

I Democracy and Alternatives

Majority Rule

Out of a rare insight into his friend's character, W. H. Hudson wrote:

"Certainly you are unique among English writers and your singularity is most evident when you write of the people of other races because of the union in you of two rare qualities - intense individuality, and detachment, which enables you to identify yourself with those who are most unlike us".

This capacity for implication and detachment, for seeing individuals and societies with a direct, personal vision, without the cataract of class or national prejudice, is an important clue to the understanding of Cunninghame Graham. He is able to speak for peoples and classes, alien in their convictions and modes of life, as if he were one of themselves; and to do this when these convictions stand in contradiction to one another as well as to our western manner of living. He will not burke the truth as he sees it merely for the sake of uniformity.

Democracy in the form which was accepted in Victorian Britain in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was but one social framework for a people's life among those he knew. In Scotland's breathing past, the clan system had demonstrated the virtue of lands held in common, and a personal relationship set up between chief and clansmen as of a father to a family.

In his South American wanderings he had come across the derelict churches and townships of the Jesuit missions, whose history he later described in "A Vanished Arcadia." There he found traces of paternalistic organisation of life, the Indians accepting some form of "thought - suggested representation" - which he ruefully claims would be an advantage if a fair method of applying it to County Councils in his own day could be found!

Like W.S. Blunt, he savoured the civilisation of the Moors, and found it rich in many things, which could teach our western civilisation. Of the tribal system in Morocco he wrote:

"The unit is the tribe, and not the individual and what we understand by freedom and democracy would seem to be the grossest form of tyranny on earth.....hardly a Moor alive would change the desultory Eastern tyranny.....for the six monthly visit of the tax collector as in Algeria"

This kind of inside appreciation but underlines his freedom from the insularity and national arrogance which Charles Dickens caricatured in the person of Mr Podsnap, and which characterised even much of the social protest of the 1880s and 1890s (the Fabians had no extensive range of international sympathy). Cunninghame Graham brought to an understanding of democracy in Britain an undoctinaire outlook which counted people so variously created that no one system could express and comprehend their freedom.

He insists: ".....men can be happy under conditions which no writer on political economy would recognise as fit for human beings"¹.

When he deals with democracy in Britain, he is equipped to look full in the face those elements which do not belong to its accepted theory.

Democracy never meant to him the rule of a majority just because it is a majority. He fights for the full enfranchisement of men politically, but recognises that ".....a man can vote and be a slave"², - an economic slave, the slave of false values and cultural bankruptcy. In prefaces he flays the public for its want of vision, wisdom and taste³. He evidences at times "great scorn of his audience"⁴ when he speaks at meetings. Frank Harris gives us this glimpse of his platform appearance:

".....There was disdain of his audience in every word, in his attitude even; he had an artist's contempt for their lack of vision, an adventurer's scorn for their muddy, slow blood"⁵.

The task of fashioning a democracy had for him an implication far beyond that of registering majority opinion as it had obtained at a given time. The attitude is rejected with scorn which counts majorities righteous in their judgements (here he stands with Carlyle):

".....anything which can secure a majority of votes is sent from heaven, for God himself is quite uncertain of the justice of his acts till men have voted on them"⁶.

he says in "Mogreb-el-Acksa". The gain of representative government will be of little significance unless people also are servants of truth and justice, and bring to fruition the graces of their humanity.

Cunninghame Graham set before himself a twofold task: to see to it that the people's word was law, and to see to it that the people's word was worthy of being law. He was an agitator in parliament, on behalf of their rights. He was an agitator all through the country, pleading for their responsible, unselfish, imaginative assumption of power. His scorn in speaking to them was, I believe, often a deliberate way of rousing them from complacency and inarticulateness, but he demanded an impossibly high standard of the electorate.

Conrad wrote to him on December 1897:

"You are a most hopeless idealist - your aspirations are irrealisable. You want from men faith, honour, fidelity to truth in themselves and others. You want them to have all this, to show it every day, to make out of these words their rules of life.....".

For this hopeless ideal of democracy he fought, within the framework of the democracy he found in Britain.

¹ "A Vanished Arcadia", p.208.

² "In Jesuit Land". WH Kobel. Introduction.

³ eg, in Prefaces to his first two published books.

⁴ Mr Thomas Kerr, ex-Lord Provost of Glasgow, in an interview.

⁵ In his short sketch in "Contemporary Portraits". (3rd Series).

⁶ "Mogreb-el-Acksa", p.57.

Constituent Elements

Four preconditions for the achievement of real democracy as he understood it deserve particular attention:

1. The judicious use of state and municipal power.
2. The liberation of people in terms of wages, conditions, leisure and education.
3. A basis of social equality.
4. A basis of justice.

i) In a very early speech¹, as a 'prentice politician', he gives the point of view from which he derives his support for direct intervention on the part of state and municipality: "No-one has complete right to do what he likes, without consulting the rights and feelings of others". He speaks feelingly on this occasion of the deer forests in the Highlands, the de-population of the countryside, the people to whom the lands should belong forced to live upon the selvages. He goes on to advocate these remedies: the restoration of the right of mountain pasturage and the imposition of a land tax; the power of compulsory acquisition of land at fair valuation by town and country councils - the object in the latter case being to provide the poverty-stricken with crofts. From the first, he, as a landlord, favoured nationalisation of the land. He was not long in Parliament when he was advocating large-scale nationalisation. Supporting an endeavour to reduce the work of boys aged 12 - 16 years from 54 to 48 hours per week, he chided the Home Secretary for speaking as if Scots were:

".....in terror of more state supervision.....(whereas)..... We look confidently to the time when the Government will take possession of the mines and machinery of this country, and work them for the benefit of the country and not for the selfish benefit of capitalists"².

In the case of state intervention, his point of view is more explicitly elaborated than is usual. In an article on "The State"³ he argues that the more democratic a country is, the less is state interference to be feared. The time for fear was when autocratic despots could take sons, daughters, goods and life. He goes on:

".....The State is but (at least the governing part of it) the executive councils of this vast toiling mass which forms the working class of England.if men want shorter hours of work, want better wages, sanitary dwellings, they can appeal to Parliament with the same safety as to their union. It is their union..... it is their property, and a man who fears to use it, fears to ride his own horse".

He is prepared to see Parliament fix wages, if need be, believing that it is impossible to fix them lower than, for instance, at Cradley Heath⁴. Cries of "individual liberty in danger" he counts mere diversions⁵: state intervention is a means to a people's genuine liberty. He hopes people will accomplish state intervention by constitutional means, by

¹ At Coatbridge, probably in 1885. A report of the speech is preserved in a Scrap Book.

² June 22nd 1887. Hansard.

³ In "The People's Press", October 18th 1890.

⁴ The centre of the chain-making trade.

⁵ Letter to "The Speaker", October 11th 1890.

using their votes, returning the right kind of MP, and seeing that he is there only so long as he expresses their wishes. If this should fail, the working population have the means of bringing the state to a standstill. If they only insist, they can get what they want. But his continual plea is for the use of constitutional means.

We may sum up his convictions:

If a genuine democracy is to exist, the State must be an instrument of the people to restrict harmful activity on the part of a few, and actively to interfere to provide the conditions requisite for a just and responsible society.

ii) The political and social liberation of working people was being hindered by economic conditions. The conditions attached to election (eg, the amount of the returning officer's fee¹), and the non-payment of MP's meant that the way to Parliament was not open to members of the working class. Municipal service was impossible because there was no system of recompense for hours of work lost in attending Council Meetings². Cunninghame Graham was convinced that Parliament would not be "the executive council of this toiling mass" until it substantially consisted of men from among their number. He did not think working men fear their inadequacy. "The democracy was composed of precisely the same blood, the same bones, as the aristocracy"³. The TUC could find two or three hundred able men to replace the triflers at Westminster⁴. Working men had a unique gift to bring to the House - the manifestation of their real need.

"I wish to see a gaunt, half-starved figure stalk into the House (the people's House of Commons).I want to hear his speech, ungrammatical, rude, uneducated. I want to hear the poor's questions put forward by a poor man"⁵.

Thus he pressed continually for the assumption of responsibility for election expenses by nation and ratepayers. He fought for the payment of MPs and Town Councillors. The way had to be cleared for the people's representatives adequately to represent them.

Economic factors put at premium responsible thinking and action on the part of the working people. In reply to a statement by Sidney Webb, which expressed his concern at the apathy of London's wage-earners, Cunninghame Graham pleads for patience⁶: their long economic servitude could not be quickly replaced by a new sense of liberty. When he agitates for a policy of employment, for just wages and conditions, for reduced hours of labour (especially for an eight hours' day), for the extension of Trade Unionism, for the abolition of sweating and overtime, his aim is to gain for people the economic freedom and leisure which is a pre-requisite of responsibility. Men and women who work from dawn to dusk, wearying themselves so that they can just crawl into bed and crawl out again in order to go back to work, all the time living on a starvation level, could never be made into a democracy. Speaking in the House on the deplorable conditions which obtained at Cradley Heath, Cunninghame Graham insisted:

"The first way to civilise these people was to make them imagine that someone was caring for them; and then they ought to shorten their hours of labour in order to enable

¹ He declares in a speech in the Black Country that this is £700.

² Hansard, July, 1889; protest.

³ Speech as MP in Hyde Park Hall, Springburn, Glasgow: probably 1887.

⁴ Article in "The People's Press", September 20th 1890.

⁵ Letter to the Press on Payment of MP's, November 13th 1888.

⁶ Articles in "The People's Press", July 5th 1890.

them to read books, to raise themselves in the social scale, and to put a spirit in them that would enable them to revolt against such a state of affairs"¹.

Men were not to be freed to trifle; they were to be freed to extend the whole range of their living. Education had a large part to play. Economic barriers should not stand in the way of it. It was a right the state owed all its citizens². In the House he was to affirm his conviction that for the reward of having intelligent citizens, the state could not pay too dearly - and at the same time insist that poor children needed to be fed at schools to that they might appropriate the benefits of education³. Of those benefits he was quite sure:

"It is education that opens the world of literature, science and art to man, without which what is life but a daily round of cares and troubles.....education places a man in direct contact with Plato, Shakespeare, Cervantes and all the great minds that have written and toiled and wept for suffering humanity"⁴.

iii) The equality achieved by "equalising men down" was anathema to Cunninghame Graham. He anticipated spurious equality, totalitarian in character, warning his readers against:

".....the happy time when all shall sit, appalled in one livery, at little tables, drinking some not too diuretic "table water" approved by the County Council, and reading expurgated Bibles"⁵.

The insight George Orwell was to express in "Animal Farm" and "1984" was closely akin to this earlier detestation of organised uniformity.

He was thoroughly aware that equality of status could not be realised where there was great disparity of wealth, and none fought harder than he did for a fairer distribution of the national income. But he never seems to have been in favour of the idea that all should be equally remunerated, or to have done other than anticipate discrepancies in wealth in a thoroughly socialised society. A basis of justice achieved, genuine human status was to be discovered in the manner of their personal relationships within society, in the acknowledgement of the great variety of skills and gifts for living required for the support of society, in co-operation in exercising these in humility before all others in their contribution and in a sense of the worth of one's own.

This sense of human equality was Scoto-Spanish. It was derived in his case from Spain itself (who had derived it from the Moorish invaders) and from Spanish influence in South America - although it forms one of the links of kinship between the Spanish and the Scottish outlook. Burns had it:

"The rank is but the guinea stamp.
The man's the gowd for a' that".

In terms of Spanish life, it is expressed by Cunninghame Graham in these words:

¹ March 7th 1889. Hansard.

² Stated in speech in Ballieston made as a candidate: probably 1885.

³ November 9th 1888. Hansard.

⁴ Address made in Argyle Hall, Glasgow, early, probably 1885.

⁵ "Notes on the District of Menteith", p.13.

".....they esteem a man by virtue of his being, and no one ever 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"¹.

The Moorish camel-driver keeps his lowly place of society, but in terms of his manhood considers himself the equal of the Sultan². The carter carries out the will of the Spanish nobleman who employs him, but when they talk together, they talk as equals³. The basis of this sense of equality was genuine respect for the contribution to the life of society brought by oneself and by other people⁴. In South America it was found among the "intelligentsia of the lazo not of mere puling books"⁵, in the recognition that some possess the mysterious arts of reading and writing, but cannot see a horse's footprint on hard ground⁶.

This mutual respect for work, for gifts, for different modes of living, which in sum are needed to make up the fabric of society, materially expressed, seems to him an essential ingredient in a real democracy. Without it, even political and educational enfranchisement is but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal⁷:

"Votes, citizenship, reading and writing, knowledge of a profession or a trade, yet leaves a man a boor, unless social equality between man and man makes men true citizens"⁸.

In Britain, the effect of the Nonconformist Conscience appeared to Cunninghame Graham to be to divert attention from a genuine policy of social equalisation and to substitute a form of moral patronage. In Parliamentary discussion this was writ large. He expresses his point of view in an article:

"Temperance is a safe subject..... Anything is popular in Parliament that tends to improve the masses from above. Anything that tends to make them the social equals of honourable gentlemen, anything that makes them independent of the upper classes, is, of course "Taboo"⁹.

He would not allow Parliament to rest in this error. His attitude to the emancipation of women partakes of the same large awareness. Feminists and suffragettes hailed tales like "Un Monsieur" (the story of a well-to-do married man's callous dealings with a prostitute) as the product of one who had heartfelt sympathy with and understanding of their aspirations. Cunninghame Graham certainly supported many of these aspirations. He encouraged the formation of Trade Unions among women workers, advocated the opening of political office to women, championed their right to the vote, spoke against the employment of women in mines. His very over-sympathising with prostitutes (who appear in many of his tales) stems from an outraged sense of the sexually unequal

¹ Introduction to "Companions in the Sierra"; Charles Rudy, 1907.

² "Pedro de Valdivia", p.43.

³ Noted often, eg, in "Jose Antonio Paez", p.104.

⁴ See "Cartagena and the Banks of the Sinu", p.175.

⁵ Preface to "El Rodeo".

⁶ "Thirteen Stories", p.46.

⁷ He notes how the form can be present without the substance, eg, in "Cartagena and the Banks of the Sinu", p.164.

⁸ Ibid, p.98.

⁹ Article on "People's Parliament", "The People's Press", June 21st 1890.

treatment of men and women by society. Late in life, he could express great satisfaction at their emancipation.

"Women had come into their own in the last fifty years. They legislated for us, pleaded for us, even preached in our pulpits. Were they any the worse for that? Certainly not. They were as good wives and mothers as ever they were¹".

His strong sense of justice led to the demand at many points that women have political, economic, social and sexual status denied them in the society in which he was brought up²; and his very great courtesy led to a constant insistence that women be treated with chivalry - the angry note in his sketch *Selvagia*³, a realistic description of the brutish life in a Scottish village, comes from sensitiveness to the complete lack of all courtesy of manner in its make-up.

Yet, on occasion, he shows that the form of emancipation may be gained and the substance lost. In his picture of *demi-Mondaines* in fashionable restaurants and places of amusement, he sounds the warning - it may be license women covet, not liberty. In a bitter paragraph in the biography of his ancestor ("*Doughty Deeds*") he avers that the only equality women have ever wanted was in sexual laxity. "Votes and careers and all their other war-cries have been but smoke-screens to cover their advance". This seeming disillusionment came largely from the conviction that women had a particular gift for life, as men had a particular gift, and freedom was not to be found in aping masculine ways. The status this gave might be realised in societies where women seemed enslaved and be lost in societies in which they had, in all technical matters, equal status. His concern is really that women both obtain a substantial social equality with men, and that they bring to society their unique gift of womanliness. In the same book, he says:

"Notwithstanding votes and seats in Parliament in England, women scarcely count as women. If they do count, it is as citizens, a very different thing.....in Scotland, women have always exercised more influence, as women, upon men....."⁴

Without making of courtesy a fetish (he does not equate it with the weakness which defers to all people and situations at all times⁵) he sees in it a grace without which social living must be barren, however adequate its outward form⁶. He regretted the loss of the ancient Scottish courtesy of manner which he believed and belonged to past, chivalrous times⁸, and inveighed against Scotland's equation of boorishness and harshness with independence and manliness⁹.

What he longed to see, it appears to me, was the grace of living which characterised a patriarchal form of society made indigenous to a more democratically organised form of

¹ Speech in 1934 opening the Public Hall at Buchlyvie. It is of interest to note that it was on a similar occasion exactly 50 years earlier, that he made his first public speech.

² He works this out fully in an unpublished MS, entitled "*The Real Equality of the Sexes*", in Dartmouth College Library.

³ In "*The Ipane*", probably written in reaction to the Kailyard School.

⁴ "*Doughty Deeds*", p.66.

⁵ *Ibid.* p.104.

⁶ He makes this crystal clear in his humorous and pathetic story of Dutch Smith's amiability in a sketch in "*Faith*", pp. 181, 182.

⁷ See Preface to "*Thirteen Stories*", p. ix.

⁸ "*Notes on the District of Menteith*", p.13.

⁹ "*The Ipane*", pp. 113 and 193.

life¹. Courtesy was a form of recognition of human dignity. It was no substitute for political, social, economic and cultural enfranchisement. But it was the outward expression of the humble realisation of inter-dependence which belonged, with these other freedoms, to the attainment of a full life for human beings.

IV) The word "Justice" is used in two senses throughout Cunninghame Graham's writings. It is at times spoken of as an ideal, recognised among many races, but far beyond the command of mankind. At times, the word is used for the rough-and-ready approximation we know on earth.

His conclusion about the possibility of the existence of justice as an absolute, anywhere, in any state, is uniformly pessimistic. True justice is so scarce on earth, it may well be rare in heaven². If it is to be found, it must exist in some far country, unattainable by man³. His attitude is probably most adequately stated in terms of the mythical land of Trapalanda, a paradise for horses and horsemen (where grass is always green and hard riding brings no ache between the shoulder-blades) imagined in Indian folk-lore. Of it he says (late in life, indicating the consistency of his attitude):

"Justice, deaf, blind and futile as she has always been in this world, there shall recover sight and hearing, and the perception of the meaning of her name. All this I wish, rather than look for....."⁴

He had a real longing for assurance of the existence of true justice to vindicate our earthly approximations. But honesty compelled him to remain an unbeliever.

About justice, as it is commonly found, he despairs. It depends on law, which "is too often but a system framed to quiet the conscience of the strong when they ill-treat the weak"⁵. It is implemented by force, which is always the servant of the powers-that-be, in London, in South America, anywhere. In London:

"Policemen stood upon their beats, stout and well-fed, looking with scorn if a taxpayer in a threadbare coat passed by them and ever ready, after the fashion of the world, to aid the rich, the strong and those who did not need their help, and spurn the miserable"⁶.

In South America justice in the hands of superior race, with superior fire-power, meant that intelligent Indian caciques were dealt with summarily as "gente sin razon"⁷. Of the Sioux, harried by an American punitive expedition, Cunninghame Graham wrote to the press:

"The Messiah these poor people are waiting for, our poor people here in London also look for. Justice will not come either to Cherry Creek, no, nor yet to Whitechapel"⁸.

¹ I take this to be the implication of his comparison of the Andorrans' way of life with ours, in "Faith", p.194.

² "Redeemed", p.80.

³ "Charity", p.218. My underlining.

⁴ Preface to "Southern Cross to Pole Star", by A F Tschiffely.

⁵ "Bernal Diaz del Castillo", p.132.

⁶ "Charity", p.74; see also "Mogreb-el-Acksa", p.129.

⁷ "A Vanished Arcadia", p.248. cf. "Cartagena and the Banks of the Sinu", p.55.

⁸ Quoted in Professor West's Biography, p.88.

When men were no longer useful, or when they were poor and powerless to articulate their rights and bring pressure to bear to preserve them, justice was absent¹. God nor man seemed to care².

All this appears to be the language of resignation. But how false the appearance. However much he may have despaired of "true justice" existing in pattern in heaven, or becoming indigenous to our earthly societies, in particular concrete instances his demand for justice was immediate and absolute. He battled continually in Parliament and on the platform for adequate inspection of conditions in mines, for the considerate treatment of pit ponies, for the equal treatment of rich and poor, agitator and hereditary pensioner - ".....the very policemen who smite him with their truncheons have the benefit of his advocacy when their pay, pensions and privileges are in question" remarks "Spy" in an otherwise none-too-kind cameo attached to a published cartoon³; for the availability of justice in the law-courts irrespective of financial position; for bringing judges under popular control; for the growth of organs expressing the people's voice (eg, Trade Unions, "The People's Press"⁴) so that it might not be pressure of rumour but of right which commended their case; for the freedom of meeting and speech. One of the most interesting things about the speeches and interventions recorded in Hansard, is his championship of obscure people who have had a raw deal from the law - of two girls given hard labour for sleeping in a doorway; of a man injured at work and refused just compensation; of people alleged to be beaten up by police in their cells; particularly of a man, who, he claimed, invented a form of time-fuse and was swindled out of his just reward - his case is taken up again and again in spite of its hopelessness. The unjust treatment of individuals, of groups, of a whole class called out his spirited protagonism. We shall examine (in Appendix I) one particular instance - the Trafalgar Square incident of "Bloody Sunday" - which articulates, in terms of action, his mind on the justice and freedom which should mark Britain's democracy.

Meantime, a characteristic outburst, cutting to the quick of the situation, sparing neither foe nor ally in its condemnation, may be quoted to give a lively picture of R B Cunninghame Graham, Liberal MP, in action on a public platform. The time is just after the release from prison following a six weeks' sentence for his assault on civilisation (as George Bernard Shaw saw it) in the "Battle of Trafalgar Square". He reminds his audience that Burns, his colleague, and he come back to their homes and congratulations: but that many others have received long, hard sentences. He goes on:

"But what of the poor fellows who have no friends.....? What of the civilisation, what of the Christianity, the social system and the hypocrisy that has created such a class among us - a class who prefer to be in Pentonville or Millbank, or any prison where they are free from starvation, and where, at least, they can get three meals a day from the richest, the most Christian, and the most civilised country in the world?while the audience were still laughing, and cheering exultantly, Mr Graham asked whether things would be much

¹ So he speaks of a soldier's recompense, the war over, in "Hernando de Soto", p.129; of the poor defrauded of justice in Hansard, July 6th and 20th, 1888.

² "Notes on the District of Menteith", 1st Edition, p.53.

³ August 25th 1888. In Dartmouth College Library.

⁴ The Capitalist Press brings out some of his bitterest invective. His attitude is best expressed in two articles in "The People's Press", "Utopia", 11th October and "Public Opinion", 8th November 1890. A phrase from the former may sum up..... "the great lying lever that thinks it moves the world".

better under a Liberal government about which there was a difference of opinion among the audience - and declared that unless they stiffened the knees of the Liberals, they would find the old, old story that "Come Whig, come Tory", the people are cheated, cajoled and coerced.

..... "We have had enough of it", he said. A rich man can do what he pleases - cheat on the turf and on the Stock Exchange, seduce children of thirteen, and he is still my honourable member for so-and-so. The rich woman can pass her time in frivolity, in luxury, in the pursuit of fashion, and she is still Madam, My Lady. "But turn the mirror", roared Graham with feverish fierceness, "turn the mirror, with the silver off it, and come to the plain work-a-day class, and then - then - the actors become plain rogue, and whore, without periphrasis. Now all that must be changed, but not by revolution in this country. I am not one of those who urge revolution - knowing that it must needs be unsuccessful - knowing that in a country kept down by mercenary police, with an army of the capitalist class, it cannot be successful - but a revolution as sweeping and searching can be effected at the ballot-boxes as it can be by the effusion of oceans of blood. You have the power - the vote which has not been given you, but which you have extorted - why not use it?"

If the attainment of a genuinely democratic form of social organisation implied the use of state or municipal power to provide the framework of a just society; an inheritance of economic security, significant participation in work, and cultured leisure; a commonality of gifts and energies given recognition in a sense of social equality; justice within the reach of everyone: what was its very heart?

To my mind, Cunninghame Graham, though he never deals with this question directly, gives one answer in his writings and in his life. The heart of democracy is liberty.

He was well aware the word is used as a catch-penny phrase with emotional overlays in political currency. He was quite alive to the dangers exemplified in revolutions in liberty's name, where liberty could become the "bloodstained goddess" who "usually eats her children"¹.

"Liberator" could be the highest title mankind has in its power to bestow², or might be equated with mere self-seeking³.

Far beyond not only the Tories but also the Liberals of his day, he saw how the form of liberty might exist alongside its denial in terms of the structure of society. Beyond the Marxists and many of the Socialists, he saw that liberty demanded a sense of equality in society which was not only economic and political, and understood the enrichment of humanity's whole being.

At the heart of every society, he insists, there must be the right of free responsible choice, the possibility of living out one's life in a way native to one's very being, as long as this does not hurt the lives of others. Individuals and nations must have this as a birthright. This is what Cunninghame Graham has in mind when he says

¹ "Cartagena and the Banks of the Sinu", p.128.

² "Cartagena and the Banks of the Sinu", pp.158, 159.

³ Re Don Justo de Urquiza's defeat of Rosas, the Argentinean dictator, and elevation of himself: "Progress", p.67.

".....every man must make his heaven for himself, for heaven made by another's hand would be a hell"¹. And of nations:

"every nation since the beginning of the world, has preferred, and rightly, indifferent government, by one of its own citizens, to any rule, however beneficial, imposed from the outside"².

This is why he had such a liking for the free life of the Gauchos, Vaqueros and Llaneros in South America. Liberty had not one or two forms, as seemed so often to be asserted in his day by advocates of particular liberties (eg, Marx, Herbert Spencer, Henry George, Oscar Wilde, the leaders of the Suffragettes). "Literally it has a hundred forms and shades"³, and all these need to be appropriated for the enrichment of a society which any strait-jacket freedom must impoverish. To him, personal freedom matters so much that the crusted Tory who acts with spirit and feeling⁴, and the person who is constitutionally incapable of sharing his own most fervent convictions⁵, must have their honoured place in society, even while he attacks their tradition and imperviousness. He, who understood so well the oppression which a system of government could entail upon men, who was so conscious of the freedom to be gained only by means of altering that system, never allows that any system is fulfilment in itself. ".....as if a system ever saved anything but itself.....", he says with scorn⁶.

In all this, the simple and important assertion emerges that government exists for people, not people for government. A D Lindsay, in a series of broadcasts reproduced in his book "I Believe in Democracy", makes points such as these:

"Democracy.....means that everyone is to count Good manners, which are the outward expression of treating people as person.....democracy implies that government exists to protect what really matters in society - the ultimate values of free human intercourse⁷.

Cunninghame Graham would have doffed his hat, or thrown it in the air, and shouted "Bravo!".

¹ "The Conquest of New Granada", p.104. I am sure this is the conception indicated by those words to which Tschiffely attached so much importance: "I hold that the best right that a man can have is to be happy after the way that pleases him best" (Don Roberto, p.183). The phrase looks individualist and anarchistic, unless seen in the light of the social context he gave it.

² "Jose Antonio Paez", p.217.

³ Preface to "Revolutionary Types".

⁴ In Glasgow, in 1887, he expresses this kind of appreciation of General Stewart's book on the Highlands - speech preserved in a Scrap-Book.

⁵ eg, Parnell.

⁶ "Jose Antonio Paez", p.220.

⁷ pp. 58 and 59.