

ROBERT BONTINE
CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

THREE STORIES



A HEGIRA
THE GOLD FISH
BEATTOCK FOR MOFFAT

Introduction by Jenni Calder

Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham

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Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham (1852–1936) was a traveller and adventurer, a politician and campaigner, a Scottish laird and an American rancher, a superb horseman, and a writer of essays, polemic, history, biography, and fiction. Throughout his life he was a champion of the underdog and an outspoken critic of injustice and inequality, and wherever he went, his capacity for empathy and his appreciation of the demands and customs of diverse territories and contrasting cultures were hallmarks of his life, his political ideas, and his writing.

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INTRODUCTION

by Jenni Calder

ROBERT BONTINE CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM has been described as a legendary figure, but he is a legend with multiple dimensions who is little known. He was a traveller and adventurer, a politician and campaigner instrumental in founding two political parties, a Scottish laird and an American rancher, a superb horseman, and a writer of essays, polemic, history, biography and fiction. Throughout his life he was a champion of the underdog and an outspoken critic of injustice and inequality.

The son of a Scottish laird and a half-Spanish mother, he was connected both to Scottish aristocracy and to the Spanish and Latin American culture that would have a profound influence on his life. At the age of seventeen he struck out from his privileged education, spending several years in South and Central America relishing the life of a gaucho and getting caught up in revolutionary and frontier upheaval. He and his wife Gabriela, equally adventurous, spent two years in Texas trying their hand, without success, at cattle ranching, trail driving, buffalo hunting and teaching.

When Cunninghame Graham's father died in 1883, he inherited the debt-ridden estate of Gartmore near Stirling. In 1886 he was elected member of parliament for Northwest Lanark. Although a Liberal, his uncompromising radicalism led two years later to his key role in founding the Scottish Labour Party, and then in turn to his involvement in the campaign for Scottish Home Rule and his presidency of the National Party of Scotland. He struggled to maintain the Gartmore estate but in 1894 had to concede defeat. The estate was sold and from that time he was based at Ardoch, near Dumbarton, which also belonged to the family.

Although immersed in Scottish life, Cunninghame Graham's travels did not cease. He spent time particularly in Spain and Morocco, and briefly back in South America. Wherever he went, his capacity for empathy and his appreciation of the demands and customs of diverse territories and contrasting cultures were hallmarks of his life, his political ideas and his writing. He had an extraordinary ability "to find perfectly intelligible the behaviour that others might have termed barbaric, senseless or irrational".¹

The three stories collected here are striking illustrations of this ability, as well as of the range of his experience and interests. Although published widely in journals and magazines, his first book did not appear until 1895. By the time of his death in 1936 he had published twenty-eight books plus numerous pamphlets and articles. These stories are set respectively in Mexico, Morocco and Scotland. They are about journeys and frontiers, and about tenacity, loss and death. In "A Hegira", the little band of escaped Mescalero Apaches trying to get back to their homeland don't make it.

In “The Gold Fish”, Amarabat sets out on an impossible mission and dies in the desert. In “Beattock for Moffat”, a dying man makes it to Beattock but not to his desired destination.

In each of these stories the changing landscape and the changing nature of connection are essential features. One by one the fleeing Mescaleros are caught and horribly killed, until the last three, within sight of their homeland, are matter-of-factly despatched by a Texas homesteader. The story’s impact is heightened by the teller’s almost deadpan restraint. Each incident of killing is allowed to speak for itself of prejudice, fear, pride and incomprehension.

There is a weary inevitability about the demise of the Apache—their way of life, like that of many of those Cunninghame Graham encountered in Latin America, cannot last. In “The Gold Fish”, Amarabat’s unquestioning pursuit of a quixotic journey bearing a fragile vessel of water through waterless terrain has a similar inevitability. Two days from his destination, he loses his way. Only the crystal bowl survives. Does it represent the illusory nature of material objects? Or is it a symbol of the enduring quality of fabricated beauty? However it is interpreted, it remains an ironic comment on the frailty of human—and animal—life.

In the third story, Andra dies on the station platform at Beattock, beyond the consolation of the “braw hurl” he is promised in the new Moffat hearse. On his last journey he has passed the River Eden at Carlisle and revives momentarily as the train moves through the Border’s Debateable Lands. The metaphorical resonance was clearly intended. Like the Mescalero, and like Amarabat, he is tantalisingly close to

where he wants to be, but fails to arrive. Perhaps we can see this as a metaphor for life itself, and in particular for the life of Robert Cunninghame Graham. And always present is the veiled understanding that even if you do reach your goal, the ultimate termination is never far away.

Notes

- 1 Cedric Watts and Laurence Davies, *Cunninghame Graham, A Critical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

A HEGIRA

THE GIANT CYPRESSES, tall even in the time of Montezuma, the castle of Chapultepec upon its rock (an island in the plain of Mexico), the panorama of the great city backed by the mountain range; the two volcanoes, the Popocatepetl and the Istacihuatl, and the lakes; the tigers in their cages, did not interest me so much as a small courtyard, in which, ironed and guarded, a band of Indians of the Apache tribe were kept confined. Six warriors, a woman and a boy, captured close to Chihuahua, and sent to Mexico, the Lord knows why; for generally an Apache captured was shot at once, following the frontier rule, which without difference of race was held on both sides of the Rio Grande, that a good Indian must needs be dead.

Silent and stoical the warriors sat, not speaking once in a whole day, communicating but by signs; naked except the breech-clout; their eyes apparently opaque, and looking at you without sight, but seeing everything; and their demeanour less reassuring than that of the tigers in the cage hard by. All could speak Spanish if they liked, some a word or two of English, but no one heard them say a word in either tongue. I asked the nearest if he was a Mescalero, and received the answer: "Mescalero-hay," and for a moment a gleam shone

through their eyes, but vanished instantly, as when the light dies out of the wire in an electric lamp. The soldier at the gate said they were "brutes"; all sons of dogs, infidels, and that for his part he could not see why the "Gobierno" went to the expense of keeping them alive. He thought they had no sense; but in that showed his own folly, and acted after the manner of the half-educated man the whole world over, who knowing he can read and write thinks that the savage who cannot do so is but a fool; being unaware that, in the great book known as the world, the savage often is the better scholar of the two. But five-and-twenty years ago the Apache nation, split into its chief divisions of Mescaleros, Jicarillas, Coyoteros, and Lipanes, kept a great belt of territory almost five hundred miles in length, and of about thirty miles in breadth, extending from the bend of the Rio Gila to El Paso, in a perpetual war. On both sides of the Rio Grande no man was safe; farms were deserted, cattle carried off, villages built by the Spaniards, and with substantial brick-built churches, mouldered into decay; mines were unworkable, and horses left untended for a moment were driven off in open day; so bold the thieves, that at one time they had a settled month for plundering, which they called openly the Moon of the Mexicans, though they did not on that account suspend their operations at other seasons of the year. Cochise and Mangas-Coloradas, Naked Horse, Cuchillo Negro, and others of their chiefs, were once far better known upon the frontiers than the chief senators of the congresses of either of the two republics; and in some instances these chiefs showed an intelligence, knowledge of men and things, which in another sphere would certainly have raised them high in the estimation of mankind.

The Shis-Inday (the people of the woods), their guttural language, with its curious monosyllable “hay” which they tacked on to everything, as “Oro-hay” and “plata-hay”; their strange democracy, each man being chief of himself, and owning no allegiance to any one upon the earth; all now have almost passed away, destroyed and swallowed up by the “Inday pindah lichoyi” (the men of the white eyes), as they used to call the Americans and all those northerners who ventured into their territory to look for “yellow iron.” I saw no more of the Apaches, and except once, never again met any one of them; but as I left the place the thought came to my mind, if any of them succeed in getting out, I am certain that the six or seven hundred miles between them and their country will be as nothing to them, and that their journey thither will be marked with blood.

At Huehuetoca I joined the mule-train, doing the twenty miles which in those days was all the extent of railway in the country to the north, and lost my pistol in a crowd just as I stepped into the train, some “lepero” having abstracted it out of my belt when I was occupied in helping five strong men to get my horse into a cattle-truck. From Huehuetoca we marched to Tula, and there camped for the night, sleeping in a “meson” built like an Eastern fondak round a court, and with a well for watering the beasts in the centre of the yard. I strolled about the curious town, in times gone by the Aztec capital, looked at the churches, built like fortresses, and coming back to the “meson” before I entered the cell-like room without a window, and with a plaster bench on which to spread one’s saddle and one’s rugs, I stopped to talk with a knot of travellers feeding their animals on barley and chopped straw,

grouped round a fire, and the whole scene lit up and rendered Rembrandtesque by the fierce glow of an “ocote” torch. So talking of the Alps and Apennines, or, more correctly, speaking of the Sierra Madre, and the mysterious region known as the Bolson de Mapimi, a district in those days as little known as is the Sus to-day, a traveller drew near. Checking his horse close by the fire, and getting off it gingerly, for it was almost wild, holding the hair “mecate” in his hand, he squatted down, the horse snorting and hanging back, and setting rifle and “machete” jingling upon the saddle, he began to talk.

“Ave Maria purisima, had we heard the news?” What! a new revolution? Had Lerdo de Tejada reappeared again? or had Cortinas made another raid on Brownsville? the Indios Bravos harried Chihuahua? or had the silver “conduct” coming from the mines been robbed? “Nothing of this, but a voice ran (*corria una voz*) that the Apache infidels confined in the courtyard of the castle of Chapultepec had broken loose. Eight of them, six warriors, a woman and a boy, had slipped their fetters, murdered two of the guard, and were supposed to be somewhere not far from Tula, and, as he thought, making for the Bolson de Mapimi, the deserts of the Rio Gila, or the recesses of the mountains of the Santa Rosa range.”

Needless to say this put all in the meson almost beside themselves; for the terror that the Indians inspired was at that time so real, that had the eight forlorn and helpless infidels appeared I verily believe they would have killed us all. Not that we were not brave, well armed—in fact, all loaded down with arms, carrying rifles and pistols, swords stuck between our saddle-girths, and generally so fortified as to

resemble walking arsenals. But valour is a thing of pure convention, and these men who would have fought like lions against marauders of their own race, scarce slept that night for thinking on the dangers which they ran by the reported presence of those six naked men. The night passed by without alarm, as was to be expected, seeing that the courtyard wall of the meson was at least ten feet high, and the gate solid "ahuehuete" clamped with iron, and padlocked like a jail. At the first dawn, or rather at the first false dawn, when the fallacious streaks of pink flash in the sky and fade again to night, all were afoot. Horsemen rode out, sitting erect in their peaked saddles, toes stuck out and thrust into their curiously stamped toe-leathers; their "chaparreras" giving to their legs a look of being cased in armour, their "poblano" hats, with bands of silver or of tinsel, balanced like halos on their heads.

Long trains of donkeys, driven by Indians dressed in leather, and bareheaded, after the fashion of their ancestors, crawled through the gate laden with "pulque," and now and then a single Indian followed by his wife set off on foot, carrying a crate of earthenware by a broad strap depending from his head. Our caravan, consisting of six two-wheeled mule-carts, drawn by a team of six or sometimes eight gaily-harnessed mules, and covered with a tilt made from the "istle," creaked through the gate. The great meson remained deserted, and by degrees, as a ship leaves the coast, we struck into the wild and stony desert country, which, covered with a whitish dust of alkali, makes Tula an oasis; then the great church sank low, and the tall palm-trees seemed to grow shorter; lastly church, palms and towers, and the

green fields planted with aloes, blended together and sank out of sight, a faint white misty spot marking their whereabouts, till at last it too faded and melted into the level plain.

Travellers in a perpetual stream we met journeying to Mexico, and every now and then passed a straw-thatched "jacal," where women sat selling "atole," that is a kind of stirabout of pine-nut meal and milk, and dishes seasoned hot with red pepper, with "tortillas" made on the "metate" of the Aztecs, to serve as bread and spoons. The infidels, it seemed, had got ahead of us, and when we slept had been descried making towards the north; two of them armed with bows which they had roughly made with sticks, the string twisted out of "istle," and the rest with clubs, and what astonished me most was that behind them trotted a white dog. Outside San Juan del Rio, which we reached upon the second day, it seemed that in the night the homing Mescaleros had stolen a horse, and two of them mounting upon him had ridden off, leaving the rest of the forlorn and miserable band behind. How they had lived so far in the scorched alkali-covered plains, how they managed to conceal themselves by day, or how they steered by night, no one could tell; for the interior Mexican knows nothing of the desert craft, and has no idea that there is always food of some kind for an Apache, either by digging roots, snaring small animals, or at the last resort by catching locusts or any other insect he can find.

Nothing so easy as to conceal themselves; for amongst grass eight or nine inches high, they drop, and in an instant, even as you look, are lost to sight, and if hard pressed sometimes escape attention by standing in a cactus grove,

and stretching out their arms, look so exactly like the plant that you may pass close to them and be unaware, till their bow twangs, and an obsidian-headed arrow whistles through the air.

Our caravan rested a day outside San Juan del Rio to shoe the mules, repair the harness, and for the muleteers to go to mass or visit the "poblana" girls, who with flowers in their hair leaned out of every balcony of the half-Spanish, half-Oriental-looking town, according to their taste. Not that the halt lost time, for travellers all know that "to hear mass and to give barley to your beasts loses no tittle of the day."

San Juan, the river almost dry, and trickling thirstily under its red stone bridges; the fields of aloes, the poplars, and the stunted palms; its winding street in which the houses, overhanging, almost touch; its population, which seemed to pass their time lounging wrapped in striped blankets up against the walls, was left behind. The pulque-aloes and the sugar-canes grew scarcer, the road more desolate as we emerged into the "tierra fria" of the central plain, and all the time the Sierra Madre, jagged and menacing, towered in the west. In my mind's eye I saw the Mescaleros trotting like wolves all through the night along its base, sleeping by day in holes, killing a sheep or goat when chance occurred, and following one another silent and stoical in their tramp towards the north.

Days followed days as in a ship at sea; the waggons rolling on across the plains; and I jogging upon my horse, half sleeping in the sun, or stretched at night half dozing on a tilt, almost lost count of time. Somewhere between San Juan del Rio and San Luis Potosi we learned two of the Indians had

been killed, but that the four remaining were still pushing onward, and in a little while we met a body of armed men carrying two ghastly heads tied by their scalp-locks to the saddle-bow. Much did the slayers vaunt their prowess; telling how in a wood at break of day they had fallen in with all the Indians seated round a fire, and that whilst the rest fled, two had sprung on them, as they said, "after the fashion of wild beasts, armed one with a stick, and the other with a stone, and by God's grace," and here the leader crossed himself, "their aim had been successful, and the two sons of dogs had fallen, but most unfortunately the rest during the fight had managed to escape."

San Luis Potosi, the rainless city, once world-renowned for wealth, and even now full of fine buildings, churches and palaces, and with a swarming population of white-clothed Indians squatting to sell their trumpery in the great market-square, loomed up amongst its fringe of gardens, irrigated lands, its groves of pepper-trees, its palms, its wealth of flowering shrubs; its great white domes, giving an air of Bagdad or of Fez, shone in the distance, then grew nearer, and at last swallowed us up, as wearily we passed through the outskirts of the town, and halted underneath the walls. The city, then an oasis in the vast plateau of Anáhuac (now but a station on a railway-line), a city of enormous distances, of gurgling water led in stucco channels by the side of every street, of long expanses of "adobe" walls, of immense plazas, of churches and of bells, of countless convents; hedged in by mountains to the west, mouth of the "tierra caliente" to the east, and to the north the stopping-place for the long trains of waggons carrying cotton from the States; wrapped

in a mist as of the Middle Ages, lay sleeping in the sun. On every side the plain lapped like an ocean, and the green vegetation round the town stopped so abruptly that you could step almost at once from fertile meadows into a waste of whitish alkali.

Above the town, in a foothill of the Sierra Madre about three leagues away, is situated the "Enchanted City," never yet fouled by the foot of man, but yet existent, and believed in by all those who follow that best part of history, the traditions which have come down to us from the times when men were wise, and when imagination governed judgment, as it should do to-day, being the noblest faculty of the human mind. Either want of time, or that belittling education from which few can escape, prevented me from visiting the place. Yet I still think if rightly sought the city will be found, and I feel sure the Mescaleros passed the night not far from it, and perhaps looking down upon San Luis Potosi cursed it, after the fashion that the animals may curse mankind for its injustice to them.

Tired of its squares, its long dark streets, its hum of people; and possessed perhaps with that nostalgia of the desert which comes so soon to all who once have felt its charm when cooped in bricks, we set our faces northward about an hour before the day, passed through the gates and rolled into the plains. The mules well rested shook their bells, the leagues soon dropped behind, the muleteers singing "La Pasadita," or an interminable song about a "Gachupin"¹ who loved a nun.

1 It had a chorus reflecting upon convent discipline: "For though the convent rule was strict and tight, She had her exits and her entrances by night."

The Mescaleros had escaped our thoughts—that is, the muleteers thought nothing of them; but I followed their every step, saw them crouched round their little fire, roasting the roots of wild “mescal”; marked them upon the march in single file, their eyes fixed on the plain, watchful and silent as they were phantoms gliding to the north.

Crossing a sandy tract, the Capataz, who had long lived in the “Pimeria Alta,” and amongst the Maricopas on the Gila, drew up his horse and pointing to the ground said, “Viva Mexico!—look at these footmarks in the sand. They are the infidels; see where the men have trod; here is the woman’s print and this the boy’s. Look how their toes are all turned in, unlike the tracks of Christians. This trail is a day old, and yet how fresh! See where the boy has stumbled—thanks to the Blessed Virgin they must all be tired, and praise to God will die upon the road, either by hunger or some Christian hand.” All that he spoke of was no doubt visible to him, but through my want of faith, or perhaps lack of experience, I saw but a faint trace of naked footsteps in the sand. Such as they were, they seemed the shadow of a ghost, unstable and unreal, and struck me after the fashion that it strikes one when a man holds up a cane and tells you gravely, without a glimmering of the strangeness of the fact, that it came from Japan, actually grew there, and had leaves and roots, and was as little thought of as a mere ash-plant growing in a copse.

At an “hacienda” upon the road, just where the trail leads off upon one hand to Matehuala, and on the other to Rio Verde, and the hot countries of the coast, we stopped to pass the hottest hours in sleep. All was excitement; men came in,

their horses flecked with foam; others were mounting, and all armed to the teeth, as if the Yankees had crossed the Rio Grande, and were marching on the place. "Los Indios! si, señor," they had been seen, only last night, but such the valour of the people of the place, they had passed on doing no further damage than to kill a lamb.

No chance of sleep in such a turmoil of alarm; each man had his own plan, all talked at once, most of them were half drunk, and when our Capataz asked dryly if they had thought of following the trail, a silence fell on all. By this time, owing to the horsemen galloping about, the trail was cut on every side, and to have followed it would have tried the skill of an Apache tracker; but just then upon the plain a cloud of dust was seen. Nearer it came, and then out of the midst of it horses appeared, arms flashed, and when nearing the place five or six men galloped up to the walls, and stopped their horses with a jerk. "What news? have you seen anything of the Apaches?" and the chief rider of the gallant band, getting off slowly, and fastening up his horse, said, with an air of dignity, "At the 'encrucijada,' four leagues along the road, you will find one of them. We came upon him sitting on a stone, too tired to move, called on him to surrender, but Indians have no sense, so he came at us tired as he was, and we, being valiant, fired, and he fell dead. Then, that the law should be made manifest to all, we hung his body by the feet to a huisaché tree." Then compliments broke out and "Viva los valientes!" "Viva Mexico!" "Mueran los Indios salvajes!" and much of the same sort, whilst the five valiant men modestly took a drink, saying but little, for true courage does not show itself in talk.

Leaving the noisy crew drinking confusion to their enemies, we rolled into the plain. Four dusty leagues, and the huisaché tree growing by four cross trails came into sight. We neared it, and to a branch, naked except his breech-clout, covered with bullet-wounds, we saw the Indian hang. Half-starved he looked, and so reduced that from the bullet-holes but little blood had run; his feet were bloody, and his face hanging an inch or two above the ground distorted; flies buzzed about him, and in the sky a faint black line on the horizon showed that the vultures had already scented food.

We left the nameless warrior hanging on his tree, and took our way across the plain, well pleased both with the "valour" of his slayers and the position of affairs in general in the world at large. Right up and down the Rio Grande on both sides for almost a thousand miles the lonely cross upon some river-side, near to some thicket, or out in the wide plain, most generally is lettered "Killed by the Apaches," and in the game they played so long, and still held trumps in at the time I write of, they, too, paid for all errors, in their play, by death. But still it seemed a pity, savage as they were, that so much cunning, such stoical indifference to both death and life, should always finish as the warrior whom I saw hang by the feet from the huisaché, just where the road to Matehuala bifurcates, and the trail breaks off to El Jarral. And so we took our road, passed La Parida, Matehuala, El Catorce, and still the sterile plateau spread out like a vast sea, the sparse and stunted bushes in the constant mirage looming at times like trees, at others seeming just to float above the sand; and as we rolled along, the mules struggling and straining in the whitish dust, we seemed to lose all trace of the Apaches; and

at the lone hacienda or rare villages no one had heard of them, and the mysterious hegira of the party, now reduced to three, left no more traces of its passing than water which has closed upon the passage of a fish.

Gomez Farias, Parras, El Llano de la Guerra, we passed alternately, and at length Saltillo came in sight, its towers standing up upon the plain after the fashion of a lighthouse in the sea; the bull-ring built under the Viceroy's looking like a fort; and then the plateau of Anáhuac finished abruptly, and from the ramparts of the willow-shaded town the great green plains stretched out towards Texas in a vast panorama; whilst upon the west in the dim distance frowned the serrated mountains of Santa Rosa, and further still the impenetrable fastnesses of the Bolson de Mapimi.

Next day we took the road for Monterey, descending in a day by the rough path known as "la cuesta de los fierros," from the cold plateau to a land of palms, of cultivation, orange-groves, of fruit-trees, olive-gardens, a balmy air filled with the noise of running waters; and passing underneath the Cerro de la Silla which dominates the town, slept peacefully far from all thoughts of Indians and of perils of the road, in the great caravansary which at that time was the chief glory of the town of Monterey. The city with its shady streets, its alameda planted with palm-trees, and its plaza all decorated with stuccoed plaster seats painted pale pink, and upon which during both day and night half of the population seemed to lounge, lay baking in the sun.

Great teams of waggons driven by Texans creaked through the streets, the drivers dressed in a "défroque" of old town clothes, often a worn frock-coat and rusty trousers stuffed

into cowboy boots, the whole crowned with an ignominious battered hat, and looking, as the Mexicans observed, like “pantomimas, que salen en las fiestas.” Mexicans from down the coast, from Tamaulipas, Tuxpan, Vera Cruz and Guatzecoalcos ambled along on horses all ablaze with silver; and to complete the picture, a tribe of Indians, the Kickopos, who had migrated from the north, and who occasionally rode through the town in single file, their rifles in their hands, and looking at the shops half longingly, half frightened, passed along without a word.

But all the varied peoples, the curious half-wild, half-patriarchal life, the fruits and flowers, the strangeness of the place, could not divert my thoughts from the three lone pathetic figures, followed by their dog, which in my mind’s eye I saw making northward, as a wild goose finds its path in spring, leaving no traces of its passage by the way. I wondered what they thought of, how they looked upon the world, if they respected all they saw of civilized communities upon their way, or whether they pursued their journey like a horse let loose returning to his birthplace, anxious alone about arriving at the goal. So Monterey became a memory; the Cerro de la Silla last vanishing, when full five leagues upon the road. The dusty plains all white with alkali, the grey-green sage-bushes, the salt and crystal-looking rivers, the Indians bending under burdens, and the women sitting at the cross roads selling tortillas—all now had changed. Through oceans of tall grass, by muddy rivers in which alligators basked, by “bayous,” “resacas,” and by “bottoms” of alluvial soil, in which grew cotton-woods, black-jack, and post-oak, with gigantic willows; through countless herds of

half-wild horses, lighting the landscape with their colours, and through a rolling prairie with vast horizons bounded by faint blue mountain chains, we took our way. Out of the thickets of "mesquite" wild boars peered upon the path; rattlesnakes sounded their note of warning or lay basking in the sun; at times an antelope bounded across our track, and the rare villages were fortified with high mud walls, had gates, and sometimes drawbridges, for all the country we were passing through was subject to invasions of "los Indios Bravos," and no one rode a mile without the chance of an attack. When travellers met they zigzagged to and fro like battleships in the old days striving to get the "weather gauge," holding their horses tightly by the head, and interchanging salutations fifty yards away, though if they happened to be Texans and Mexicans they only glared, or perhaps yelled an obscenity at one another in their different tongues. Advertisements upon the trees informed the traveller that the place to stop at was the "Old Buffalo Camp" in San Antonio, setting forth its whisky, its perfect safety both for man and beast, and adding curtly it was only a short four hundred miles away. Here for the first time in our journey we sent out a rider about half-a-mile ahead to scan the route, ascend the little hills, keep a sharp eye on "Indian sign," and give us warning by a timely shot, all to dismount, "corral" the waggons, and be prepared for an attack of Indians, or of the roaming bands of rascals who like pirates wandered on the plains. Dust made us anxious, and smoke ascending in the distance set us all wondering if it was Indians, or a shepherd's fire; at halting time no one strayed far from camp, and we sat eating with our rifles by our sides, whilst men on

horseback rode round the mules, keeping them well in sight, as shepherds watch their sheep. About two leagues from Juarez a traveller bloody with spurring passed us carrying something in his hand; he stopped and held out a long arrow with an obsidian head, painted in various colours and feathered in a peculiar way. A consultation found it to be "Apache," and the man galloped on to take it to the governor of the place to tell him Indians were about, or, as he shouted (following the old Spanish catchword), "there were Moors upon the coast."

Juarez we slept at, quite secure within the walls; started at daybreak, crossing the swiftly-running river just outside the town, at the first streak of light; journeyed all day, still hearing nothing of the retreating Mescaleros, and before evening reached Las Navas, which we found astir, all lighted up, and knots of people talking excitedly, whilst in the plaza the whole population seemed to be afoot. At the long wooden tables set about with lights, where in a Mexican town at sundown an *al fresco* meal of kid stewed in red pepper, "tamales" and "tortillas," is always laid, the talk was furious, and each man gave his opinion at the same time, after the fashion of the Russian *Mir*, or as it may be that we shall yet see done during debates in Parliament, so that all men may have a chance to speak, and yet escape the ignominy of their words being caught, set down, and used against them, after the present plan. The Mescaleros had been seen passing about a league outside the town. A shepherd lying hidden, watching his sheep, armed with a rifle, had spied them, and reported that they had passed close to him; the woman coming last and carrying in her arms a little dog; and he "thanked God

and all His holy saints who had miraculously preserved his life." After the shepherd's story, in the afternoon firing had been distinctly heard towards the small rancho of Las Crucecitas, which lay about three leagues further on upon the road. All night the din of talk went on, and in the morning when we started on our way, full half the population went with us to the gate, all giving good advice; to keep a good look-out, if we saw dust to be certain it was Indians driving the horses stolen from Las Crucecitas, then to get off at once, corral the waggons, and above all to put our trust in God. This we agreed to do, but wondered why out of so many valiant men not one of them proffered assistance, or volunteered to mount his horse and ride with us along the dangerous way.

The road led upwards towards some foothills, set about with scrubby palms; not fifteen miles away rose the dark mountains of the Santa Rosa chain, and on a little hill the rancho stood, flat-roofed and white, and seemingly not more than a short league away, so clear the light, and so immense the scale of everything upon the rolling plain. I knew that in the mountains the three Indians were safe, as the whole range was Indian territory; and as I saw them struggling up the slopes, the little dog following them footsore, hanging down its head, or carried as the shepherd said in the "she-devil's" arms, I wished them luck after their hegira, planned with such courage, carried out so well, had ended, and they were back again amongst the tribe.

Just outside Crucecitas we met a Texan who, as he told us, owned the place, and lived in "kornkewbinage with a native gal," called, as he said, "Pastory," who it appeared of all the

females he had ever met was the best hand to bake “tortillers,” and whom, had she not been a Catholic, he would have made his wife. All this without a question on our part, and sitting sideways on his horse, scanning the country from the corner of his eye. He told us that he had “had right smart of an Indian trouble here yesterday just about afternoon. Me and my ‘vaquerys’ were around looking for an estray horse, just six of us, when close to the ranch we popped kermash right upon three red devils, and opened fire at once. I hed a Winchester, and at the first fire tumbled the buck; he fell right in his tracks, and jest as I was taking off his scalp, I’m doggoned if the squaw and the young devil didn’t come at us jest like grizzly bars. Wal, yes, killed ’em, o’ course, and anyhow the young ’un would have growed up; but the squaw I’m sort of sorry about. I never could bear to kill a squaw, though I’ve often seen it done. Naow here’s the all-firedest thing yer ever heard; jes’ as I was turning the bodies over with my foot a little Indian dog flies at us like a ‘painter,’ the varmint, the condemndest little buffler I ever struck. I was for shootin’ him, but ‘Pastory’—that’s my ‘kornkewbyne’—she up and says it was a shame. Wal, we had to bury them, for dead Injun stinks worse than turkey-buzzard, and the dodgasted little dog is sitting on the grave, ’pears like he’s froze, leastwise he hasn’t moved since sun-up, when we planted the whole crew.”

Under a palm-tree not far from the house the Indians’ grave was dug; upon it, wretched and draggled, sat the little dog. “Pastory” tried to catch it all day long, being kind-hearted though a “kornkewbyne”; but, failing, said “God was not willing,” and retired into the house. The hours seemed days

in the accursed place till the sun rose, gilding the unreached Santa Rosa mountains, and bringing joy into the world. We harnessed up the mules, and started silently out on the lonely road; turning, I checked my horse, and began moralizing on all kinds of things; upon tenacity of purpose, the futility of life, and the inexorable fate which mocks mankind, making all effort useless, whilst still urging us to strive. Then the grass rustled, and across an open space a small white object trotted, looking furtively around, threw up its head and howled, ran to and fro as if it sought for something, howled dismally again, and after scratching in the ground, squatted dejectedly on the fresh-turned-up earth which marked the Indians' grave.

THE GOLD FISH

OUTSIDE THE LITTLE STRAW-THATCHED *CAFÉ* in a small courtyard trellised with vines, before a miniature table painted in red and blue, and upon which stood a dome-shaped pewter teapot and a painted glass half filled with mint, sat Amarabat, resting and smoking hemp. He was of those whom Allah in his mercy (or because man in the Blad-Allah has made no railways) has ordained to run. Set upon the road, his shoes pulled up, his waistband tightened, in his hand a staff, a palm-leaf wallet at his back, and in it bread, some hemp, a match or two (known to him as *el spiritus*), and a letter to take anywhere, crossing the plains, fording the streams, struggling along the mountain-paths, sleeping but fitfully, a burning rope steeped in saltpetre fastened to his foot, he trotted day and night—untiring as a camel, faithful as a dog. In Rabat as he sat dozing, watching the greenish smoke curl upwards from his hemp pipe, word came to him from the Khalifa of the town. So Amarabat rose, paid for his tea with half a handful of defaced and greasy copper coins, and took his way towards the white palace with the crenellated walls, which on the cliff, hanging above the roaring tide-rip, just inside the bar of the great river, looks at Salee. Around the horseshoe archway of the gate stood soldiers,

wild, fierce-eyed, armed to the teeth, descendants, most of them, of the famed warriors whom Sultan Muley Ismail (may God have pardoned him!) bred for his service, after the fashion of the Carlylean hero Frederic; and Amarabat walked through them, not aggressively, but with the staring eyes of a confirmed hemp-smoker, with the long stride of one who knows that he is born to run, and the assurance of a man who waits upon his lord. Some time he waited whilst the Khalifa dispensed what he thought justice, chattered with Jewish pedlars for cheap European goods, gossiped with friends, looked at the antics of a dwarf, or priced a Georgian or Circassian girl brought with more care than glass by some rich merchant from the East. At last Amarabat stood in the presence, and the Khalifa, sitting upon a pile of cushions playing with a Waterbury watch, a pistol and a Koran by his side, addressed him thus: —

“Amarabat, son of Bjorma, my purpose is to send thee to Tafilet, where our liege lord the Sultan lies with his camp. Look upon this glass bowl made by the Kaffir, but clear as is the crystal of the rock; see how the light falls on the water, and the shifting colours that it makes, as when the Bride of the Rain stands in the heavens, after a shower in spring. Inside are seven gold fish, each scale as bright as letters in an Indian book. The Christian from whom I bought them said originally they came from the Far East where the Djin-descended Jawi live, the little yellow people of the faith. That may be, but such as they are, they are a gift for kings. Therefore, take thou the bowl. Take it with care, and bear it as it were thy life. Stay not, but in an hour start from the town. Delay not on the road, be careful of the fish, change not their water

at the muddy pool where tortoises bask in the sunshine, but at running brooks; talk not to friends, look not upon the face of woman by the way, although she were as a gazelle, or as the maiden who when she walked through the fields the sheep stopped feeding to admire. Stop not, but run through day and night, pass through the Atlas at the Glau; beware of frost, cover the bowl with thine own haik; upon the other side shield me the bowl from the Saharan sun, and drink not of the water if thou pass a day athirst when toiling through the sand. Break not the bowl, and see the fish arrive in Tafilet, and then present them, with this letter, to our lord. Allah be with you, and his Prophet; go, and above all things see thou breakest not the bowl." And Amarabat, after the manner of his kind, taking the bowl of gold fish, placed one hand upon his heart and said: "Inshallah, it shall be as thou hast said. God gives the feet and lungs. He also gives the luck upon the road."

So he passed out under the horseshoe arch, holding the bowl almost at arm's length so as not to touch his legs, and with the palmetto string by which he carried it, bound round with rags. The soldiers looked at him, but spoke not, and their eyes seemed to see far away, and to pass over all in the middle distance, though no doubt they marked the smallest detail of his gait and dress. He passed between the horses of the guard all standing nodding under the fierce sun, the reins tied to the cantles of their high red saddles, a boy in charge of every two or three: he passed beside the camels resting by the well, the donkeys standing dejected by the firewood they had brought: passed women, veiled white figures going to the baths; and passing underneath the

lofty gateway of the town, exchanged a greeting with the half-mad, half-religious beggar just outside the walls, and then emerged upon the sandy road, between the aloe hedges, which skirts along the sea. So as he walked, little by little he fell into his stride; then got his second wind, and smoking now and then a pipe of hemp, began, as Arabs say, to eat the miles, his eyes fixed on the horizon, his stick stuck down between his shirt and back, the knob protruding over the left shoulder like the hilt of a two-handed sword. And still he held the precious bowl from Franquestan in which the golden fish swam to and fro, diving and circling in the sunlight, or flapped their tails to steady themselves as the water danced with the motion of his steps. Never before in his experience had he been charged with such a mission, never before been sent to stand before Allah's vicegerent upon earth. But still the strangeness of his business was what preoccupied him most. The fish like molten gold, the water to be changed only at running streams, the fish to be preserved from frost and sun; and then the bowl: had not the Khalifa said at the last, "Beware, break not the bowl"? So it appeared to him that most undoubtedly a charm was in the fish and in the bowl, for who sends common fish on such a journey through the land? Then he resolved at any hazard to bring them safe and keep the bowl intact, and trotting onward, smoked his hemp, and wondered why he of all men should have had the luck to bear the precious gift. He knew he kept his law, at least as far as a poor man can keep it, prayed when he thought of prayer, or was assailed by terror in the night alone upon the plains; fasted in Ramadan, although most of his life was one continual fast; drank of the shameful but seldom, and

on the sly, so as to give offence to no believer, and seldom looked upon the face of the strange women, Daughters of the Illegitimate, whom Sidna Mohammed himself has said, avoid. But all these things he knew were done by many of the faithful, and so he did not set himself up as of exceeding virtue, but rather left the praise to God, who helped his slave with strength to keep his law. Then left off thinking, judging the matter was ordained, and trotted, trotted over the burning plains, the gold fish dancing in the water as the miles melted and passed away.

Duar and Kasbah, castles of the Caids, Arabs' black tents, suddra zaribas, camels grazing—antediluvian in appearance—on the little hills, the muddy streams edged all along the banks with oleanders, the solitary horsemen holding their long and brass-hooped guns like spears, the white-robed noiseless-footed travellers on the roads, the chattering storks upon the village mosques, the cow-birds sitting on the cattle in the fields—he saw, but marked not, as he trotted on. Day faded into night, no twilight intervening, and the stars shone out, Soheil and Rigel with Betelgeuse and Aldebaran, and the three bright lamps which the cursed Christians know as the Three Maries—called, he supposed, after the mother of their Prophet; and still he trotted on. Then by the side of a lone palm-tree springing up from a cleft in a tall rock, an island on the plain, he stopped to pray; and sleeping, slept but fitfully, the strangeness of the business making him wonder; and he who cavils over matters in the night can never rest, for thus the jackal and the hyena pass their nights talking and reasoning about the thoughts which fill their minds when men lie with their faces covered in their haiks,

and after prayer sleep. Rising after an hour or two and going to the nearest stream, he changed the water of his fish, leaving a little in the bottom of the bowl, and dipping with his brass drinking-cup into the stream for fear of accidents. He passed the Kasbah of el Daudi, passed the land of the Rahamna, accursed folk always in "siba," saw the great snowy wall of Atlas rise, skirted Marakesh, the Kutubieh, rising first from the plain and sinking last from sight as he approached the mountains and left the great white city sleeping in the plain.

Little by little the country altered as he ran: cool streams for muddy rivers, groves of almond-trees, ashes and elms, with grape-vines binding them together as the liana binds the canela and the urunday in the dark forests of Brazil and Paraguay. At mid-day, when the sun was at its height, when locusts, whirring through the air, sank in the dust as flying-fish sink in the waves, when palm-trees seem to nod their heads, and lizards are abroad drinking the heat and basking in the rays, when the dry air shimmers, and sparks appear to dance before the traveller's eye, and a thin, reddish dust lies on the leaves, on clothes of men, and upon every hair of horses' coats, he reached a spring. A river springing from a rock, or issuing after running underground, had formed a little pond. Around the edge grew bulrushes, great catmace, water-soldiers, tall arums and metallic-looking sedge-grass, which gave an air as of an outpost of the tropics lost in the desert sand. Fish played beneath the rock where the stream issued, flitting to and fro, or hanging suspended for an instant in the clear stream, darted into the dark recesses of the sides; and in the middle of the pond enormous tortoises, horrid and antediluvian-looking, basked with their backs

awash or raised their heads to snap at flies, and all about them hung a dark and fetid slime.

A troop of thin brown Arab girls filled their tall amphoræ whilst washing in the pond. Placing his bowl of fish upon a jutting rock, the messenger drew near. "Gazelles," he said, "will one of you give me fresh water for the Sultan's golden fish?" Laughing and giggling, the girls drew near, looked at the bowl, had never seen such fish. "Allah is great; why do you not let them go in the pond and play a little with their brothers?" And Amarabat with a shiver answered, "Play, let them play! and if they come not back my life will answer for it." Fear fell upon the girls, and one advancing, holding the skirt of her long shift between her teeth to veil her face, poured water from her amphora upon the fish.

Then Amarabat, setting down his precious bowl, drew from his wallet a pomegranate and began to eat, and for a farthing buying a piece of bread from the women, was satisfied, and after smoking, slept, and dreamed he was approaching Tafilet; he saw the palm-trees rising from the sand; the gardens; all the oasis stretching beyond his sight; at the edge the Sultan's camp, a town of canvas, with the horses, camels, and the mules picketed, all in rows, and in the midst of the great "duar" the Sultan's tent, like a great palace all of canvas, shining in the sun. All this he saw, and saw himself entering the camp, delivering up his fish, perhaps admitted to the sacred tent, or at least paid by a vizier, as one who has performed his duty well. The slow match blistering his foot, he woke to find himself alone, the "gazelles" departed, and the sun shining on the bowl, making the fish appear more magical, more wondrous, brighter, and more golden than before.

And so he took his way along the winding Atlas paths, and slept at Demnats, then, entering the mountains, met long trains of travellers going to the south. Passing through groves of chestnuts, walnut-trees, and hedges thick with blackberries and travellers' joy, he climbed through vineyards rich with black Atlas grapes, and passed the flat mud-built Berber villages nestling against the rocks. Eagles flew by and moufflons gazed at him from the peaks, and from the thickets of lentiscus and dwarf arbutus wild boars appeared, grunted, and slowly walked across the path, and still he climbed, the icy wind from off the snow chilling him in his cotton shirt, for his warm Tadla haik was long ago wrapped round the bowl to shield the precious fish. Crossing the Wad Ghadat, the current to his chin, his bowl of fish held in one hand, he struggled on. The Berber tribesmen at Tetsula and Zarkten, hard-featured, shaved but for a chin-tuft, and robed in their "achnifs" with the curious eye woven in the skirt, saw he was a "rekass," or thought the fish not worth their notice, so gave him a free road. Night caught him at the stone-built, antediluvian-looking Kasbah of the Glaui, perched in the eye of the pass, with the small plain of Teluet two thousand feet below. Off the high snow-peaks came a whistling wind, water froze solid in all the pots and pans, earthenware jars and bottles throughout the castle, save in the bowl which Amarabat, shivering and miserable, wrapped in his haik and held close to the embers, hearing the muezzin at each call to prayers; praying himself to keep awake so that his fish might live. Dawn saw him on the trail, the bowl wrapped in a woollen rag, and the fish fed with bread-crumbs, but himself hungry and his head swimming with want of sleep, with

smoking “kief,” and with the bitter wind which from El Tisi N’Glai flagellates the road. Right through the valley of Teluet he still kept on, and day and night still trotting, trotting on, changing his bowl almost instinctively from hand to hand, a broad leaf floating on the top to keep the water still, he left Agurzga, with its twin castles, Ghresat and Dads, behind. Then rapidly descending, in a day reached an oasis between Todghra and Ferkla, and rested at a village for the night. Sheltered by palm-trees and hedged round with cactuses and aloes, either to keep out thieves or as a symbol of the thorniness of life, the village lay, looking back on the white Atlas gaunt and mysterious, and on the other side towards the brown Sahara, land of the palm-tree (Belad-el-Jerid), the refuge of the true Ishmaelite; for in the desert, learning, good faith, and hospitality can still be found—at least, so Arabs say.

Orange and azofaifa trees, with almonds, sweet limes and walnuts, stood up against the waning light, outlined in the clear atmosphere almost so sharply as to wound the eye. Around the well goats and sheep lay, whilst a girl led a camel round the Noria track; women sat here and there and gossiped, with their tall earthenware jars stuck by the point into the ground, and waited for their turn, just as they did in the old times, so far removed from us, but which in Arab life is but as yesterday, when Jacob cheated Esau, and the whole scheme of Arab life was photographed for us by the writers of the Pentateuch. In fact, the self-same scene which has been acted every evening for two thousand years throughout North Africa, since the adventurous ancestors of the tribesmen of to-day left Hadrumut or Yemen, and upon which Allah looks

down approvingly, as recognizing that the traditions of his first recorded life have been well kept. Next day he trotted through the barren plain of Seddat, the Jibel Saghra making a black line on the horizon to the south. Here Berber tribes sweep in their razzias like hawks; but who would plunder a rekass carrying a bowl of fish? Crossing the dreary plain and dreaming of his entry into Tafilet, which now was almost in his reach not two days distant, the sun beating on his head, the water almost boiling in the bowl, hungry and footsore, and in the state betwixt waking and sleep into which those who smoke hemp on journeys often get, he branched away upon a trail leading towards the south. Between the oases of Todghra and Ferkla, nothing but stone and sand, black stones on yellow sand; sand, and yet more sand, and then again stretches of blackish rocks with a suddra bush or two, and here and there a colocynth, bitter and beautiful as love or life, smiling up at the traveller from amongst the stones. Towards midday the path led towards a sandy tract all overgrown with sandarac bushes and crossed by trails of jackals and hyenas, then it quite disappeared, and Amarabat waking from his dream saw he was lost. Like a good shepherd, his first thought was for his fish; for he imagined the last few hours of sun had made them faint, and one of them looked heavy and swam sideways, and the rest kept rising to the surface in an uneasy way. Not for a moment was Amarabat frightened, but looked about for some known landmark, and finding none started to go back on his trail. But to his horror the wind which always sweeps across the Sahara had covered up his tracks, and on the stony paths which he had passed his feet had left no prints.

Then Amarabat, the first moments of despair passed by, took a long look at the horizon, tightened his belt, pulled up his slipper heels, covered his precious bowl with a corner of his robe, and started doggedly back upon the road he thought he traversed on the deceitful path. How long he trotted, what he endured, whether the fish died first, or if he drank, or, faithful to the last, thirsting met death, no one can say. Most likely wandering in the waste of sandhills and of suddra bushes he stumbled on, smoking his hashish while it lasted, turning to Mecca at the time of prayer, and trotting on more feebly (for he was born to run), till he sat down beneath the sun-dried bushes where the Shinghiti on his Mehari found him dead beside the trail. Under a stunted sandarac tree, the head turned to the east, his body lay, swollen and distorted by the pangs of thirst, the tongue protruding rough as a parrot's, and beside him lay the seven golden fish, once bright and shining as the pure gold when the goldsmith pours it molten from his pot, but now turned black and bloated, stiff, dry, and dead. Life the mysterious, the mocking, the inscrutable, unseizable, the uncomprehended essence of nothing and of everything, had fled, both from the faithful messenger and from his fish. But the Khalifa's parting caution had been well obeyed, for by the tree, unbroken, the crystal bowl still glistened beautiful as gold, in the fierce rays of the Saharan sun.

BEATTOCK FOR MOFFAT

THE BUSTLE ON THE EUSTON PLATFORM stopped for an instant to let the men who carried him to the third class compartment pass along the train. Gaunt and emaciated, he looked just at death's door, and, as they propped him in the carriage between two pillows, he faintly said, "Jock, do ye think I'll live as far as Moffat? I should na' like to die in London in the smoke." His cockney wife, drying her tears with a cheap hem-stitched pocket handkerchief, her scanty town-bred hair looking like wisps of tow beneath her hat, bought from some window in which each individual article was marked at seven-and-sixpence, could only sob. His brother, with the country sun and wind burn still upon his face, and his huge hands hanging like hams in front of him, made answer.

"Andra," he said, "gin ye last as far as Beattock, we'll gie ye a braw hurl back to the farm, syne the bask air, ye ken, and the milk, and, and—but can ye last as far as Beattock, Andra?"

The sick man, sitting with the cold sweat upon his face, his shrunken limbs looking like sticks inside his ill-made black slop suit, after considering the proposition on its merits, looked up, and said, "I should na' like to bet I feel fair boss, God knows; but there, the mischief of it is, he will na' tell ye,

so that, as ye may say, his knowlidge has na commercial value. I ken I look as gash as Garscadden. Ye mind, Jock, in the braw auld times, when the auld laird just slipped awa', whiles they were birlin' at the clairet. A braw death, Jock . . . do ye think it'll be rainin' aboot Ecclefechan? Aye . . . sure to be rainin' aboot Lockerbie. Nae Christians there, Jock, a' Johnstones and Jardines, ye mind?"

The wife, who had been occupied with an air cushion, and, having lost the bellows, had been blowing into it till her cheeks seemed almost bursting, and her false teeth were loosened in her head, left off her toil to ask her husband "If e' could pick a bit of something, a porkpie, or a nice sausage roll, or something tasty," which she could fetch from the refreshment room. The invalid having declined to eat, and his brother having drawn from his pocket a dirty bag, in which were peppermints, gave him a "drop," telling him that he "minded he aye used to like them weel, when the meenister had fairly got into his prelection in the auld kirk, outby." The train slid almost imperceptibly away, the passengers upon the platform looking after it with that half foolish, half astonished look with which men watch a disappearing train. Then a few sandwich papers rose with the dust almost to the level of the platform, sank again, the clock struck twelve, and the station fell into a half quiescence, like a volcano in the interval between the lava showers. Inside the third class carriage all was quiet until the lights of Harrow shone upon the left, when the sick man, turning himself with difficulty, said, "Good-bye, Harrow-on-the-Hill. I aye liked Harrow for the hill's sake, tho' ye can scarcely ca' yon wee bit mound a hill, Jean."

His wife, who, even in her grief, still smarted under the Scotch variant of her name, which all her life she had pronounced as "Jayne," and who, true cockney as she was, bounded her world within the lines of Plaistow, Peckham Rye, the Welch 'Arp ('Endon way), and Willesden, moved uncomfortably at the depreciation of the chief mountain in her kosmos, but held her peace. Loving her husband in a sort of half antagonistic fashion, born of the difference of type between the hard, unyielding, yet humorous and sentimental Lowland Scot, and the conglomerate of all races of the island which meet in London, and produce the weedy, shallow breed, almost incapable of reproduction, and yet high-strung and nervous, there had arisen between them that intangible veil of misconception which, though not excluding love, is yet impervious to respect. Each saw the other's failings, or, perhaps, thought the good qualities which each possessed were faults, for usually men judge each other by their good points, which, seen through prejudice of race, religion, and surroundings, appear to them defects.

The brother, who but a week ago had left his farm unwillingly, just when the "neeps were wantin' heughin' and a feck o' things requirin' to be done, forby a puckle sheep waitin' for keelin,'" to come and see his brother for the last time, sat in that dour and seeming apathetic attitude which falls upon the country man, torn from his daily toil, and plunged into a town. Most things in London, during the brief intervals he had passed away from the sick bed, seemed foolish to him, and of a nature such as a self-respecting Moffat man, in the hebdomadal enjoyment of the "prelections" of a Free Church minister could not authorise.

“Man, saw ye e’er a carter sittin’ on his cart, and drivin’ at a trot, instead o’ walkin’ in a proper manner alangside his horse?” had been his first remark. The short-tailed sheep dogs, and the way they worked, the inferior quality of the cart horses, their shoes with hardly any calkins worth the name, all was repugnant to him.

On Sabbath, too, he had received a shock, for, after walking miles to sit under the “brither of the U.P. minister at Symington,” he had found Erastian hymn books in the pews, and noticed with stern reprobation that the congregation stood to sing, and that, instead of sitting solidly whilst the “man wrestled in prayer,” stooped forward in the fashion called the Nonconformist lounge.

His troubled spirit had received refreshment from the sermon, which, though short, and extending to but some five-and-forty minutes, had still been powerful, for he said:

“When yon wee, shilpit meenister—brither, ye ken, of rantin’ Ferguson, out by Symington—shook the congregation ower the pit mouth, ye could hae fancied that the very sowls in hell just girmed. Man, he garred the very stour to flee aboot the kirk, and, hadna’ the big book been weel brass banded, he would hae dang the haricles fair oot.”

So the train slipped past Watford, swaying round the curves like a gigantic serpent, and jolting at the facing points as a horse “pecks” in his gallop at an obstruction in the ground.

The moon shone brightly into the compartment, extinguishing the flickering of the half-candle power electric light. Rugby, the station all lit up, and with its platforms occupied but by a few belated passengers, all muffled up like race

horses taking their exercise, flashed past. They slipped through Cannock Chase, which stretches down with heath and firs, clear brawling streams, and birch trees, an out-post of the north lost in the midland clay. They crossed the oily Trent, flowing through alder copses, and with its backwaters all overgrown with lilies, like an “aguapey” in Paraguay or in Brazil.

The sick man, wrapped in cheap rugs, and sitting like Guy Fawkes, in the half comic, half pathetic way that sick folk sit, making them sport for fools, and, at the same time, moistening the eye of the judicious, who reflect that they themselves may one day sit as they do, bereft of all the dignity of strength, looked listlessly at nothing as the train sped on. His loving, tactless wife, whose cheap “sized” handkerchief had long since become a rag with mopping up her tears, endeavoured to bring round her husband’s thoughts to paradise, which she conceived a sort of music hall, where angels sat with their wings folded, listening to sentimental songs.

Her brother-in-law, reared on the fiery faith of Moffat Calvinism, eyed her with great disfavour, as a terrier eyes a rat imprisoned in a cage.

“Jean wumman,” he burst out, “to hear ye talk, I would jist think your meenister had been a perfectly illeeterate man, pairadise here, pairadise there, what do ye think a man like Andra could dae daunderin’ about a gairden naked, pu’in soor aipples frae the trees?”

Cockney and Scotch conceit, impervious alike to outside criticism, and each so bolstered in its pride as to be quite incapable of seeing that anything existed outside the purlieus of their sight, would soon have made the carriage into

a battle-field, had not the husband, with the authority of approaching death, put in his word.

“Whist, Jeanie wumman. Jock, dae ye no ken that the Odium-Theologicum is just a curse—pairadise—set ye baith up—pairadise. I dinna’ even richtly ken if I can last as far as Beattock.”

Stafford, its iron furnaces belching out flames, which burned red holes into the night, seemed to approach, rather than be approached, so smoothly ran the train. The mingled moonlight and the glare of iron-works lit the canal beside the railway, and from the water rose white vapours as from Styx or Periphlegethon. Through Cheshire ran the train, its timbered houses showing ghastly in the frost which coated all the carriage windows, and rendered them opaque. Preston, the catholic city, lay silent in the night, its river babbling through the public park, and then the hills of Lancashire loomed lofty in the night. Past Garstang, with its water-lily-covered ponds, Garstang where, in the days gone by, catholic squires, against their will, were forced on Sundays to “take wine” in Church on pain of fine, the puffing serpent slid.

The talk inside the carriage had given place to sleep, that is, the brother-in-law and wife slept fitfully, but the sick man looked out, counting the miles to Moffat, and speculating on his strength. Big drops of sweat stood on his forehead, and his breath came double, whistling through his lungs.

They passed by Lancaster, skirting the sea on which the moon shone bright, setting the fishing boats in silver as they lay scarcely moving on the waves. Then, so to speak, the train set its face up against Shap Fell, and, puffing heavily, drew up into the hills, the scattered grey stone houses of the north,

flanked by their gnarled and twisted ash trees, hanging upon the edge of the streams, as lonely, and as cut off from the world (except the passing train) as they had been in Central Africa. The moorland roads, winding amongst the heather, showed that the feet of generations had marked them out, and not the line, spade, and theodolite, with all the circumstance of modern road makers. They, too, looked white and unearthly in the moonlight, and now and then a sheep, aroused by the snorting of the train, moved from the heather into the middle of the road, and stood there motionless, its shadow filling the narrow track, and flickering on the heather at the edge.

The keen and penetrating air of the hills and night roused the two sleepers, and they began to talk, after the Scottish fashion, of the funeral, before the anticipated corpse.

“Ye ken, we’ve got a braw new hearse outby, sort of Epescopalian lookin’, wi’ gless a’ roond, so’s ye can see the kist. Very conceity too, they mak’ the hearses noo-a-days. I min’ when they were jist auld sort o’ ruckly boxes, awfu’ licht, ye ken upon the springs, and just went dodderin’ alang, the body swinging to and fro, as if it would flee richt oot. The roads, ye ken, were no nigh hand so richtly metalled in thae days.”

The subject of the conversation took it cheerfully, expressing pleasure at the advance of progress as typified in the new hearse, hoping his brother had a decent “stan’ o’ black,” and looking at his death, after the fashion of his kind, as it were something outside himself, a fact indeed, on which, at the same time, he could express himself with confidence as being in some measure interested. His wife, not being Scotch, took quite another view, and seemed to think that the mere

mention of the word was impious, or, at the least, of such a nature as to bring on immediate dissolution, holding the English theory that unpleasant things should not be mentioned, and that, by this means, they can be kept at bay. Half from affection, half from the inborn love of cant, inseparable from the true Anglo-Saxon, she endeavoured to persuade her husband that he looked better, and yet would mend, once in his native air.

“At Moffit, ye’d ’ave the benefit of the ’ill breezes, and that ’ere country milk, which never ’as no cream in it, but ’olesome, as you say. Why yuss, in about eight days at Moffit, you’ll be as ’earty as you ever was. Yuss, you will, you take my word.”

Like a true Londoner, she did not talk religion, being too thin in mind and body even to have grasped the dogma of any of the sects. Her Heaven a music ’all, her paradise to see the king drive through the streets, her literary pleasure to read lies in newspapers, or pore on novelettes, which showed her the pure elevated lives of duchesses, placing the knaves and prostitutes within the limits of her own class; which view of life she accepted as quite natural, and as a thing ordained to be by the bright stars who write.

Just at the Summit they stopped an instant to let a goods train pass, and, in a faint voice, the consumptive said, “I’d almost lay a wager now I’d last to Moffat, Jock. The Shap, ye ken, I aye looked at as the beginning of the run home. The hills, ye ken, are sort ’o heartsome. No that they’re bonny hills like Moffat hills, na’, na’, ill-shapen sort of things, just like Borunty tatties, awfu’ puir names too, Shap Fell and Rowland Edge, Hutton Roof Craggs, and Arnside Fell; heard ever ony body sich like names for hills? Naething to fill the mooth;

man, the Scotch hills jist grap ye in the mooth for a' the world like speerits."

They stopped at Penrith, which the old castle walls make even meaner, in the cold morning light, than other stations look. Little Salkeld, and Armathwaite, Cotehill, and Scotby all rushed past, and the train, slackening, stopped with a jerk upon the platform, at Carlisle. The sleepy porters bawled out "change for Maryport," some drovers slouched into carriages, kicking their dogs before them, and, slamming to the doors, exchanged the time of day with others of their tribe, all carrying ash or hazel sticks, all red faced and keen eyed, their caps all crumpled, and their great-coat tails all creased, as if their wearers had laid down to sleep full dressed, so as to lose no time in getting to the labours of the day. The old red sandstone church, with something of a castle in its look, as well befits a shrine close to a frontier where in days gone by the priest had need to watch and pray, frowned on the passing train, and on the manufactories, whose banked up fires sent poisonous fumes into the air, withering the trees which, in the public park, a careful council had hedged round about with wire.

The Eden ran from bank to bank, its water swirling past as wildly as when "The Bauld Buccleugh" and his Moss Troopers, bearing "the Kinmount" fettered in their midst, plunged in and passed it, whilst the keen Lord Scroope stood on the brink amazed and motionless. Gretna, so close to England, and yet a thousand miles away in speech and feeling, found the sands now flying through the glass. All through the mosses which once were the "Debateable Land" on which the moss-troopers of the clan Graeme were used to

hide the cattle stolen from the “auncient enemy,” the now repatriated Scotchman murmured feebly “that it was bonny scenery” although a drearier prospect of “moss hags” and stunted birch trees is not to be found. At Ecclefechan he just raised his head, and faintly spoke of “yon auld carle, Carlyle, ye ken, a dour thrawn body, but a gran’ pheelosopher,” and then lapsed into silence, broken by frequent struggles to take breath.

His wife and brother sat still, and eyed him as a cow watches a locomotive engine pass, amazed and helpless, and he himself had but the strength to whisper “Jock, I’m dune, I’ll no’ see Moffat, blast it, yon smoke, ye ken, yon London smoke has been ower muckle for ma lungs.”

The tearful, helpless wife, not able even to pump up the harmful and unnecessary conventional lie, which after all, consoles only the liar, sat pale and limp, chewing the fingers of her Berlin gloves. Upon the weather-beaten cheek of Jock glistened a tear, which he brushed off as angrily as it had been a wasp.

“Aye, Andra” he said, “I would hae liket awfu’ weel that ye should win to Moffat. Man, the rowan trees are a’ in bloom, and there’s a bonny breer upon the corn—aye, ou aye, the reid bogs are lookin’ gran’ the year—but Andra, I’ll tak’ ye east to the auld kirk yaird, ye’ll no’ ken onything about it, but we’ll hae a heartsome funeral.”

Lockerbie seemed to fly towards them, and the dying Andra’ smiled as his brother pointed out the place and said, “Ye mind, there are no ony Christians in it,” and answered, “Aye, I mind, naething but Jardines,” as he fought for breath.

The death dews gathered on his forehead as the train shot by Nethercleugh, passed Wamphray, and Dinwoodie, and with a jerk pulled up at Beattock just at the summit of the pass.

So in the cold spring morning light, the fine rain beating on the platform, as the wife and brother got their almost speechless care out of the carriage, the brother whispered, "Dam't, ye've done it, Andra', here's Beattock; I'll tak' ye east to Moffat yet to dee."

But on the platform, huddled on the bench to which he had been brought, Andra' sat speechless and dying in the rain. The doors banged to, the guard stepping in lightly as the train flew past, and a belated porter shouted, "Beattock, Beattock for Moffat," and then, summoning his his last strength, Andra' smiled, and whispered faintly in his brother's ear, "Aye, Beattock—for Moffat?" Then his head fell back, and a faint bloody foam oozed from his pallid lips. His wife stood crying helplessly, the rain beating upon the flowers of her cheap hat, rendering it shapeless and ridiculous. But Jock, drawing out a bottle, took a short dram and saying, "Andra', man, ye made a richt gude fecht o' it," snorted an instant in a red pocket handkerchief, and calling up a boy, said, "Rin, Jamie, to the toon, and tell McNicol to send up and fetch a corp." Then, after helping to remove the body to the waiting room, walked out into the rain, and, whistling "Corn Rigs" quietly between his teeth lit up his pipe, and muttered as he smoked "A richt gude fecht—man aye, ou aye, a game yin Andra', puir felly. Weel, weel, he'll hae a braw hurl onyway in the new Moffat hearse."

The Cunninghame Graham Collection

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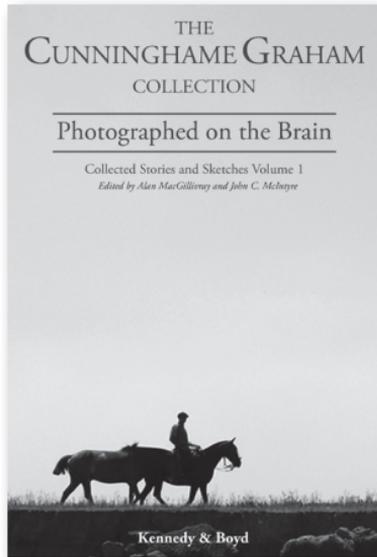
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See overleaf for details of the five volumes in this series.

**Photographed on the Brain:
Collected Stories and Sketches Volume 1**

ISBN 9781849211000 | Paperback | 352 pages | £16.95 | \$25.00

The works in this volume were published between 1895 and 1899. *Notes on the District of Menteith* (1895), while not a collection of stories, is included because it was Cunninghame Graham's first book, a brief survey of the district of Scotland around Graham's house and ancestral estate of Gartmore. In a sense, it is the physical, social and historical landscape seen from the windows of his own home. *Father Archangel of Scotland* (1896) is a collection of essays and sketches from the hands of both Robert and his wife Gabriela, their only joint literary venture. *The Ipané* (1899) is Cunninghame Graham's first true collection of his own short stories and sketches, although he had already published a travel book, *Mogreb-Al-Acksá* (1898), about his experiences in Morocco.



“... a sort of record of a dream, dreamed upon pampas and on prairies, sleeping upon a saddle under the southern stars, or galloping across the plains in the hot sun, photographed in youth upon the writer's brain ...”

—*The Ipané*, “The Lazo”

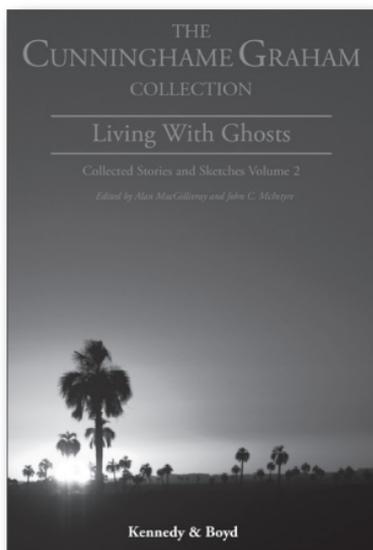
Living With Ghosts:

Collected Stories and Sketches Volume 2

ISBN 9781849211017 | Paperback | 446 pages | £16.95 | \$25.00

Living with Ghosts, the second volume of this series, contains the collections of stories that Cunninghame Graham published between 1900 and 1905, in the period immediately after he was forced to sell his estate of Gartmore and divide his time between London and the smaller house of Ardoch on the Clyde. He was thus made more free to devote himself to writing and achieve a greater output of the stories and sketches that are at the heart of his literary endeavour.

The collections *Thirteen Stories* (1900), *Success and Other Stories* (1902), and *Progress and Other Sketches* (1905), display his new-found confidence about his own skills and ability to handle the wide-ranging subject matter that became his trademark.



“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?”

—*Thirteen Stories*, Preface

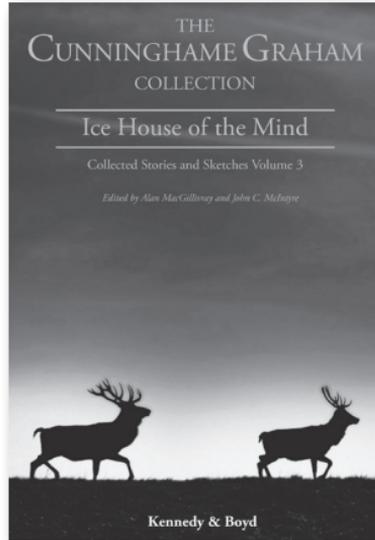
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Ice House of the Mind:

Collected Stories and Sketches Volume 3

ISBN 9781849211024 | Paperback | 478 pages | £16.95 | \$25.00

Ice House of the Mind contains the collections *His People*, *Faith*, and *Hope*, published between 1906 and 1910, which present a typical mix of Cunninghame Graham's stories set in widely separated locations and drawing on his vast experience of life in different classes of human society. The stories are suffused with Cunninghame Graham's striking blend of the elegiac mood and unsentimental realism.



“All that we write is but a bringing forth again of something we have seen or heard about. What makes it art is but the handling of it, and the imagination that is brought to bear upon the theme out of the writer’s brain. It follows therefore that all writing, as I said before, brings sorrow in its train ... To record, even to record emotions, is to store up a fund of sadness, and that is why all writing is a sort of icehouse of the mind ...”

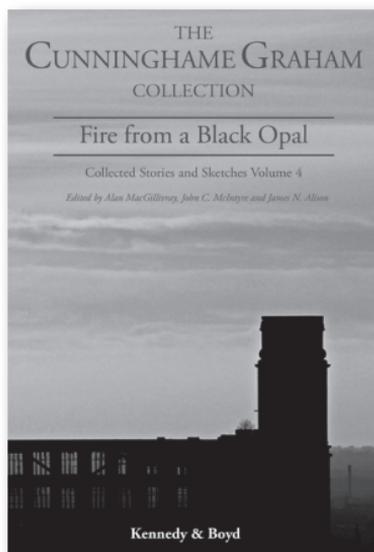
—*Faith*, Preface

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**Fire from a Black Opal:
Collected Stories and Sketches Volume 4**

ISBN 9781849211031 | Paperback | 478 pages | £16.95 | \$25.00

Fire from a Black Opal contains the collections, *Charity*, *A Hatchment* and *Brought Forward*, published between 1912 and 1916, immediately prior to and during the First World War. Cunninghame Graham was by now in his sixties, yet many of the stories demonstrate his amazing powers of recall for the experiences and feelings of his youth. Equally the later stories reveal a close empathy with the terrible demands that the war was making on people of different nations.



“Honour and virtue do not of necessity take with them charity; neither can base estate nor any adverse circumstance of life stifle it in the hearts of those, to whom it comes, just as the fire shines out from a black opal, almost without their ken.”

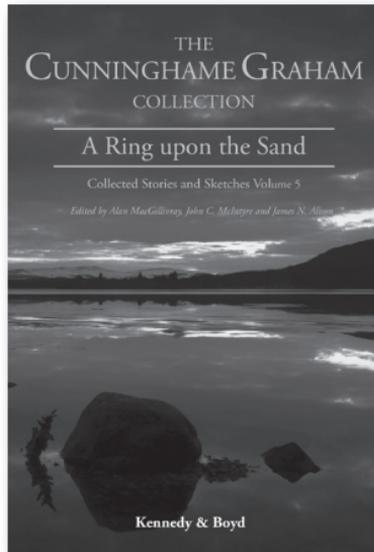
—*Charity*, Preface

A Ring upon the Sand:
Collected Stories and Sketches Volume 5

ISBN 9781849211048 | Paperback | 354 pages | £16.95 | \$25.00

A Ring upon the Sand contains the collections *Redeemed*, *Writ in Sand*, and *Mirages*, published between 1927 and 1936. There is a sense of winding down in the pieces presented. The characteristic Cunninghame Graham astringency and irony are less intense, and there is more conventional sentiment. However, some of the familiar targets for his distaste and anger are still being picked off. Cunninghame Graham shows himself to be fully alive to the increasingly menacing world of

1930s Europe. Cunninghame Graham died on 20 March 1936: exactly four months later, the Spanish Civil War began. If he had lived, there is little doubt about where his sympathies would have lain.



“I thanked the stationmaster for his horse, unsaddled him, emptied a tin mug of water over his sweating back, and threw him down a bundle of fresh Pindó leaves to keep him occupied till he was ready for his maize. Then I strolled into the station café, where Exaltacion Medina, Joao Ferreira, and, I think, Enrique Clerici were playing billiards, whilst they waited for me.”

— *Writ in Sand*, “The Stationmaster’s Horse”

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Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham (1852–1936) was a traveller and adventurer, a politician and campaigner, a Scottish laird and an American rancher, a superb horseman, and a writer of essays, polemic, history, biography, and fiction. Throughout his life he was a champion of the underdog and an outspoken critic of injustice and inequality, and wherever he went, his capacity for empathy and his appreciation of the demands and customs of diverse territories and contrasting cultures were hallmarks of his life, his political ideas, and his writing.

The three stories collected here are set respectively in Mexico, Morocco, and Scotland. They are about journeys and frontiers, and about tenacity, loss, and death. In “A Hegira”, a little band of escaped Mescalero Apaches are trying to get back to their homeland; in “The Gold Fish”, Amarabat must carry a fragile, priceless gift across the desert; and in “Beattock for Moffat”, a dying man travels north, looking to see his home one last time.

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