

## HENRY DRUMMOND: A MYSTERY

HENRY DRUMMOND was born in 1851, a year after Robert Louis Stevenson. He matriculated at Edinburgh University in the Faculty of Arts in 1866, a year before Stevenson matriculated in Science. From 1867 to 1875 the two were fellow-students, pursuing each in his own way an uncertain and to all appearance unprofitable career. They never met. Each played the charmer in his particular circle, but the circles did not touch, much less intersect. Had any chance encounter occurred between them it may be taken for granted that neither would have seen much to desire in the other. From Stevenson's point of view Drummond could only have been a sanctimonious young prig of mean attainments, who added to his offending by being a dandy and, in a genteel way, a sportsman. Drummond, for all his charity and real liking for odd characters, could hardly have seen in Stevenson anything but a youth of sickly habit, slovenly in dress and loose of life—in short, a generally unsavoury young man, who, having no more sense of his lost condition than he had of the supreme

importance of cleanliness and cricket, was not even interesting as a sinner.

To bracket two such names, to discern a parallelism in characters so divergent, to suggest that Drummond and Stevenson were in some sort spiritual congeners, may seem to the survivors of their generation an exercise in the perverse and the fantastic. Really it is only the common transmutation of paradox into platitude by lapse of time. These young men were twin apostles of that uneasy *Aufklärung* that marked the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They were children of the same race, generation and culture. Both came into the world exactly in the middle of the century. Neither lived to see the century out. Stevenson died in 1894, aged forty-four; Drummond in 1897, in his forty-sixth year. Both belonged to the affluent Scottish middle-class, and both puzzled their respective God-fearing families—Stevenson by the usual device of scandalising them, Drummond by subtler methods. Each had a great aptitude for drift, and each in the same year of grace (1874) found what he needed to give his life direction—the influence of a forceful, not to say coarse, man of genius. In Stevenson's case it was W. E. Henley, in Drummond's D. L. Moody. Three years later each had found his vocation. Stevenson was charming the readers of the *Cornhill*, and Drummond, who had migrated to Glasgow, was fascinating theological students and young iron-

moulders—the former on week-days by acquainting them in an agreeable manner with the elements of modern science, the latter on Sundays by playing the part of a new Ezekiel who could measure the New Jerusalem with the yardstick of Darwin and Huxley. These first youthful adventures resulted in two immensely popular books—*Virginibus Puerisque* and *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. Neither book had any intellectual merit that is worth considering at this time of day, but both were attuned to the mood of the generation and amazingly well written. Thenceforward Stevenson and Drummond ascended into fame *pari passu*. Both made their appeal to youth—*virginibus puerisque*—and became the centre of a cult that lasted nearly a generation and even now has its grey-haired votaries. Each, one is glad to think, matured considerably as time went on, enough in fact to raise the same question by his early death—What would he have done had he lived another twenty years?

In Stevenson's case the question, though interesting, is not important. He has left a permanent record by which he can be judged through all the eighteen years of his career. We can see his beginnings and trace the stages of his growth into the accomplished artist he was when he died. *Weir of Hermiston*, had it been finished, would have been a great work, but it is unlikely that it would have altered our general estimate of

the author. Stevenson, in the nature of the case, is an open book. There is no mystery about him. With Drummond, on the other hand, there are mysteries at every turn, at the end as well as at the beginning of his career. The first that one encounters is the mystery of his intellectual equipment. As a youth he was lively and intelligent but showed even less than average promise. Like Stevenson, he was an unsatisfactory student; but Stevenson had the excuse of wretched health, and even so he showed considerable aptitude for the two professions he successively studied. Drummond, who as boy and man was almost aggressively healthy, had a university career that was not even mediocre. There was no reason for this except a certain lack of moral fibre. It is certain that his natural abilities, though not distinguished, were sufficient, given a moderate degree of application and industry, to enable him to make a creditable showing. But to Drummond application was ever abhorrent. Diligent he could be in any matter that held his emotions, but throughout all his varied and eventful life there is not a single instance of his undertaking a task that was not thoroughly agreeable to him. Though at school he had been a promising Latinist nothing would induce him to acquire the very modest amount of Latin and Greek that sufficed for a Scottish pass degree in the seventies. "I never had courage", he once remarked with characteristic

blandness, "to attempt the classical department of the M.A." What he meant was that he simply could not be bothered. It would have meant drudgery, and Henry Drummond, though rather vague on many things, was quite clear on one point—that drudgery was not for him. Who shall blame him? He probably had a shrewd notion of the kind of part for which Heaven had cast him. We have a suggestive picture of the youth from a fellow-student. "He generally wore a tall hat and had long auburn hair. Though I fain would have spoken to him, his ethereal appearance and great grace and refinement seemed to forbid an approach to one who appeared different from the majority of students. . . . He struck me as one possessed by great thoughts which were polarising in his mind and giving a happy expression to his face."

Great thoughts polarising in his mind! Drummond was always able to convey that valuable suggestion of himself. He was not consciously posing; he could not help looking interesting. But there is no evidence that at that time he thought either greatly or at all. In the course of his life he had at least one good idea, but good ideas are not great thoughts. No, the chances are that the red-haired youth with the top-hat who stood in solitary elegance at the north-east corner of the Old Buildings quad. was pondering the possibility of regenerating the world by the development of "animal

magnetism" and telepathy, a species of mountebankery in which he had great faith and considerable gifts. Presently he would float gracefully from lecture-room to lecture-room, doing here a little philosophy not so badly and there a little science really well, but never addressing himself to the solid business of taking a degree. He left the University without one. After entering upon his theological curriculum he had some thought of a degree in science, but two failures in Part I. of the B.Sc. made him give that up also. There is no excuse for his *laches*. His interest in the humanities may have been superficial and his capacity for them meagre, but he had a real scientific gift, and Geikie found in him not merely an apt pupil but a geologist of rare talent that just fell short of genius.

In these circumstances it was fortunate for Drummond that he had an indulgent father who was content to let a favourite son do pretty much as he pleased. Why not? Henry was a delightful lad. Everybody said so. He had no vices, which was a great comfort when one considered what young men were apt to be. He was genuinely religious and accepted the perfection of evangelical dogma as beyond dispute. He was studying for the ministry: a candidate so suitable might be allowed to study in his own way, which was doubtless God's way, being mysterious. Henry himself, however, when questioned about his intentions, was rather vague,

even evasive. The ministry—yes, of course, he was studying for the ministry. But there would be a note of hesitancy in his voice, suggesting that at the back of his mind he cherished a pious hope that Providence had something better in store for him than the dreary round of a professional parson. Meanwhile let him spend his days in innocent enjoyment. Germany was an attractive idea. It had become the fashion in the later nineteenth century for Scottish theological students to go for a season to Göttingen, Tübingen or Bonn, just as in the eighteenth century it had been the fashion for Scottish law students to go to Leyden or Utrecht. Henry Drummond had friends who were going to Tübingen. It would be very jolly to be with them. And so to Tübingen Henry went. His father had no qualms. Henry's orthodoxy would be proof against the virus of German scepticism. Henry, no doubt, was of the same confident opinion, but to make assurance doubly sure he carefully avoided lectures. This, at least, is a fair inference from the fact that neither of the two fellow-students (destined to be lifelong intimates) who accompanied him was ever able to say what courses he attended or what were his studies. We do know, however, that he was not idle. Henry was never idle. He was at pains to learn good *Hoch-Deutsch*, joined a Studentsverein, sang songs, drank beer, assisted at duels, made himself agreeable to Lutheran

pastors and discreetly charming to Lutheran pastors' daughters, and went with German cronies upon expeditions to the Black Forest.

On his return from Germany in the autumn of 1873 Drummond did a curious, and as events proved, a very significant thing, though the significance was not perceived at the time. He decided to suspend his theological studies for a year and divide his time between natural science and mission work in the slums. The sudden change of plan and the queer assortment of activities does not seem to have excited any comment. It was just Henry Drummond's way and another example of his constitutional weakness for always finding something more important than the business in hand. But Drummond knew better. He had got the first glimpse of his destiny.

He gave a revelation of his mind in an address which he delivered as president of the New College Theological Society. The subject was Spiritual Diagnosis. The training for the ministry, he argued, was seriously defective in that it had no "clinical" side. The pulpit, no doubt, had its place, but its value as a method of saving souls was limited by the fact that its appeal was to the mass, whereas souls are individuals. Preaching was easy, "but to draw souls one by one, to buttonhole them and take from them the secret of their lives, to talk them clear out of themselves, to read them off like a page of print,



to pervade them with your spiritual essence and make them transparent, *this* is the Spiritual Diagnosis which is so difficult to acquire and so hard to practise". Yet in this difficult and paramount task of his calling the divinity student received no systematic instruction, for the simple reason that the phenomena of the spiritual life had never been the subject of scientific study. It was essential, therefore, that there should be "a spiritual science" analogous to natural science, an inductive study of the soul, observing, recording, distinguishing, classifying and relating the phenomena of the spiritual life.

It is said by one who was present on the occasion that Drummond's exposition of his thesis "electrified us", which may fairly be taken to mean that it made his audience's hair stand on end. Nobody now would turn even one hair. We have been glutted with stuff of the sort by Freud and others. But in 1873 Freud was but a medical student at Vienna, and the only people who dabbled in such speculations were Ritualistic curates, with whom Drummond had no acquaintance. It is a curious coincidence that at the very moment when Drummond was "electrifying" the serious young Scots of New College, Edinburgh, Samuel Butler in the shabby seclusion of Clifford's Inn was writing *The Way of All Flesh*, and telling how the accomplished rascal Pryer "electrified" Ernest Pontifex in the same way. "You know, my dear Pontifex,

it is all very well to quarrel with Rome, but Rome has reduced the treatment of the human soul to a science, while our own Church, though so much purer in many respects, has no organised system either of diagnosis or pathology—I mean, of course, spiritual diagnosis and spiritual pathology. . . . The history of all ages has shown—and surely you must know this as well as I do—that as men cannot cure the bodies of their patients if they have not been properly trained in hospitals under skilled teachers, so neither can souls be cured of their hidden ailments without the help of men who are skilled in soul craft—or, in other words, of priests.”

The argument, even to the phrasing, is the same. Butler, as a satirist, has simply added the little that was lacking from Drummond’s exposition to make it diabolical. (Though how avidly, one thinks, would Butler, in that same capacity of satirist, have leapt upon the Drummond phrase of “buttonholing” souls!) As Drummond stated it the idea was wonderfully attractive, and at the same time uncomfortable, sinister, even terrifying to young men who had hitherto implicitly accepted the decent Protestant tradition that the soul is a sanctuary to which God alone has the right of access. But Henry Drummond could never see the matter in that light. He was conscious of no taboo. As a boy in his teens he had defended mesmerism on the ground that “in a reasonable universe the Creator cannot

have isolated men from each other nor shut each up in his own prison body". As a man he could not conceive of any soul as inviolable; any soul, that is, but his own.

Within a few weeks there was given to Drummond a remarkable opportunity of putting his principles into practice. While he was still amusing himself in Germany, two determined men, Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey, had sailed from America to Liverpool to convert Great Britain and Ireland to Christianity. Their outfit for the enterprise consisted of a fair amount of sincere religion, a good deal of practical insight, an unlimited stock of assurance and an harmonium. Owing to their ignorance of the terrain their campaign made a poor start. They toured the North of England. But the North of England was peopled by men of tough old evangelical stock who were making an incredible deal of money and dictating national policy accordingly. With these sure tokens that God was with them they felt no need to let their hearts be troubled nor to have their souls hustled into Heaven by a couple of smart Yankee drummers. Only a lucky accident saved the mission from an early and ignominious failure. Reaching Newcastle-on-Tyne in no very cheerful mood the evangelists were heard by an impressionable Scottish minister who persuaded them to try their luck across the Border. They went to Edinburgh. In Edinburgh they "made good".

The sudden change of fortune was remarkable, but it may be explained. As an individual the Scotsman is no more—perhaps less—religious than the Englishman, but in the mass his emotions are far more easily stirred. Why this should be is not clear, but the most probable reason is that, as compared with England, Scotland's social and political culture is of a recent and rapid growth. From the Union of the Parliaments Scotland had to compress into little more than one century the progress that in England had been spread over at least three. The result is that even to this day Scotland as a social unit is much less stable than England and much more liable to revert to the herd movements that are characteristic of a backward community. Moody and Sankey discovered this in 1873, just as Mr. Gladstone was to discover it to the great advantage of his party when he went to Midlothian seven years later. But there was another reason, or rather another aspect of the same reason. The industrial revolution had brought great wealth to Scotland as to England, but the spiritual reaction was not the same. England was inured to wealth. Apart from the landed interest there had been for centuries a rich and increasingly influential burgess class who were very much on the side of the angels. From them Puritanism and Nonconformity drew their political strength, and Cromwell's triumph was due not so much to his Ironsides as to the fact that he had the support of the men who

commanded most of the liquid assets of the country. The industrial revolution and the great economic expansion of the Victorian era inflated this class to an enormous extent, but so stable and well disciplined was the English social order that the hordes of industrial *parvenus* accepted without question the ethic of the class they had invaded, viz. that material prosperity was the sure mark of a good man, whence, by a bad but very human logic, it followed that poverty was at least strong presumptive evidence of depravity.

The case of Scotland was different. Prior to the industrial revolution the country had not only been backward but stricken with poverty to a degree that is hard to conceive nowadays. The nobility, to preserve the outward decencies of life, had no resource but to sell themselves to one or other of the English political factions, and this they did without scruple. The burgess class was small, feeble and pusillanimous. The burden of the struggle with the Crown in the seventeenth century, which in England was borne by the rich bourgeoisie, in Scotland fell upon the peasantry and lesser gentry, who having neither goods to lose nor bribeworthy service to offer had no option but to be poor and honest. Hence it came about that the same kind of "saintliness" which in England was associated with affluence was in Scottish tradition associated with penury; and even those who, like Burns, discarded con-

ventional religion, were still apt to treat the higher moral virtues as a monopoly of the poor.

The industrial revolution, therefore, was very upsetting to Scottish ethics. It made a cynical mockery of the old boast of "honest poverty". How, under the new order, could poverty be honest? It was the rich, not the poor, who practised the sturdy virtues and were zealous for pure religion; it was the poor, not the rich, who were vicious and ungodly. To the English middle-classes this was a platitude, and they could contemplate the ugliness of industrialism with equanimity and even unctiōn. But to the newly enriched Scots it was a bewildering paradox. They had to believe the evidence of their senses, but they could not be comfortable about it. Their scruples were not such as to make them pause in their money-making—their diligence in that regard has become proverbial—nor did they feel that they were in any way to blame for the destruction of bodies and souls that was entailed in the system by which they were enriched. But they did feel that some adjustment *sub specie aeternitatis* was required. With that object they became very earnest about spiritual things, the argument being that an increase of religion among the industrial rich would in the sight of God be a set-off to the excessive sinfulness of the industrial poor. It was obvious, too, that in order to present a satisfactory balance-sheet to the Almighty it was necessary not only to increase

the community's reserves of godliness but to effect substantial economies on the sin account—that is to say the poor must have the Gospel preached to them. This attitude of mind was already prevalent among the Scottish moneyed-classes in the 'thirties, and Thomas Chalmers made full use of it for his social projects. In 1843, however, the Disruption of the Scottish Church diverted the energies of Chalmers and his coterie into a less profitable channel. Thenceforward the merchants and manufacturers were directed that their first duty to God was to provide Scotland with a Free Church and to sign cheques accordingly, which they did without stint. But as a religious exercise the signing of cheques has limitations. Like the wearing of a hair shirt it argues but does not create enthusiasm, and after nearly a generation of it the middle-classes felt the need of something more. Even in the pulpit there was a growing suspicion that standard Calvinism highly spiced with abuse of the Establishmentarian "rump" was losing its virtue and that a new source of fervour was much to be desired. It was at this lucky moment that Moody and Sankey arrived. They supplied what was wanted, and the middle-classes heard them gladly. As for the clerical leaders of the Free Church, these handled the situation with a cynical prudence worthy of the best traditions of ecclesiastical statecraft. They might dislike Moody's theology; they certainly detested

Sankey's hymns and harmonium; but they were astute enough to discern the signs of the times and to perceive therein the possible benefit to what lay nearest their hearts. Hostility or even indifference to the movement would be dangerous, whereas judicious exploitation might be of the greatest advantage to the beloved Church. And as Moody and Sankey were not only willing but eager to work through ecclesiastical channels, it was obvious that the parties could deal. Thus the tacit bargain was struck. The Free Church lent its organisation, whereby the Yankee evangelists got enough way on to carry them in triumph through the formerly apathetic English provinces even to the goal of London itself. And in return the Free Church enjoyed an access of zeal among the laity that stabilised the financial position for another generation. Incidentally souls were saved. The completed manœuvre stood in need of no greater justification than that usually accorded to wisdom by her children.

Drummond, of course, had no such motive, but he was in the movement from the first. As soon as Moody and Sankey arrived in Edinburgh he offered his services and was accepted as a worker. For nearly two years he was their most valued assistant. Studies were first abandoned, then forgotten. He toured the United Kingdom with the Great Mission. His father, whose wonted indulgence was now fortified with admiration and thankfulness to God, supplied



the necessary funds—for Henry could hardly ever be prevailed upon to dip his fingers into the evangelists' hat. He would go short rather. "I shall ride once more upon a 'bus," he wrote from London acknowledging a handsome remittance, "and pay my way like a man and a Drummond." And this was not merely Scotch pride; it was an example of that social fastidiousness which was perhaps Drummond's most obvious characteristic. Sir George Adam Smith does not exaggerate in claiming that he might have been model for Steele's celebrated portrait of "a fine gentleman". It seems strange, therefore, that this same fine and fastidious young gentleman should have found it possible not only to be associated with but to take a prominent part in a movement that, even with due allowance for merits, was crude, blatant and in some of its aspects disgusting. Sentiments of which Mr. Jefferson Brick and the Watertoast Sympathisers would not have been ashamed garnished Mr. Moody's preaching of the Gospel, while Mr. Sankey's singing of the same was an outrage of which it is difficult to speak with moderation. To suppose that religious zeal rendered Drummond oblivious of these immundicities, to picture him as swept away in the furious current of general emotion, is to ignore the ascertained facts. Neither Moody nor anybody else ever "converted" Drummond. We have his own word for it that he never experienced a religious

crisis, and he was quite complacent about what he evidently regarded as a fortunate immunity. We know also that the mission offended his taste in many ways. It is certain that if Moody and Sankey had been ordinary revivalists, depending solely on the mass appeal and vast disorderly noisy meetings, Drummond would not have wasted a day on them. But Moody not only kept his great meetings comparatively quiet but had a new invention. This was the "inquiry-room", wherein souls that had been awakened by the mass appeal could be dealt with individually. To those who disliked the mission this was the most objectionable feature of all. To Drummond, who like many fastidious people had very little sensibility, it was really the only thing that mattered. It was a school in which he could perfect himself in "spiritual diagnosis"—a rough school, no doubt, but the only one available. The teachers were no better than horse-doctors, but much may be learned from a good horse-doctor by an active young man of scientific habit. And the clinical material was good and abundant. Such was the spirit in which Drummond joined Moody and Sankey. It lacked ardour, but that was soon supplied. Once the initial nausea was over evangelising became less and less a scientific pursuit and more and more an exciting game. Being a fisher of men is great sport; at least, so Drummond found it. One must bear in mind his method. Others might handle the miraculous

draughts that broke the nets and wellnigh swamped the boat. He himself (adept fly-fisher from boyhood) cast for the individual fish, played him, grassed him in triumph, cast his fly again, and never went deeper than he could wade. The fish, ancient symbol of mystery and divinity, dweller in the element that is at once life and death, shining, swift and subtle—*animula, vagula, blandula*—that was Drummond's image of the soul. To exchange the rôle of fisherman for that of shepherd, to see souls as silly sheep—symbols of vacuity and sacrifice, with himself under the spreading beech piping feebly twice each Sabbath day while the creatures browsed—the thought was intolerable.

So it was with some difficulty that Henry was dissuaded from following Moody and Sankey to America and committing himself to the career of a strolling evangelist. Rather dolefully he returned to New College, Hebrew, Church history, Christian apologetics and systematic theology. No doubt it was with a bitter pang that he read in these shades of the prison-house Moody's artless appeal that came to him from Philadelphia at the end of the year. "Could you come over and help us? We want you much, and will see that all expenses are paid. I think you would get a few thousand souls on these shores." He did not go. When nearly four years later he paid his first visit to America his mission had nothing to do with souls.

There were three men whose converging influences during this period determined the peculiar course of Drummond's life. Moody, as we have seen, was one. Another was Marcus Dods, Robertson Smith's friend and nearly his fellow-martyr. The third was Geikie. Whether Drummond ever realised the extent of his debt to his master in science is doubtful. His admiration for Moody—it amounted almost to an infatuation—left him with little to spare for others. Yet Geikie's influence was just the wholesome bracing thing he most needed, whereas Moody's from the beginning had as much bane as benefit in it, and by the time the great Mission came to an end it was positively demoralising. It unsettled him for serious study and instilled the pernicious idea that a man of his parts and charm could live very well and religiously on his wits. The result was that Drummond's last year at New College was probably the most unhappy season of his life. He was unwilling to enter the ministry, but could see no alternative. It was mainly due to Geikie that his troubles were brought to an end. In 1877 a lectureship in Natural Science at the Glasgow Free Church College fell vacant. For a man who could write nothing after his name, except "B.Sc. (failed)", to apply for such a post required some courage, but just then Drummond had the courage of despair. He appealed to Geikie for help. Geikie gave it so enthusiastically that Drummond was

appointed. From that day his life was an unbroken record of happiness and success. His luck in getting the lectureship was, perhaps, better than he deserved. The pay was not great, but it was more than the stipend of many a grey-headed country minister. The duties were absurdly light, viz. four simple lectures a week during a session of five months and the rest of the year to follow his pleasure in travel and preaching. Then, in the summer of 1879, Geikie did him another signal service by choosing him as his assistant in a geological expedition to the Rockies. This experience was invaluable to Drummond in two ways. It gave him a practical knowledge of scientific exploration and thus qualified him for the important commission for which he was selected a few years later—the exploration of the Nyasa and Tanganyika region on behalf of the African Lakes Corporation. But, still better, it provided a spiritual discipline and corrective that he badly needed, taking his mind out of the stuffy atmosphere of the inquiry-room into God's fresh air. His diary of the expedition breathes a spirit of enjoyment that is much more wholesome than the feverish delight of his letters during the Moody campaign. There is no reflection, nothing but disjointed notes of hard facts registered by a very sharp young mind. "Fishing, caught a two-and-a-half-pounder, sluggish, not game. . . . Came to log shanty, store for miners, got gold specimen from miner

in next shanty ; a ranch burned by Indians two years ago. . . . Presently the magnificent buck dashed past at full speed—flying shot, must have missed. Fired at a doe coming behind—must have struck her originally as, although Jack fired at her, three bullets were in her when she dropped. Jack had shot another through the forelegs, which I killed with my revolver. During the retreat Jack surprised a second herd, and killed one more. Total, four antelopes—all does.” From which it appears that Drummond, like many excellent men, was a keen and callous hunter. In killing or maiming any wild creature he was as merciless as any primitive man, and then, in the plenitude of his modernity, he would scribble a little note on “tenacity of life”, from personal experiences that he at any rate did not find repellent. Still, deer-stalking is great sport for a healthy young man, especially if it diverts his mind from such dubious occupations as “button-holing souls”, and there is nothing pleasanter about Drummond’s record of the expedition to the Rockies than its freedom from his former preoccupation. A letter to his mother, when he was in the heart of Colorado, contains what is practically the only reference to a religious matter—a characteristically lively and light-hearted account of a funeral. (Death, whether in man or beast, never worried him ; he could write of the death of his dearest friend with exquisite propriety but almost as coolly as he records the

slaying of an antelope or wildebeest.) A miner had died at a distant camp, and Drummond, as the nearest thing to a minister within a hundred miles or so, consented to officiate in uncanonical tweeds redeemed by a white tie bought at the local store "which gave me a sufficiently professional look for the mountains". As might be expected, he rose to the occasion brilliantly. The funeral oration was such that the camp clamoured for more, and he was not the man to disoblige them. A second and most exhilarating diet of worship was held, after which the miners gave him tea and dismissed him in friendly fashion "loaded with specimens of gold". This was all very harmless, but when he reached Boston on his journey home a *nostalgie de la boue* seized him. He must needs dash off to see Moody and Sankey at Cleveland, where he found things going on in the same old way that had delighted him in Scotland and England—"perishing men and women finding their way to prayer-meeting, Bible-reading and inquiry-room". To get this gratifying intelligence and to find that Moody's collar was still in a chronic state of crush and that Sankey's black necktie was as faultless as ever, he refused an invitation to meet Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes at dinner.

Nevertheless, the knowledge that the good work was going on in the good old way seems to have been enough for him, for he gave no sign of any disposition to stay in America and

take part in it. Moody and Sankey were all very well in 1873; they served their turn, and Drummond was eternally obliged to them. But he was some critical years older now, and, though he would hardly have admitted it even to himself, his visit to Cleveland probably gave him a hint that he had grown a bit and that Moody-and-Sankeyism as a spiritual garment was getting rather tight about the chest: a rising young man of science must have room to breathe. Further, though Drummond's mind was essentially limited and unadventurous, his spirit was bold, unconventional and intolerant of interference. He liked his own way and usually he got it. He had refused to settle down to a regular ministry because it would have involved his accommodating himself to other men; later, as we shall see, he refused to enter politics for the same reason; and much as he loved Moody, he would not be his underling. Drummond was not of the stuff of which disciples are made. In the circumstances he was well content to take an affectionate farewell of his old friends, wish them the best of luck and hasten back to Glasgow where, a year before, he had found an outlet for his evangelising zeal that was much more to his taste than anything he saw at Cleveland.

It was associated, too, with the personality that had begun to supplant Moody in his regard, Marcus Dods, then minister of Renfield Church, Glasgow, and afterwards professor of New Testa-



ment Exegesis at New College. That on settling in Glasgow Drummond should have elected to "sit under" a notorious modernist like Dods and become one of his elders and his bosom friend at the very time when a heresy libel was being framed against him was the first indication of the new phase that within a few years was to make the name of Henry Drummond famous throughout the English-speaking world. Of this there will be something to say presently. To begin with, Drummond's attachment to Dods was not so much due to intellectual considerations as to the fact that Dods was able to offer him the plaything he coveted, which, as he expressed it, was "a quiet mission somewhere, entry immediate and self-contained". (The stipulation "self-contained" is significant—no irksome contacts with neighbours.) This was a mission-station which Dod's congregation had established in the Possilpark district—a peculiarly doleful corner of the vineyard that would have broken, or at least dulled, the spirit of the general run of the Lord's labourers. But Drummond, who to his last painful breath was a perfect Mark Tapley, spent four unconquerably jolly years there. He worked hard, experimented a good deal and made his mission a brilliant success. From this it must not be inferred that he had any warm feeling for poor men as such, any more than he had for black men when he left Possilpark and went to Central Africa. Both had their places in the Divine

order, widely different no doubt, but so remote from Henry Drummond's place that the difference was negligible. Although his experience did ultimately make him realise that poverty is a social problem and not merely a disagreeable accident of individual lives, the moral aspect of the question never troubled him. From his point of view, which was the point of view of the ordinary comfortable Victorian, poverty was bad because it put the poor man's soul in peril; but souls could always be saved by liberal doses of the Gospel, so why worry about the poverty? When this comfortable doctrine was put to the test of a hard winter in Possilpark and came out of it badly, Drummond's reaction was merely one of mild petulance. "Thousands have been really starving," he wrote early in 1879, "and out here I have had to feed scores of families with the meat that perisheth and a scant seasoning only of the other." Here was no diagnosing of maladies of the soul, only the filling of healthy, hungry bellies. Divine Providence can be very trying at times. Fortunately, Drummond was far too good-natured to allow mere petulance to get the better of him, and above all he had that boyish genius for play and leadership in the lighter things of life of which Mark Twain has given the perfect picture in Tom Sawyer.<sup>1</sup> No matter what

<sup>1</sup> Drummond met Mark Twain at Hartford, Conn., in 1887, and recognised a kindred soul, though his manner of noting the event had a disconcerting touch of Scotch Philistinism. "He is funnier than any of his books, and, to my surprise (*sic*), is a most respected

the circumstances were, city slum or country-house party, he could always get people interested in the game that was on, and it was always a game of his choosing. In Possilpark the game was so successful that at the end of four years the mission-station was ready to be raised to the status of a full charge.

This happy result having been achieved, Drummond retired and looked about for a change of scene. In 1883 Moody and Sankey conducted their second mission in Great Britain, which was a very damp affair. Drummond dutifully assisted them, but could hardly conceal his boredom with the whole business. In his own queer way he had been reflecting during the last four years, which so pleased him that he had written a book about it that was even then in the press. With a journalistic perception of the signs of the time worthy of a Northcliffe he had solemnly labelled it *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. It was, as he always protested, only a sort of a book, quite a good sort, of course, but still only a sort—the kind of thing that one does not plan but which just happens. He has left a vivacious account of its origins which, though it must not be taken as serious history—Drummond was a born *raconteur* and his stories lost nothing in the telling—is true to this extent, that the author hardly anticipated more from it than a young man's pleasure at

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citizen devoted to things æsthetic, and the friend of the poor and struggling."

seeing his name on a title page for the first time. There was also, perhaps, a touch of pique in his anxiety to get his "Sunday talks to working men" into book form. At the Glasgow College he found himself among men like T. M. Lindsay and A. B. Bruce<sup>1</sup>—men of commanding intellect and formidable scholarship. He liked his colleagues and he knew that they liked him, but he also knew that they did not like his evangelistic antecedents and that they did not take him very seriously as a teacher, which vexed him. The prevailing sentiment at the College was an advanced, though not aggressive liberalism, which Drummond absorbed with a facility that in a more intellectual man would scarce have been honest. His own explanation of his change of outlook is as jaunty and vague as Topsy's "'specks I grewed"; for all its choice scientific diction amounts to no more. The expert in "spiritual diagnosis" never seems to have had the most elementary knowledge of the physiology of his own spirit. That, however, did not occur to him, and consequently did not trouble him. His main concern was to prove that he could be as good a theological liberal as anyone, and could go one better than most theological liberals by propounding a constructive philosophy of religion. It is a notorious conceit of every village-bred Scotsman that he is a born philosopher, and

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Christian Apologetics, Gifford lecturer at the University of Glasgow, 1897-98.

Drummond was full of it. The fact that he had never shown any serious interest in or aptitude for philosophic studies did not daunt him, for he despised the philosophy of the schools. The pupil of Moody and Sankey was all for Huxley and Tyndall and the scientific cock-a-whoopery of his generation. Consequently, when candid friends told Drummond that the "philosophy" of *Natural Law* was mostly nonsense, he was not in the least impressed: they were mere schoolmen to whom the truth had not been revealed. Later, it is true, he was constrained to admit that on the whole they were right, but his faith in his mission as a philosopher of religion remained unshaken to the end.

Who can blame him? Looking at what befell in 1884, 1885 and 1886 one marvels rather at the humility of his claim. He had no apostolic dreams when he let down his net, only a boyish ambition. And lo, the miraculous draught that broke the net and weighed down the vessel!

As it happened, when *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was published in June 1883, Drummond had a new enterprise to interest him, and hardly gave a thought to the book or its fate. The African Lakes Corporation, which was controlled by a syndicate of Glasgow merchants, had commissioned him at very short notice to make a scientific survey of the Nyasa and Tanganyika region. Before the first reviews of *Natural Law* appeared he was steaming down the Red Sea in

high spirits at the prospect of an adventure which combined so many agreeable features. He was his own master; the scientific work he had to do was responsible but within his compass, and he did it conscientiously and well; there were Free Church mission-stations where he could find and give spiritual refreshment; and there were swarms of wild things to shoot. As to this last there is a characteristic note in his diary. "Moir and Lieutenant Pully went off to shoot elephants at Kimbashi. Much tempted to go with them. . . . They sent *eighteen tusks back*, capital sport." Three weeks after writing these words the disappointed Nimrod had something more exciting than the slaughter of elephants to think about. The first mails since he had left home five months before reached him near Nyasa. They told him that *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was a clamorous success, that reviewers were outreaching one another in pæans of praise over it, that within a few weeks of publication this his compilation of Sunday Talks to Working Men had already gone into a second edition and none could tell how many more would be called for, as the sales were increasing every day. It was one of Drummond's gifts that he could take great good fortune calmly, indeed as of his right, but he admits that he lay awake that night. Apart from that the only comment on the news in his diary is a Pepysian "which surprised me", with reference to the *Spectator's* review. And well it

might surprise even him; for upon such a book as his the verdict of R. H. Hutton's organ was treated by the men of the 'eighties as final. The oracle had placed him among the seers and he could hail the future with the exulting cry, "sublimi feriam sidera vertice". He returned home in triumph just in time for the General Assembly of 1884, which raised the lectureship in Natural Science to the dignity of a chair and elected him professor by acclamation. Fate, which produces many a good play very badly, had been in a happy mood over Henry Drummond. He stepped into the limelight straight from darkest Africa. (Not that anybody talks of Darkest Africa—or indeed of darkest anything nowadays. The phrase was killed by the savage humour of William Booth with his *Darkest England*, and in any case could not have survived some of the European incidents since Drummond's day, but in the 'eighties and early 'nineties it had a glamour.)

What follows constitutes a problem well calculated to interest the so-called student of human nature, for there is no solution to it. There is no mystery about the success of *Natural Law*. It was not a great book—few best sellers are—but it had qualities, and the public that bought it showed more intelligence than did the public that bought, say, *Proverbial Philosophy* or *Festus*. Above all, it was opportune. But it does not explain Drummond's *personal* vogue as a fashion-

able religious teacher. It was merely the trumpet or drum that announced the show. The show was Drummond himself, and a most remarkable show it must have been that could take a ducal mansion in Mayfair for its booth and crowd a great ball-room on three successive Sundays in the height of the season. For that is what Henry Drummond did in April and May 1885, and it declares at once the strength and the weakness of the man that he was prevailed upon to do it. He was incapable of anything so blatant as conceiving the idea of a "mission" to the West End of London, but he could not, once it was made, resist the suggestion. It came from Lord Aberdeen, one of the many new and influential friends that Drummond owed to *Natural Law*, and took the form of a proposal for a series of "lectures". A vain man would have been flattered by it into a hasty and effusive acceptance; a modest man would have refused even to consider it; but Drummond was neither vain nor modest. He parleyed with Lord Aberdeen on the subject with a *sang-froid* and assurance that would argue profound astuteness were they not also consistent with an extreme degree of simplicity. He would not say no, but there were difficulties. He was fully occupied with a religious movement among students which had shown all the signs of being "a distinct work of God", and besides he had no opinion of "lectures" as a means of grace. "I should really have some faith", he wrote "in



addresses of a simple kind—not written lectures, but clear statements of what Christianity really is, what personal religion really is, and evangelical matter generally. To attempt this would be very much more trying; but if the call came I would feel that I dared not shrink from it.”

Of course the call came. Drummond never did anything but on his own conditions, and these were invariably accepted. An intimation appeared in the Society column of the *Morning Post* that the first of a series of three discourses would be delivered by Professor Henry Drummond at Grosvenor House on the last Sunday in April. No subject was announced. On the appointed day a decorous mob of Cabinet ministers, peers, Society women and young men about town filled the ball-room. (From dreams of such a pool the angler usually wakes before he has cast a line.) Their experience there was novel, even disconcerting, but not unpleasantly so. Certainly the person of the prophet they had come out for to see was interesting. Drummond was only thirty-four, and but for the grey with which an arduous year in tropical Africa had streaked the shining red of his hair, might have been taken for even less. He wore neatly trimmed mutton chop whiskers and a finicky little upturned moustache. (Later he abandoned this fashion and wore his moustache longer and drooping, but he always retained the whiskers.) His bright hazel eyes were remarkable both for their colour, which was

as it were sun filled, and for their gaze which, though not what is called piercing, was keen and brilliantly steady. He was above the middle height, rather slender but broad shouldered and well proportioned, with a grace of movement which was, however, of the precise and even formal kind. His clothes were faultless. He might indeed have passed for a Guardsman, especially as, in addition to his other gifts, there was nothing in his appearance to suggest intellectual pretensions. In short he was an extremely handsome, attractive and well turned-out young man. Speaking afterwards of his Society début Drummond said with a grin that he had never felt so horrid in his life, but it does not appear that any sign of diffidence or self-consciousness escaped him. He began his address, and presently it dawned upon his audience that they were listening to the last thing they had expected to hear—a discourse on conversion, expressed with great ingenuity and charm in terms of modern thought, but genuine evangelical stuff none the less. When at the end of an hour the preacher said, “Let us pray”, they were dazed but they knelt. Next Sunday in addition to the ball-room an ante-room had to be opened to cope with the crowd that came.

Drummond’s London triumph was complete, but whether it was a legitimate triumph is an open question. As a social *tour de force* it was perfect, but there is not much more to be said for it. At

Grosvenor House he was on his mettle. His audience consisted of men and women whose outlook differed *toto coelo* from his own and who, besides being quicker witted and better educated, knew far more about the hard realities of human nature than any audience he had ever before been called upon to handle. That he should have succeeded in not only interesting them but winning their respect was an achievement to be proud of; St. Paul in similar circumstances did not do nearly so well. As a display of virtuosity it had a personal value for Drummond by affording him a *réclame* of a kind that at that juncture was very useful to him, but by that same token its religious value was nil. And even when judged from the personal standpoint its effect was equivocal. Certainly it was the means of averting a great deal of unpleasantness with which he was threatened by some of his countrymen and fellow-churchmen. *Natural Law*, with its audacious attempt to construct a Christian apologetic out of the teachings of natural science, had scandalised the orthodox, and its author was freely denounced as a Judas, a more poisonous reptile even than Robertson Smith. There was ample material for a first-class heresy hunt. True, the "lynching", as Drummond had called it, of Robertson Smith had been a sickening affair, and many of those who had taken part in it had no stomach for another job of the sort, but that would not have deterred the zealots. Grosvenor

House, however, made it impossible for them to take effective action, because against Drummond they could not count on the support of the wealthy elders whose attitude was always in the last resort the deciding factor in Free Church politics. These, like many other worthy men, were snobs. It was easy to mobilise them against Robertson Smith, who was only a man of genius and a great scholar and teacher, but it was impossible to make them doubt the orthodoxy of one who had the approval of the "best people". And so to the end of his life Drummond never had to put up with anything worse than a few abusive newspaper articles and a fair proportion of scurrilous letters (mostly anonymous) in his morning mail.<sup>1</sup>

But while the Grosvenor House adventure may have been advantageous to Drummond in one quarter it was undoubtedly detrimental to him in another, as he was presently to find to his chagrin. Although he owed much to the praise with which Anglican writers had received *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, clerical opinion in England was as a whole unsympathetic, and it was provoked to positive antipathy by his appearance as a fashionable evangelist. The Church

<sup>1</sup> An amusing variant of this form of attack came to the author's notice in Glasgow one Sunday morning shortly after the appearance of *The Ascent of Man*. Posted on the door of the Free Church College was a tiny slip of paper bearing the couplet :

"O monkey Drummond, mighty Christian man,  
What new dirt gospel next? Come tell me if you can."

newspapers were sour about him and his doctrine. They even hinted that he was a bit of a mountebank—a cruel accusation that he was bound to feel. It was easy enough to see that Drummond was not really a knowledgeable man, and that his thinking was vague and incoherent. It was also easy to see that he loved publicity and that he was well aware that, within certain limits, he was a complete master of the arts of the platform. The inference drawn was the natural uncharitable one that he was exploiting his gifts from motives of gain or vanity. Now nothing is plainer than that by his temperament, his natural gifts, his tastes, his opportunities, even his religious dogma, Drummond had every temptation to be a mountebank. He was saved only by the prevenient grace of God in making him a gentleman and a Christian; but as his Anglican critics could not be expected to know that, we need not blame them too much for judging him in accordance with natural injustice. They saw only that the Grosvenor House discourses, an ominous beginning, were being followed up by a campaign of drawing-room meetings in support of a fantastic scheme “for setting all the unemployed in the West End to work”, and that dear Professor Drummond showed all the symptoms of being a craze of frivolity (largely feminine) in its most detestable mood—the mood of pretending to be serious.

Drummond did not realise into what a false

position he had drifted until the following October when he went to Oxford to organise a series of meetings in support of the religious movement among students. As he went as a guest of the Warden of All Souls, and had many flattering assurances of help, he imagined in his Scottish innocence of Oxford ways that his visit would be a success, perhaps a crowning triumph. And indeed he was able to write home about the "seething mass of undergraduates" which was his first meeting at Trinity. But Oxford had made up its mind about him, and had prepared his humiliation. Certain heads of colleges vied with one another in giving individual displays of the fine art of being perfectly beastly in the gentlemanly way, notably Jowett and Liddell. In the malicious eyes of the former Drummond was too good a chance to be missed. He wrote a demure little note suggesting, "if I may make the proposal", that the evangelist should dine with him *tête à tête*. And, of course, the lad accepted joyfully.

It would be of passing interest to have the full record of that dinner. Drummond's own chronicle of it is notably abstract and brief. "I thought my dinner with the Vice-Chancellor very sad," he writes. "We were entirely alone and had a good talk, also occasional silences. He asked me if in Scotland we were now giving up belief in Miracles—he meant as a sign of progress." One may infer that one, and that the

vastest, of the occasional silences followed that question—Jowett chuckling inwardly at having suppressed a raw upstart, and Drummond, all in amaze at the acute little old gentleman's gift of irrelevance, musing, "And this is Oxford!" But it was more in anger than in sorrow that he wrote of Liddell, who had been cajoled into allowing a meeting to be held in Christ Church hall. "He gave me pretty clearly to understand that it was solely on Aberdeen's account. He thawed a little after twenty minutes over tea, but I thought him very appalling." This sort of thing was daunting, but Drummond's heart, though troubled, was not broken until he realised the fury of the rival sects—Church against Dissent and the still more bitter conflict of High Church and Low Church. His letters show how sick he was of the whole boiling of them, but especially of the Evangelicals, whose assumption of a kind of private property in him entitling them to order him about was too much for his Highland blood. A tall fellow with red hair and bright eyes is not to be trifled with, however smooth his manners may appear. He had with some pain emancipated himself from the religion of phrases which is called cant, and it was with unspeakable disgust that he found that at Oxford he was expected to observe it. He seems to have spoken his mind with some freedom. "I had no idea", he says, "that it would be part of my work here to run a tilt against the evangelism

current in the place, but nothing is more needed. . . . I have told the Low Church men to repress themselves entirely, but to work behind the scenes to any extent. To the latter our ways of work, our leading ideas, the absence of cant and of evangelical formulas are a complete revelation, and I really think they will adopt them." We may take it that he thought nothing of the kind, but like a decent fellow he had to say so.

Drummond's discomfiture at Oxford did not discourage him from pursuing the "students' movement", which to the end of his life remained his principal concern, but it made him reflect to some purpose. He quietly withdrew from drawing-room meetings. Feminine adulation, though quite agreeable, did not seriously interest him and he now knew its limitations and dangers, not to himself as a man (women were never dangerous to Drummond) but to his ministry. When three years later he consented to give a second Grosvenor House series, the announcement mentioned that owing to the limited accommodation available men only would be admitted! It was an adroit move and its results confounded his enemies. Had Drummond been the kind of man that Jowett and Liddell in their worldly wisdom took him for, his reappearance at Grosvenor House would certainly have been a fiasco; yet working under stringent limitations and without any of the lure of novelty that had helped him before, he achieved a success that was



quite as spectacular and much more solid than that of 1885. On each of the three Sundays, according to a contemporary newspaper report, "the great square room was densely crowded by an interested and representative gathering—politicians, clergymen, authors, artists, critics, soldiers and barristers, with a large sprinkling of smart young men, whose appearance would scarcely have suggested a vivid interest in serious concerns". The addresses—"Evolution and Christianity", "Natural Selection and Christianity" and "The Programme of Christianity"—had all Drummond's faults in full measure, but their matter and the manner in which they were received prove that both he and his audience were quite convinced that he had something to say, even if neither he nor his audience seemed to know in precise terms what that something was. Drummond's detractors were in a dilemma. If he had something to say, some new and profound religious message for his generation, *cadit quaestio*: he was entitled to his audience. If not, then the fact that none the less he could exact the respect, even admiration, of men like Arthur Balfour, George Curzon, Alfred Lyttelton, G. W. E. Russell and J. E. C. Welldon, excluded the idea of a superior mountebank, and argued a great and triumphant personality.

By this time, however, testimony to the quality of Drummond's personal power was really superfluous, for during 1885 and 1886, to all seeming,

the Grand Old Man himself was chained to his chariot—a supreme spectacle from the point of view of the 'eighties. "To all seeming" one must say, because it is difficult to speak absolutely of Mr. Gladstone's behaviour at any time, and quite impossible in the case of the years 1885 and 1886. The two men had met but their personal contacts had been of the slightest, and as Gladstone through all his long life had never shown himself subject to personal enthusiasms it is unlikely that at the age of seventy-six, and thoroughly *rusé*, he should develop one for a young and inexperienced man of thirty-four with whom he had nothing in common save a sincere belief in the Christian religion, a profession of Liberal principles and a strong regard for Lord Aberdeen. The last was the only common ground that presented any substance, for as to the second Drummond was a Liberal for no better reason than that in his time the Labour party had not been invented, and as to Christianity one really hesitates to bracket the author of *Natural Law* and the author of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* as professors of the same religion. The aged statesman, during his brief recess from office in 1885, had been making himself ridiculous by his controversy with Huxley about the Book of Genesis, and Drummond had felt it his duty to say so in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*. But when, in February 1886, the odious article appeared, Mr. Gladstone had for the moment lost interest in

Moses. He was forming his first Home Rule administration and was in no mood to quarrel with a brilliant young man who not only had gained the ear of the general public but was known to have great influence with an important and wealthy section of Scottish Liberals whose attitude at this juncture was a source of considerable anxiety to the Liberal party. If Drummond could make these people swallow Evolution and the Higher Criticism he could make them swallow anything—even Home Rule. In the circumstances it was expedient to leave his heterodoxy to the safe determination of Judgment Day and concentrate on the immediate business of securing his support for the Government's Irish policy. This proved comparatively easy, though it did not work out quite as Mr. Gladstone had proposed. Drummond's adoring friend, Lord Aberdeen, had gone to Dublin as the Home Rule viceroy, and almost his first act was to beg him to join the Viceregal staff. If Drummond had had anything of the adventurer in him, now was his chance. Having regard to the personal relations that subsisted between him and Lord Aberdeen the offer was tantamount to an invitation to become the power behind the Viceregal throne, and, had he chosen, not even the presence of Morley as Chief Secretary would have prevented him from becoming the virtual ruler of Ireland. But he did not choose. He sent Lord Aberdeen a good-natured but perfectly firm refusal

with a disclaimer of ambition which is almost touching in its sincerity and artlessness. "For Mrs. Grundy, I do not care, I hope; but for others, for the students and for those to whom one may yet speak of a Spiritual World, one would like to avoid even the appearance of ambition. Is it not so?" It may have been an element in his reluctance that his mind about Ireland was not yet made up, but his doubts could not have been serious, for when two months later he paid a flying visit to Dublin he went not only as the Viceroy's guest and intimate but as one of the Prime Minister's secret agents. When he returned, with John Morley bearing him company and in close converse with him across the channel, his enthusiasm for Home Rule and his confidential report on the state of Irish feeling left nothing to be desired. The natural consequence was that the Liberal assault on Drummond's integrity was renewed with a violence that few men could have resisted. The Whips' Office thrust seats upon him. Most of them were reasonable certainties which he had no hesitation in declining, but there was one where the odds against were heavy that gave him serious trouble. This was the Partick Division of Lanarkshire<sup>1</sup>, of which the sitting Liberal member, relying on an estimate of the constituency that was admittedly sound, had gone Unionist. Partick included the whole of the

<sup>1</sup> Now, since 1918, a division of Glasgow.

new West End of Glasgow as well as a working-class district that was notoriously Orange, and a Gladstonian victory there would do much to steady the tottering fabric of West of Scotland Liberalism. It was believed that Drummond, and Drummond alone, could achieve it. Unheard-of efforts were made to induce him to stand. The local Liberals were frantic in their entreaties. They invaded his house and had almost to be driven by force from his doorstep. The Whips were clamorous in their solicitations. Gladstone himself wrote a pressing letter. But Drummond would not be moved. "What little I can do as regards the present crisis," he wrote to Gladstone, "I think I can do to equal purpose apart from the House of Commons, and, in the long run, for the good ends, of which this is but a part, I believe that by working in the fixed walk of life which seems to be assigned to me, and which refuses, in spite of private struggles and the persuasion of the wisest friends, to release me for this special service, I can do more for every cause of truth and righteousness." After the General Election—during which he punctually observed his promise to work for "the cause" and incurred plenty of odium thereby—Drummond put politics out of his life. In the autumn he was hard at work addressing students' meetings at Bonn, where he hoped to make a beginning of the extension of the "students' movement" to the German universities. It does not appear

that he made any deep impression, but he was happier there than at Oxford: he could speak the people's language.

During the eight years of active life that remained to him Drummond went serenely along the solitary path that he had chosen, neither avoiding nor courting publicity, as gracious and winning and light-hearted as ever, but perfectly detached. To all the world he presented the vision of the happy man—the man who can do what pleases him in the way that pleases him and enjoys every moment of it. He gave the second series of Grosvenor House addresses of which mention has been made. He laboured unceasingly at his beloved students' movement—a quixotic task that involved a voyage round the world. While in Australia he was successfully tempted to make a quasi-political excursion to the New Hebrides. In 1894 he published *The Ascent of Man* (being the Lowell Lectures delivered by him at Boston in the previous year) and refused the principalship of McGill University, Montreal. His career was over. In the same year the first symptoms appeared of a malignant disease of the bones. He died at Tunbridge Wells on March 11, 1897, after more than two years of intense suffering, which he bore not only without complaint but with the same gaiety and playfulness that had endeared him to his fellows in the days when to have imagined Henry Drummond as a helpless pain-racked cripple would have

seemed like a denial of the decencies that even a godless universe must recognise.

It was observed at the beginning of this study that in the history of Henry Drummond there are mysteries at every turn. Was he a man of genius *manqué* or did he fulfil his destiny? Was there substance in the reputation he enjoyed in his lifetime or was he merely a delightful illusion? Was his rôle of religious teacher the only one possible or, in refusing to enter politics, did he make the Great Refusal and justly incur the oblivion that descended upon him as soon as his body was laid in the grave? Or was that oblivion but the triumph of some malignant deity that had determined that his story should remain half-told? Those who care to speculate upon these questions may find it most profitable to approach them by starting with the last. Of the oblivion there is no doubt. To-day the mention of his name awakens only a faint and broken echo in the memories of men to whose ears forty years ago it came like the call of a celestial clarion. To younger men it conveys nothing at all. Even among Drummond's surviving intimates it is to be feared that the man has been forgotten and his place taken by a sentimental legend, beautiful to those that like such things, but untrue. Its untruth is due to the singular fact that Drummond, though he could command unlimited adoration, never made a disciple, the result being that in their passionate

desire to exalt his personality his friends have conspired with his enemies to decry the worth of his written words. "Drummond was far greater than his books", exclaims Sir George Adam Smith, his friend and pious biographer, and, in a sense that one can easily appreciate, it may be true; but in the only sense that really matters, the sense of succeeding generations, it is profoundly false. Nothing is easier than to convict Drummond's two considerable books, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* and *The Ascent of Man*, of shallowness and inconsistency, to explode their logic, sniff at their science, and deride their artless notion that the life of the universe is a rough but interesting and, on the whole, honourable game. If one applies metaphysical canons it is quite impossible to make head or tail of Drummond's doctrine, to reconcile *Natural Law* either with itself or *The Ascent of Man*. Monism and pluralism, rationalism, mysticism and empiricism jostle one another in his pages in the most bewildering fashion. Sometimes he is Hegel, sometimes Huxley, sometimes Herbert Spencer; in *The Ascent of Man* he curiously anticipates William James, both in matter and manner. But what his friends did not appreciate was that without these vaguenesses and incoherences that troubled them he could never have made the appeal to his time that he did. The situation, of course, looks clear enough now. For a generation or more science had been



sapping the foundations of conventional evangelical Christianity. There were many men who were aware of what was going on, but they had been content, like Jowett, to observe it from the fancied security of a college window with a malicious anticipation of what fun it would be when the crash came. In the 'eighties the crash did come, and no doubt it provoked Olympian laughter to see the poor souls, awakened from a troubled sleep, scurrying about and cutting the most diverting capers. But the poor souls who groped in darkness and confusion naturally had no sense of humour, and they were glad when they heard a voice from the ruins proclaim with youthful confidence, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you". Drummond himself had experienced the collapse of the old fabric, but to his joyous boyish spirit that was untroubled by doubts either of logic or of life it was no calamity but a glorious adventure. He would preach the unity of the Gospel of Christ with scientific truth, and he was so enamoured of both that it took him years to discover that, hidden in the bosom of his doctrine, there was a dualism that all his fine words and happy analogies had not resolved. As *The Ascent of Man* shows, he did not despair of resolving it, but there are many indications, both in that book and in his various published addresses, that, had he lived, he would have ended, like men who were greybeards when he was born, by accepting

frankly the position that spiritual truth and scientific truth lie in different universes and that the whole duty of the honest man is to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's. This is what the average man of the 'eighties, who read a little and thought occasionally, wished in his heart to believe. He wanted to hear somebody who would save his soul without insulting his intelligence, and in the author of *Natural Law* he got what he wanted. Drummond, for all his interest in "spiritual diagnosis", had little insight into the souls of individual men, but he was extraordinarily sensitive to the way that men in general were thinking, and by his gift of expressing their perplexities, which he himself felt, he helped to solve them. If to-day plain men can contemplate a Christianity purged of miracle and superstition, it is to Henry Drummond more than any other man that the credit is due.

The final mystery of Drummond is his personality. He was apparently the most charming and most exasperating of men. He was handsome, infinitely amusing, imperturbable (except perhaps at Oxford), fond of simple but expensive pleasures like travelling and deer-stalking, and—a trait that many people could not abide—always dressed to obvious perfection. Apart from clothes his æsthetic perceptions were poor. He collected bad pictures and bad curios. He read comparatively little and showed no taste in

what he did read—he mentions Longfellow and Bret Harte among his particular admirations. As to music, he could tolerate, though he may not have liked, Sankey's hymns. He never married, and never excited even the whisper of a love-affair, which was the only respect in which he failed to earn the nickname of "The Prince" bestowed upon him by the admiring young men who regarded his study as a presence chamber. It is difficult to think of such a man as an artist, but an artist he was in two respects—his mastery of the expository style in writing and his consummate art in addressing what is called a cultured audience upon a religious subject. In the former he has had few equals and no superior. In the latter he stands alone. No one has even attempted to imitate him.

These were notable but far from being supreme gifts. What was behind it all, what was the balance that eludes us after we have summed up the whole account of good looks, good clothes, good temper and goodness generally, and which made men who knew him say, "Drummond was unique"? Was it some rare and subtle ingredient of the soul, or was the secret that he guarded so cunningly, withal so involuntarily, the lack of something that ordinarily goes to the making of a man? Was he the Galahad or Lohengrin that his friends saw, or was he merely Peter Pan in a frock-coat and whiskers, whose influence over men consisted in

no more than his capacity to appeal to the boy that sleeps in every man's heart? A good case might be made out for the latter interpretation. He was as light-hearted and forward looking as a boy, because, like a boy he never saw very far forward. He had a boy's implicit belief that in order to be adventurous it is not necessary to be unconventional. He had a boy's generosity, a boy's affections, a boy's sensitiveness and a boy's callousness. There is a famous article on errand-boys that he wrote for *Good Words* in support of the Boys' Brigade, a passage from which may be quoted as illustrating both his understanding of the boy mind and the easy felicity of his style.

The boy is accounted for by the Evolution Theory. His father was the Primitive Man. It is only his being in a town and his mispronunciation that make you think he is not a savage. What he represents is Capacity; he is clay, dough, putty. This boy cannot as yet walk straight, or dress better, or brush his hair. He is not good. He is not bad. He has no soul. He has not even soap. He is simply Boy, pure, unwashed, unregenerate Boy. . . .

The real boy-nature in them has never been consulted. You may be a very remarkable man, but it is not their kind of remarkableness, so you are a person of no authority in their eyes. You may be a walking biblical cyclopædia, but they have no interest even in a stationary biblical cyclopædia. They believe you to be a thoroughly good fellow in your way, only it is an earth's diameter from their way; and that you should know precisely what their way is they guilelessly give you opportunity of learning every single second you spend among them.

These words were written of street boys, but what master in a public school would demur to

their universal truth? Drummond knew the boy as only one could who had the boy within him very much alive and kicking.

Yet the boy-hypothesis of Drummond breaks down at the most important point. It does not account for that very un-boyish characteristic, the steely reserve in which he sheathed his spirit and which no persuasion of interest, ambition or love would prevail with him to put off and show what manner of man he really was. Therefore he would take service under no man's banner, but lived as a knight-errant and died in his armour of proof.