basically the same political agenda, and now, for decades to come, many of the Left's intelligentsia, of which, at one time, Graham had stood on the periphery, would look towards Soviet Russia for their inspiration, and Graham hated what he saw as Soviet barbarity. His decision to stand as a Liberal in 1918 is, however, perplexing. It may simply have been that inspired by recent events, he wished to re-engage politically, and he had nowhere else to go, and as previously stated, Graham was less interested in party labels than political action. But why stand at all, having already been 'defiled by the pitch of politics' and protested so vigourously against the House of Commons? It looks like an odd decision, but the fact remains that between 1885 and 1918, Graham had put himself forward for election to parliament five times, being successful only once. It is more likely that his motivation to stand was (as usual) entirely personal, for a man who was passionate for the moment, and since the sale of Gartmore House, his debts had gone. 1107 The Liberal party had now seemingly embraced many of the policies that Graham had campaigned for, and perhaps he now saw an opportunity to advance these policies even further. However, his behaviour and statements during the 1918 General Election campaign are difficult to explain, and appear to be completely at odds with his life and philosophy hitherto, leading Neal Ascherson to speculate that 'The old boy seemed to be going

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1105</sup> Ibid., p. 127-8.

<sup>1106</sup> Quoted in Galbraith, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1107</sup> On his death, Graham's personal estate was £100, 426. Scotsman, 20 July 1936, p. 13.

potty. But it was just a bad patch. In his commitment to Scottish Nationalism, which followed, Graham returned to his normal acid sanity and talked again like a practical socialist.'1108

In 1916, Graham announced his retirement from writing. He may have felt disappointed by his lack of commercial success, or that his literary contributions would now be outdated by the cultural and political changes that the war would bring, or simply, that the sources of his previous inspiration, his reminiscences, had dried up. Certainly, apart from a brief re-engagement with *The Saturday Review* between 1925 and 1926,<sup>1109</sup> his output greatly reduced, and his focus moved away from his memories to more factual and historical material. Only occasionally did he reminisce in his inconclusive sketch style, but these lacked the political motivation of his previous works. His letters to the press also greatly reduced, and mostly concerned animal welfare, and he rarely reacted to outside agency, as he had in the past. It also appears that despite maintaining a socialist conscience, the socialism now being demonstrated in world affairs no longer appealed. This was most marked by his lack of comment on the Spanish Civil War, which in previous times, we might imagine, would have been a consuming passion. <sup>1110</sup> Graham's political activities became increasingly focused on the smaller and more comprehendible canvas of Scotland.

An interest in, and enthusiasm for, Scottish Home Rule had blossomed at the end of the First World War, led in various forms by strong and committed individuals. However, as enthusiasm and support waned, as other priorities began to take precedence, the need to amalgamate these sometimes conflicting interests became paramount. The central figures in this amalgamation were Muirhead and MacCormick, who had the vision, and ability to compromise, that helped consolidate the factions into the NPS, while Graham's initial re-engagement with the politics of Scottish nationalism, at the beginning, was tentative. From correspondence, it appears that he was at first goaded, then constantly encouraged by Muirhead into becoming more involved, but it was not without its moments of dispute, and age and experience seem to have taught Graham to distance himself even further from the day-to-day business, and machinations of its other adherents. Muirhead saw that part of his function was to keep the distant Graham engaged, by keeping him informed as to the latest developments. However, contrasting the correspondence between Muirhead and Graham, with the reports on the internal difficulties the SHRA and NPS faced, and the difficult negotiations between the nationalist groups, Muirhead mostly kept Graham in the dark as to the details and challenges.

Graham's enthusiasm had been rekindled by his near success at the Glasgow Rectorial Elections of 1928, and perhaps the feeling that he was again politically relevant, but his role has been overstated.

<sup>1108</sup> Neal Ascherson, 'Cunninghame Graham: A Critical Biography,' Spectator Review, 14 July 1979, p. 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1109</sup> Ten pieces, published over a period of one year, in very short bursts, indicating, perhaps, Graham's increasing absence from British shores.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1110</sup> One short article appeared in *The Manchester Guardian*, which recounted a localised incident during the conflict. Cunninghame Graham, 'The Tragic Village,' *Manchester Guardian*, 28 July 1934, p. 11.

Among the students he was virtually unknown; it was MacCormick who engineered his nomination, and MacCormick and Mackenzie who managed his campaign, with Graham, as was traditional, making no appearance. Fortuitously, however, Graham's near success had led to the consolidation and growth of the NPS, which in itself can be regarded as a major achievement. Graham then took (or was given) the role as an inspirational figurehead, a man who was already famous to the older generation, where the other nationalist functionaries were entirely unknown. MacDiarmid took his normal, jaundiced view, believing that Graham was misused by the nationalists:

The trouble was not that he was unpractical in this sense, not that he failed to do the donkey-work – but that donkey-work was almost all that circumstances allowed him to do, and that he was never enabled to serve the movement effectively on his own best plane. It was all right for most of the others, but he and [Compton] Mackenzie were used by the Nationalist Party, so far as suspicion and jealousy and sheer incomprehension permitted the Nationalist Party to avail themselves of their services at all.<sup>1112</sup>

In contrast, Taylor, in concluding her biography, saw Graham as a tragic figure in the world of politics:

His political career begun so early and with such passionate effect upon the hearts and minds of the industrial workers of the West of Scotland ended at the Summer outings of the National Party of Scotland where, a painfully thin but still upright and dapper figure, microphone in hand he bid for the attention of the picknickers around him.<sup>1113</sup>

Both MacDiarmid's and Taylor's assessments were overstated. MacDiarmid, who had been expelled from the NPS in 1933 for his Communist sympathies and anti-English extremism, did not understand Graham's relationship with the nationalists, as it manifested itself through the only substantive source, Graham's correspondence with Muirhead. Graham, who was spending more time abroad, was temperamentally unsuited to becoming involved in the 'donkey work' of party affairs, ironically, like MacDiarmid himself, who regarded the NPS organisation as 'hopelessly inadequate.'1114 MacCormick more accurately wrote of Graham, '[He] was in politics (and in the best sense of the word) an adventurer who took keen delight in crossing swords with party Goliaths and who gave little thought to any practical considerations with might weigh with other men.' 1115 It also appears, from Mackenzie's cryptic statement, that Graham did not approve of the amalgamation of the NPS with Scotland's Party, and, had he lived longer, he might have displayed the same disappointment and antagonism toward the SNP as he had done with the Liberals and the Labour Party. It is thus difficult to understand, that in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1111</sup> A more realistic outcome can be witnessed four years later, when, without the enthusiastic support of MacCormick and his student colleagues, Graham was badly beaten.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1112</sup> MacDiarmid, Selected Essays, p. 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1113</sup> Taylor, p. 334.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1114</sup> MacDiarmid, Selected Essays, p. 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1115</sup> MacCormick, p. 34-5.

Mitchell and Hassan's 2016 book *Scottish National Party Leaders*, Graham is given a chapter, while Muirhead, the tireless campaigner, part-funder, and organiser of the modern nationalist movement, and who campaigned into his 90s, was simply mentioned as being omitted. 1116 Taylor also failed to understand Graham's position in this new party, that Graham was making his contribution in the only way he was now capable of, as an aged figurehead, or perhaps like his idealistic preacher addressing noone, conscious that the inner fire had got the better of the fleshly tenement, and that his work was done.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1116</sup> Scottish National Party Leaders, ed. by James Mitchell and Gerry Hassan (London: Biteback Publishing, 2016), pp. 4-5. MacDiarmid described Muirhead as 'the mainspring' of the nationalist movement, Grieve, Contemporary Studies, p. 262, and a man of 'extraordinary tenacity.' p. 265.

## 06. CONCLUSION

Any attempt to analyse Graham's personality is fraught with difficulties; 1117 even his close associates found him difficult to fathom, particularly since his diverse history contained half-truths and myths, some of which he helped embellish into the legend of the hybrid Spanish *bidalgo* and adventurous Scottish laird. His publisher and long time acquaintance, Frank Harris, said of him, 'how little I knew Graham; how reticent he was or proud with that curious secretive pride which is so Scotch and so Spanish.' 1118 Hugh MacDiarmid, who knew and greatly admired Graham, described him as 'an enigma,' 1119 and Frederick Watson, described him as 'a very elusive personality.' 1120 Much later, Cedric Watts described him as 'a plethora of paradoxes,' 1121 and Laurence Davies, regarded him as 'a bizarre crusader.' 1122 Consequently, this thesis has challenged the accepted orthodoxies surrounding Graham by examining the major causes he pursued, in an attempt to establish his substantive and lasting contributions as a politician and a writer, particularly in the context of Scotland. Viewed separately, however, these contributions have proved as elusive as his personality, and the thesis has concluded that they can only be fully understood when these two strands are conceived as being indivisible, a manifestation of Graham's innate discontent, spread over time.

Notwithstanding his personal vanity, the source of Graham's discontent, and the primary and universal driving force behind all of his political and literary activities was overwhelmingly moral. However, it was not the common morality of his times, which he considered bourgeois, hypocritical, and an impediment to the reordering of society. Neither was it religious; it was closely related to what ancient Greek philosophers called *arete* or 'virtue,' sometimes described as moral excellence, with its emphasis on 'ethics,' a word that Graham frequently used to describe his own underlying philosophy. The most important virtue, to the Greeks, was justice, and the absence of justice, whether to ethnic groups, the poor, women, or animals, was the target of Graham's altruistic moral rage, and sometimes impulsive behaviour.

To Graham, the most obvious and immediate examples of injustice were economic, primarily the unequal distribution of wealth, which fostered the abuse of privilege and power, both at home and overseas, which denied the right of the individual to develop his or her potential.<sup>1124</sup> Consequently, his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1117</sup> In an obituary, Pritchett wrote, 'When men become legends, as Cunninghame Graham did, this private character becomes elusive.' V. S. Pritchett, *London Mercury* Vol.XXXVII, January 1938, p. 339.

<sup>1118</sup> Frank Harris, Contemporary Portraits (Third Series), (New York, self-published, 1920), p. 57.

<sup>1119</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, Cunninghame Graham: A Centenary Study (Glasgow: Caledonian Press, 1952), p. 23.

<sup>1120</sup> Frederick Watson, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham,' Bookman, March 1916, p. 174.

<sup>1121</sup> Cedric Watts, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham: Janiform Genius,' in *Empires and Revolutions: Cunninghame Graham* & His Contemporaries, ed. by Carla Sassi and Silke Stroh (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2017), p. 2.

<sup>1122</sup> Laurence Davies, 'R. B. Cunninghame Graham and the Concept of Impressionism,' D.Phil. Thesis, University of Sussex, 1972, p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1123</sup> In Rosalind Hursthouse's definition, 'to possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset.' Rosalind Hursthouse, 'Virtue Ethics,' *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 2003, p. 188.

<sup>1124</sup> Alasdair Macintyre, After Virtue (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1981), p. 8.

political campaigns were focussed on attacking this inequality, and this thesis has asserted that inspired by the moral and economic philosophies of others, it was Graham's fundamental ambition to politically empower the working class. The substantive outcome of this was the foundation of the first party of labour, which although small, was the seed of a mass working-class movement that would radically change the direction of British politics, and it appears, albeit from scant recorded evidence, that at the beginning, Graham was the prime mover and inspiration, which has not previously been verified.

This ethical pursuit not only defined Graham's political beliefs, but also his literary efforts. Almost all of Graham's later descriptions of native societies, his obituaries, and his Scottish portraits, described those whom he considered possessed virtue, and social critiques of home, and descriptions of colonial abuses, were of those whom he considered did not, thus this thesis has asserted that his literary works were intrinsically political, something that has not been explored by any other commentator. However, Graham's views were moderated by what might be described as his 'heroic selective elitism.' To Graham, virtue was not confined to a class, but could be shared by laird, farmer, and miner alike, but he believed that the more educated elements in society had a better opportunity to understand and more fully express this virtue, and to inspire and lead others. These were, however, exclusive of the bourgeoisie, for whom respectability and possessions displaced the heroic, virtuous, and 'natural' qualities that he admired.

Defining Graham as a socialist remains problematic; he was not an egalitarian, but pursued socialistic causes as a means of fighting injustice, but he despised the 'top-down' bureaucratic socialism which began to predominate, and there was an unmistakable silence over the post-war working-class struggles, in which previously he would have taken a vociferous part. Graham's elitism, however, took another form, which defined all of his political roles. His ambitions were pursued on behalf of others, but he was a man who was excited by ideas and strategies, not by logistics, and he knew that he was temperamentally unsuited to, and felt above, everyday political organisation, which included leadership. This was most obviously demonstrated in the positions he accepted in almost every organisation with which he became involved: titular, 'honorary' positions, with influence, but no executive power, the position of the outsider-insider. This unusual stance, however, led to misunderstandings, and as the Labour party grew, it was joined by new adherents whose attributes and motivations Graham did not admire, which led to the fracturing of his relationships with his former colleagues, and has exiled him to the margins of Labour history.

Graham's early political campaigns and his celebrity instigated a brief career in political journalism, where he displayed a unique writing style, a rebellious attitude towards authority, and an instinct for human foibles, highly unusual in such publications. Increasingly, however, a talent for irony and descriptive prose became apparent, and latterly, particularly when he tentatively began describing his overseas experiences, which he would later develop into the mainstays of his literary career.

Fortuitously, after losing his parliamentary seat, and three years in the political wilderness, Graham was able to transfer his literary talents to more mainstream publications. However, with a new and more conservative readership, while appearing to satisfy the public taste for exotic locations and adventure, he began to frame his political motivations more subtly and obliquely, nostalgically critiquing so-called progress, and its deleterious effects on more traditional societies. Although these were not entirely unique, they certainly stood in sharp contrast to the standard tales of foreign adventure and pastoral romanticism of the period, which mark Graham out not only as a highly original communicator, but the thesis has averred that he pursued a much more sustained and consistent political-cultural project, than has hitherto been appreciated by his biographers and critics.

This thesis has also asserted that commentators have over-complicated Graham's choice of literary medium, and not taken him at his word. Now unable to write polemic, which was his first instinct, and accepting that his story-telling ability was weak, Graham had no other choice but to write factual or semi-factual memoirs, which were simply a development of his early foreign news reports. Also, for someone who eschewed what he called 'invention,' and who was reluctant to expose his emotions, he was not only obliged to reach into his own experiences for inspiration, but to employ his emotionally reserved impressionistic skills to make his accounts more realistic. When Graham told his editor Garnett that one of his pieces was 'an impression, nothing more . . . that is all I can do,' he was being entirely honest. Graham was not an Impressionist, he simply wrote impressions, which he usually wrapped around some central, often vague narrative or meditation. This thesis has consequently suggested that Graham decided to stop writing in 1916 because he felt that his memories of exotic shores and noteworthy characters were now exhausted.

With some difficulty, Graham began to record his memories of Scotland, particularly his sometime home in Menteith, but these have also not been correctly interpreted. Despite Graham being quite explicit about his target in each, Walker failed to understand that the first three Scottish works were not 'bitter portrayals' that expressed Graham's negative feelings towards Scotland. Each was a political diatribe and a parody, a satire of the popular representation of Scottish rural life. Unlike Watts, Walker also failed to note that the remainder of Graham's Scottish works, which had a much gentler and nostalgic quality, began immediately after Graham's sad departure from his home, in which he recalled characters and scenes from an idealised past, documents of loss, and as such, were entirely consistent with his sketches of change and loss in South America, albeit that they lacked the exotic dangers. However, in these works, Graham avoided lapsing into sentimentality, but presented a diverse community of people and mystical landscapes, which were also an antidote to the popular literary taste of his times. If Graham had written nothing else, these nostalgic Scottish 'sketches' seen through the eyes of someone who was half inside and half outside the rural environment they described, would have stood out more distinctly as a major contribution to Scotland's literary heritage. There is no evidence,

however, that Graham wrote these as part of any particular cultural movement in Scotland, but simply reflected his continuing moral/political emotions, and he sits uncomfortably in MacDiarmid's Scottish Renaissance.

There was, however, an obvious pride for place in Graham's Scottish works, and distaste for what he and others saw as Scotland's political and cultural debasement at the hands of others, both politicians and writers. Graham's ideal was of a country of romantic freedoms, that once boasted heroic, sometimes eccentric individualists, a Scotland increasingly confined to the past, but which survived from his youthful memories, or among the peasantry. These were continually evoked as documents of nostalgic loss and regret, and in later life, they would consolidate into a political stance.

Although active, there is no evidence that Graham was a significant force within the early Scottish Home Rule movement, which ultimately failed to capture the public imagination. His major preoccupation at that time remained working class empowerment. However, after the First World War, these national concerns again took on a more hopeful political complexion, primarily inspired by writers, and Graham, at first reluctantly, threw the weight of his name and his oratorical skills behind Scottish Home Rule, and fortuitously, his near success in the Glasgow Rectorial election, was a huge boost to the infant cause. This led directly to the consolidation of the various nationalist factions into a viable political party, and while Graham, at least at the beginning, no doubt enjoyed regaining some political significance, it appears that his involvement was tentative, made more so when the party seemed to abrogate its left-wing origins. By this time in his life, and with his unsuitability for everyday political organisation, his name and personality were probably as much as he could contribute, although for a party that was continually riven by factionalism, and with little electoral support, from the perspective of its adherents, it was a significant and stabilising contribution.

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