

The Klondike Nugget

TELEPHONE NUMBER 12
(DAWSON'S PIONEER PAPER)
ISSUED DAILY AND SEMI-WEEKLY.
ALLEN BROS. Publishers

From Monday and Tuesday's Daily.
THE LECTURE COURSE.

The determination on the part of the board of directors of the free reading room to offer the public a series of popular lectures is a move which will receive general support and approval.

The entertainments which from time to time have been given at the library have invariably been greeted by an appreciative audience which on every occasion has taxed the capacity of the library building. It is to be anticipated that the new move inaugurated by the directors will be received with equal enthusiasm.

A series of lectures as proposed will have a distinctly educational effect. Dawson is now passing through a transition period, each day marking an advance toward improving the social condition of the community. A general demand for a better quality of entertainment is being noticed. More recognition is being given to the formalities of life, and the usages which are required in older communities are gradually being adopted.

The directors of the library apparently are in close touch with the growing needs of Dawson from a social and educational standpoint. They could not propose anything more desirable or which can be more successfully carried out than a series of lectures as outlined.

There should be no difficulty in securing all the talent required for there are men in Dawson who are specialists in almost every professional and scientific line. Without doubt these men will readily give their services for the purpose named and they may be well assured that in so doing they will command the deserved thanks of the community.

TRANSIENT MERCHANTS.

It will be in order very shortly that more effective legislation be passed for the protection of local merchants against the operations of transient speculators. With the opening of navigation, Dawson will be invaded by an army of men, each with a stock of some sort of goods and all bent on effecting a "cleanup" as quickly as possible and getting out of the country. Many outside commercial concerns are also preparing to send men to Dawson with the same object in view. Circulars are already arriving through the mails, stating that agents of various houses will be in Dawson for a few weeks this spring looking for the local trade. They come at the time of year when business ordinarily is at its best, rent a store room for a month or six weeks, employ the very smallest amount of labor possible and take the first boat for Whitehorse immediately on disposing of their goods. It does not seem just that such concerns should be permitted to compete on equal terms with local business houses which operate twelve months in the year, pay out large sums for labor and in many cases own the property upon which they conduct their business. We are of the opinion that some decided steps should be taken to equalize the advantage which the transient merchant thus secures over the man who is permanently engaged in business.

There is a long period during the year when the latter considers himself fortunate if he succeeds in meeting expenses. He continues in business merely awaiting the arrival of the season when buying begins and general trade conditions improve. His profits for the year must be made during the comparatively short period when business is brisk, or he realizes no profit at

all. He operates during the entire year under risk of losing everything he has by fire, and it is at the times when this risk is at its greatest that business is practically dormant. We submit, therefore, that the permanent merchant has a claim upon the community which cannot be given too general recognition.

On the other hand, the speculator who comes into Dawson for a day—too often with goods of a very inferior quality—contributes in no particular to the public welfare. His plan is to remain for the shortest possible time, get hold of whatever he can and depart.

To our way of thinking he should not be allowed to do so without making a good substantial contribution to the public coffers. A license system not too high to be prohibitive would fairly meet the emergency.

PATRONIZE HOME INDUSTRY.

Some wise man once remarked that an infidel is to be preferred to the man who fails to care for his own. Along the same line of thought something akin might be said of the man who refuses to patronize home enterprise, other things being equal.

This is peculiarly true of Dawson. Our local merchants who are employers of labor throughout twelve months in the year and whose stores are open for business, in season and out of season, whether business is good, bad or indifferent, are entitled to first consideration from the purchasing public. The welfare of the entire community is subserved by keeping as large a volume of money in local circulation as possible.

Transient traders who come into Dawson for the purpose of making a quick cleanup and then depart immediately for the outside are of no value to the community, and work an injury not only to the merchants with whom they come into active competition but indirectly to those who patronize them.

Money thus taken out of circulation affects all lines of trade alike and works a depressing influence just in proportion to its amount.

Established business houses which have stood the test of time and have identified themselves with the interests of Dawson and the territory should be given the preference. Their faith in the country has been backed in the most substantial manner and that fact entitles them to every consideration. By all means, home enterprises should be patronized by everyone.

Favorable action by the Ottawa authorities upon the memorial recently forwarded by the Yukon council will have a very marked effect upon the future of this territory. It is a fact that very few of the large mining companies which invested in Klondike properties during 1897-98 have paid any considerable dividends. This is due not to the properties themselves but largely to the excessive taxes levied upon the mining industry in addition to the cost of operation, which is probably larger in this country than in any other mining country in the world. A revision of the regulations along the lines indicated in the council's memorial will have a most salutary effect. There is capital ready for investment in mining properties in this territory whenever it is demonstrated that fair profits are reasonably certain to follow. Recent regulations passed for the Yukon have all been of a favorable nature and there is good reason for belief that the recommendations made by the council will be indorsed at Ottawa.

Special Power of Attorney forms for sale at the Nugget office.

JAMIESON COULD PREACH

Notwithstanding That He Sometimes Cussed on the Trail.

Pilgrims to the Klondike Held Flattering-Fact Religious Services While en Route.

The boat drifted in an aimless sort of way, gathering momentum from a few spasmodic strokes of the oars, or a desultory dipping of canoe paddles. Even these being interrupted by a remark by one of its occupants, the boat came to a gradual stop, or wandered to the other bank of the narrow slough. It was nearing evening and little progress was being made, but the speed was great enough to suit the fancy of the light hearted crew. They were just returning from their bathing place. In this slough, or dead channel reaching inland from the swift, muddy river, the water was clear and quiet, and the sun's rays having a chance to act, the water was much warmer than in the river. The scene was picturesque. Behind, the curving channel was lost to view in the endless forest, the banks overhung and screened from view by drooping trees. Before, was a small clearing by the main river in which were the log house and warehouse of the fur trader. Through the opening of the slough was visible the main river rushing by and bearing occasional clumps of driftwood on its bosom.

It was Sunday, and a day of rest, among a few days of rest before and after a period of great unrest. For months the prospectors had been toiling along the trail, and on reaching Fort Graham, a lonely Hudson Bay trading post in the Northwest territory, a thousand miles from the nearest frontier postoffice, were forced to pause until accurate information was received regarding further progress. And so, around this trading post were grouped a dozen or more tents, and this number was constantly being increased by the arrival of more parties over the trail. The boat contained five or six young men from different parts of the world, and from different stations in life, who were banded together not only by common ties of youth, but from the fact that they represented the singers of the camp, and they took advantage of the harmony-producing influences of the water, the forest, and the early twilight to gratify the soul's longing for music, which it had been denied during the busier days preceding. It was such an occasion, too, remembered as having no place in the busy world but similar in nature to a fleeting dream—a tranquil eddy in life's fierce current, where events make their quiet turn before being caught up again and hurried on.

"Let's try another verse of 'Baby' before we come in sight of camp, and give them a 'Hot Time' as we are coming in," suggested one.

"They are going to hold services up there tonight, and as this is Sunday, suppose we sing, 'Nearer My God to Thee,'" amended one whose superior knowledge of music gave him the leadership.

"Is Jamieson going to preach tonight?"

"Yes, and they want us to sing for them."

Mr. Jamieson was only another on whom the popular gold excitement had taken a strong hold. In former days, it was said he had been a local preacher, and later a missionary among Indians and backwoodsmen. Certain it was, he was accustomed to frontier ways, and acquitted himself favorably on the trail. There had at first been some unfavorable comment among the trailers regarding a man who should attempt to carry orthodox teachings into a life that had little in common with the churches. This mode of life had been a revelation to them, and they could call to mind no code of moral laws that would fill all the emergencies of the trail.

"Jamieson is not such a bad fellow," one member of the camp had declared. "His partner says that if things do not go right he swears like a veteran packer."

"Yes," supplemented another, "and one time when one of his horses bucked its pack off, and broke its pack saddle into kindling, he called it a blank pankey blank, and threatened to break its blanked neck if it ever did that again. I always thought a good deal more of Jamieson after that," he concluded.

It was to recommendations like this that the preacher owed his growing popularity. Nor is this remarkable, for

tried by a hundred vexations, they were impatient of anyone who added to them by advocating impossible conduct, or pretending to smile as 'for the best' if a horse rolled down hill, or ripped open a sack of beans by scrubbing his pack against a tree. They knew too well what the feelings were at such times, and not to give expression to them in the customary vociferous manner, was to stamp a man deceitful and not to be trusted.

"I always like to hear a man swear when he's mad," said one who represented the moral character of the trail, "for then you know he's not keeping anything back."

In a short time the boat had rounded the curve and came in sight of the camp. The Indians were standing in front of their teepee, and conversation about the camp lagged, then ceased, as the words of the hymn, softened by distance, fell upon ears of late unused to music. It may not have been good music from a professor's standpoint. There may have been overtones, or undertones, or tones entirely wanting, but at this time and place, it was irresistibly sweet. As the boat approached, Mr. Jamieson, in his shirt sleeves, was seen walking towards the landing.

"Boys," he said, as the boat touched shore, "we're going to have a short service, and we want you to come over and sing for us."

"Oh, we don't know anything to sing," came the inevitable protest of one who must ever be coaxed.

"We have a hymn book up there, so that objection is overruled. Come up as soon as you can, for we're ready now."

"Wait till I get my shoes on," said one whom experience had taught to defer this part of his dressing until he reached dry land. "Who knocked my socks into the water?" a moment later.

"Socks! Do you wear socks?" in incredulous tones. "Never mind your shoes. Come over in your bare feet."

"Strange! I little thought a year ago I would ever go to church in my bare feet, or without socks—and sing in the choir, too! Are you going to dress?"

"Dress? How? Why? Certainly not. You don't see those hoboes over there dressed, do you?"

The "hoboes" were certainly not dressed very fashionably. Those who had gathered in the open space among the tents wore clothing in every stage of dilapidation. Blue overalls were worn out at knees and patched with white, eight-ounce canvas. Shirts had a sleeve torn off, and were otherwise mutilated beyond recognition. Trouser legs were of unequal length. Buttons had long since disappeared and a piece of wood served to hold the single suspender to its duty. There were hats brims without crowns, and crowns without brims, and footwear that exposed the feet. One or two who had black coats packed away in their dunnage bags, had brought them out for the occasion and these lightened the grotesque appearance of the whole. Such is the negligence of attire and habits manifested by white men as soon as they leave the refining influences of the world, that it is small wonder the Indians refuse to believe that they represent a higher state of civilization.

A church, teepee form, had been erected years before at this trading post. It was 18 or 20 feet in diameter, the sides thatched with slabs of bark. The door consisted of an opening which was now covered up with more slabs. As these children of the forest find the ground their most comfortable seat, the interior was entirely devoid of furniture, and instead of art-stained windows, sufficient light came through the opening which served as an entrance, or filtered through the numerous cracks between the bark slabs, for the Indian has no fear of drafts, nor the lady of the tribe of having a new hat ruined by a chance shower.

Formerly one who assumed the office of priest had made a visit here once a year and held services in the building, but of late years he had failed to make his appearance, and the trail to the place of worship now led over fallen trees, and was choked by raspberry bushes. For this reason the service of the day was called in the open air. There was a further reason for this action, and that was that it was infinitely easier in the present instance to bring

the service to the men than the men to the service.

The tardy singers have arrived and take convenient seats on a carpenter bench where some one has been engaged in making pack saddles. The solitary hymn book, which somebody's mother doubtlessly insisted on being taken along, is produced, and the choir crane their necks over each other's shoulders to catch a glimpse of the words.

The preacher then calls the attention of the congregation to the front. In answer to the summons they shift their positions somewhat, and some few remove their hats. The most devout are seated reverently before the speaker with an expression of solemn gravity. Others are seated in the background on some pack saddles beside a tent; some are thoughtfully smoking; a number of men are strung along the fence at the back of the speaker; one with his elbows on his knees and legs spread out is meditatively whistling on a piece of wood. One man, an old trapper, who says this is the first time in ten years he has been to church, gravely kindles a mosquito smudge, and at times while the service is in progress, adds to it a further supply of rotten wood. He is as attentive to business as the church official who is entrusted with the ventilation. At times when the breeze shifts and envelopes the speaker in the thick smoke cloud, an unwanted moisture comes to his eyes, and something more than emotion chokes his utterance. Ever and anon throughout the congregation is heard the sharp slap which carries the news of fatalities in the mosquito world. There are two or three, exceptionally rude, who are seated with their backs to the preacher, and as if to carry the impression that they do not deem themselves part of the congregation, and do not feel it their right to move their seats, talk among themselves. The most attentive listener is a big St. Bernard dog, who lies in the foreground with his head between his outstretched paws, not in the least drowsy, but blinking his approval at suitable intervals.

The speaker has a hard task from want of co-operation and sympathy, and cannot find a steady flow of language, but talks in halting and pitched sentences. He calls upon them to be thankful for the many dangers safely passed, and points out even in their apparently hard lot the work of a merciful Providence.

The few Indians in camp attracted by so unusual a proceeding look curiously on.

The dusk has now set in. The choir sing the doxology, the benediction is pronounced and the service is over. The congregation again shifts itself, and the restraining force gone, they again group themselves into conversational order, but conversation is forced and unnatural, and remarks are spasmodic. Perhaps they are thinking of home.

The St. Bernard dog arises, and passing towards the tent, curls himself on a pile of horse blankets and goes to sleep.

Seated in front of one of the tents and illumined by the fitful flashes of the camp fire, the late officiating choir are entertaining a circle of loungers with "Sweet Rosie O'Grady."—Sidney Church.

Another Case of Rabies.

Sunday when Frank Close of Greenfield & Co., freighters, was en route with a team and sled from Dawson to Dawson a party requested him to take a dog from 16 to 12 roadhouse. The dog was tied to the rear end of the sled but before more than a mile had been covered he became violently crazy with the result that he fought and bit the sled until he was literally bathed in his own blood. Fortunately he was tied with a chain and this he also snapped almost continuously. Arriving at 12 roadhouse the question of loosing the dog from the sled was solved by enlisting the aid of another man and a rope. The raving canine was lassoed and held away until Close untied the chain and with a man pulling in each direction the animal was lead to a post and securely fastened. Word was left with the roadhouse people warning the dog's owner of its condition, and the probability is that the animal has been killed.

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