

## Our Contributors.

### A Day on the Yukon Trail.

By REV. JOHN PRINGLE, M.A.

I awaken at 4 o'clock in the morning, for my brain has by habit become like an alarm clock set for that hour. I must start early, because while it is not hard to break camp in the dark, it is next to impossible to make camp when the short winter day has closed. I stretch my right hand from under the blankets lay the kindlings in the stove, put a lump of dog tallow upon them, fill the stove with wood, strike a match, and almost immediately I hear the roar of the fire up the stovepipe. It is 48 below outside, but in five minutes it is 85 above in my 7 by 9 tent. I stretch myself, arms and legs, and take solid comfort for twenty minutes, while the water, which in the form of ice stood in my Hudson Bay kettle all night, boils. Then I get up ready for the trail.

I take my morning wash in snow, stir the cat meal into the boiling water, chop a wedge of beans out of the pot and put it into the frying-pan to thaw and warm and make the coffee. A few verses from my Testament, my only book, a few thoughts about truth and Him and other people, a few requests at the throne of grace, and I am ready for breakfast, and it for me. Porridge, bacon, beans, hardtack, coffee, sometimes with milk and sugar, some times with one, sometimes with neither. But one learns on the trail how little even such luxuries as the "tin cow" count for, as compared with the stuff that stays with you. My dishes washed, they go into my old grub box. I look around—a sort of farewell look at my gypsy home, grab my stove, open the door, and stand it on the snow to cool, take down my tent, double it and spread it so that it extends from end to end, and about a yard on either side of my sleigh. The stove goes on the tail of the sleigh, then dog feed, man feed, grub-box, cooking utensils—the heavy stuff at the bottom—and the pack of blankets on top. I draw the tent up on either side, so that it tightly and neatly covers the load, and lash securely to the sleigh. My rifle is pushed under the rope on one side, my snowshoes on the other. I call the dogs—Teslin, Dick, Jack, Telegraph—harness them and hitch them to the sleigh, give a glance at the deserted tent bottom to see that nothing is forgotten, and with a "get there!" to the dogs I am off. This, I trust, not hard to read about but to do it morning after morning except Sunday, for six months, getting only about five hours' sleep at night, wears—tells in hard muscles, a good appetite and grey hairs. It is 5:30 a. m., and I am absolutely alone on the trail, which runs for a few miles through a thick, gloomy spruce forest, fine going, no drift. Then after an hour or two we strike an open country and the trail is gone. I put on my snowshoes, and then to pack it for the dogs with their heavy load. Sometimes it is necessary only to go before the team, the drift being solid enough to bear them. Sometimes I have to go over it twice or thrice before the dogs can get footing. At noon I have gone perhaps ten miles, and am not tired, but hungry. On a little shelf formed by the roots of a fallen tree I build a fire, melt some snow, and make a cup of tea. My pockets hold half a dozen ship biscuits, and three or four slices of dried bacon. These, with tea, are my lunch, and when I have partaken the

trail does not look so hard. Grace before me at means more on the trail than amid the comforts and pleasures of the old conventional life.

S. I move on hour after hour until at 3 o'clock, the sun's edge touches the horizon, and I must stop if I would camp in comfort. The dogs are let loose, a spot is tramped in the snow for the tent, a tree is felled upon the site of my new home, the branches cut off to make a floor, and a ridge pole for the tent carried in, a couple of short staves made ready to keep the stove from sinking into the snow, and in thirty minutes I am at home, a fire going and supper on the way. If I am very tired I make porridge enough to satisfy my hunger without anything else. Then the dog pot goes on, and in an hour and a half four pounds of corn meal and a pound of tallow are boiled into a mess for the hungry dogs. They get the portion on the snow, eating it very slowly, for it is boiling hot. Look for them twenty minutes hence and you will find them under a tree cuddled up on brush their master has placed for them. Look into the tent at 11 o'clock you will see the minister reclining on his blankets reading his Testament by the light of a candle stuck on the corner of his grub-box. Stay a few minutes longer and you will see him take off his coat and put on a sweater, change his stockings and moccasins and then crawl between the blankets and blow out the light. A verse or two of "Sun of my Soul Thou Saviour Dear," and he is off into the land of rest and dreams.

Three or four days of this and a cabin is reached where a man lies helpless as a mummy in his bunk—scurvy. A day or two for rest, and then the return journey begins. The sick man is lashed in his blankets on the minister's sleigh; syrup cans filled with hot water are placed at his feet; one of his "pards" puts the bulky articles of the minister's outfit on his sleigh, and with dogs or without them follows to the camp where there is care and cure for the sick partner. Not much, perhaps, in all this, no preaching. But a life is saved, and the Gospel which reveals God in Jesus as man's friend is commended to hundreds who never knew or had forgotten. I know that it again and again led to the opening of the door to Him who for long years had stood at the door of the heart saying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me." Anyway, it was obedience in part to Him who commanded: "Preach the Gospel and heal the sick."

### Ralph Connor and Henry Drummond.

(From the Weekly Leader)

The backward parson and novelist, who has delighted us with "Black Rock" and "The Man from Gengary," has evidently a close connection with what was once the Free Church of Scotland. His name is Scotch to the core—Gordon—and some of us cannot think of Lanark and Douglas without remembering his uncle, who was always spoken of as "Gordon of Douglas." Presbytery clerk and man of affairs, earnest, public spirited, and a typical product of the generation after 1843, "Gordon of Douglas" came to be minister of St. Bride's in the end,

but in the times when there were fast days there was a congregation in the Free Church of Douglas. A man of power, and tact, and humour, and kindness, a thorough Celt, and a fine Christian was the uncle of Ralph Connor. He has just gone away to the lone land, leaving his old friends rather eerie.

To return to Ralph Connor. He has been delighting us with a vivid and life-like sketch of our own Henry Drummond a man who has made Stirling famous among Scotland's burgh towns. We have the memory, too, of the older Henry Drummond, Stirling's grand old man and the children's friend. He went home to his rest on a New Year's morning some years ago, and no one—not even his own gifted son and namesake—could ever take his place. He was like the woman of Shunem. He dwelt among his own people, and did good continually.

Ralph Connor's sketch is very human and finely put. We know now for certain that the parson novelist and the man we knew as evangelist, scientist, stylist, and professor, met in an old, white-painted manse twenty years ago. It was a meeting in the spirit, not in the flesh, for manses, Canadian and Scottish too, are places where wisemen are, and where the sons and daughters go in for high thinking and plain living. Especially is that the case when the mother of six sons has to take the helm in hand (the father being useless for anything but preaching on the seventh day of the week). The mother must keep the Sabbath Day holy, and her son out of flippancy and irreverence, especially when some of them are young-fledged graduates from Toronto University.

It was a stroke of sanctified genius to keep these young sons of the manse quiet by "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." That book has been belaboured by critics and praised by many people who perhaps did not understand it. It has been made the subject of many pamphlets. But never till now has it come within the scope of the Sabbath Observance Committee. The book must be a good example of reasoned and reasonable religion. It must be judged by its fruits.

Ralph Connor met Henry Drummond on his native heath, in the Oddfellows' Hall. There is a whole era of religious life in Scotland leading up to Henry Drummond's work among the Edinburgh students. One remembers that time thirty years ago almost, when Scotland stood ripe for a religious movement. The Churches had been trying their hand at movements political and otherwise. The Church of Scotland had got rid of patronage; the other two Churches had debated union *ad nauseam*, and given it up. There was no movement for Biblical criticism as yet. The whole land seemed waiting for something to come and rouse the slumberous dry bones. Across from America came two men—Messrs. Moody and Sankey—and saved the Churches on the practical and spiritual side.

The seed had been sown in many centres and all over the country, and soon there came the flash of the sickles in the hands of many preachers, and the glad sound of harvest home. Henry Drummond met Dwight Lyman Moody, and called him "the biggest human I ever knew."

It was a strange collocation. The keen, brusque American evangelist, and the cultured, keen-eyed Free Church divinity student, who became an evangelist of worldwide renown. Ralph Connor met Henry Drummond after he had become famous, when he was acting as an evangelist on new lines to the Edinburgh students. Toronto