

A Missionary in the Klondike.

(Reminiscences of Father Judge, S.J.)

One of Father Judge's friends, now a prominent citizen of Dawson, gives us the following graphic account of his first visit to the hospital:

I landed with 40,000 other men in the middle of June, 1898. Dawson was a city of tents—and sickness. The first familiar face I saw was that of an acquaintance of many years before. He had been in the Klondike a year, and was accounted rich.

'Have you been to see H—?' was the first question after the usual salutations and mutual explanations.

'Charles H—? Why, I didn't know he was here.'

'I fell,' he replied. 'Been down with the scurvy six months. Father Judge took him in. Guess he saved his life. But he's had off. Guess it'd do him good to see you.'

'Who is this Father Judge?'

'Father Judge? Why, you don't mean to say you haven't heard of Father Judge?'

'I surely have not,' I replied somewhat tartly. 'I've been in Dawson only an hour.'

'Well, all I've got to say is that you are forgetting your newspaper business, if you've been here an hour and haven't learnt of Father Judge.'

'I guess he's a priest. Don't know much about those things anyhow. But I do know as he's saved I don't know how many lives this winter. I reckon he was the only one of us as had time, or wasn't crazy about gold. Saved more'n a thousand. Doctors all mining, and the bummiest lot you ever saw. Charged two ounces a visit, and the sick fellows mostly broke, or they wouldn't a'been sick. And say! You just ought to know Father Judge. He's the biggest, jolliest—the merriest fellow you ever met. When he runs out of medicine he goes and gets a lot of bark and spruce boughs, and he's kept a whole lot of 'em alive up there, waiting for medicines to come in. You didn't bring skay with you, did you?'

'Yes, I did. I've got some for myself in case I'm sick.'

'My acquaintance, B—, of the Arctic meat market, broke into a laugh as something funny occurred to him.'

'I guess you had better not let Father Judge know you've got it,' he said. 'He'll get it out of you, if you do.'

'Is he pretty good on the bag? I asked, grinning at B—'s infectious merriment.'

'Well, I should say so. Twice this winter he got nearly a quarter of meat out of me—two dollars a pound, too. But you go and see H— and ask him.'

I secured my directions, and started through the thickly crowded single street of Dawson for the hill under the slide, where tradition says a whole village of Indians was once buried.

I found, perched upon the rocks, a large canvas church—its log predecessor had been burned. Alongside was a log building, extended with canvas tents. I entered at what I took to be the entrance, though there were many openings, with carpenters passing in and out. I was right, and found the 'office,' a bare room, but clean. I sat down on what I took to be a homemade lounge—it was of hard boards, covered with a clean carpet rug, with a pillow at the head. I touched the bell on the table, and it was answered by a tired-looking, old young man. I recognized a shabby, priestly garb.

'Is this Father Judge?'

'Yes,' replied the stranger, eyeing me thoughtfully. 'How are you? You don't look sick.'

'No, no, I hastened to say. 'I'm not sick. I just came down the river. I heard you had a friend of mine here, a Mr.—'

'Just come down the river, eh? To broke in. Then with his eyes twinkling and the appearance of age gone, he asked somewhat banteringly, but eagerly:

'I don't suppose now, you've got such things as potatoes with you?'

'Potatoes! I echoed with astonishment. 'I suppose you are hankering for a mess of potatoes after the food famine of the past winter.'

'I'm in great astonishment. Why bless your heart, no, I don't want potatoes. But I've got a big houseful of fellows with scurvy here, and medicine has been about gone for months. Potatoes would fix 'em though.'

'He grew thoughtful, and continued as though speaking to himself:

'There'll be some coming in pretty soon, I suppose, but I expect they will be five or six dollars a pound, and I'm broke. Well! With sudden resolution and briskness: 'I'll get them if I have to pray for them. Now, whom might you be wanting to see?'

I told him, and received the proper directions. And as I mounted the stairs, he said:

'You want to cheer him up till I can get some medicine or potatoes for him. We must keep them alive on hope, you know.'

I found H— He was sitting up in bed, smoking. He had been carried to the hospital six months

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'I was taken with an itching on my arms which proved very disagreeable. I concluded it was salt rheum and bought a bottle of Hood's Sarsaparilla. In two days after I began taking it I felt better and it was not long before I was cured. Have never had any skin disease since.' Mrs. I. E. WARD, Cove Point, Md.

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before, and had never been out of bed. In the ward with him were fifteen other scurvy patients. After a hearty exchange of greetings, H— proceeded to introduce me to every man in the room, after which I sat down on the edge of his bed and talked.

'I don't suppose you've brought any potatoes?' he queried, as soon as the confusion consequent upon my arrival, had ceased.

'Only the evaporated,' I replied.

'You all want what Father Judge said to me, that potatoes are medicine to you fellows.'

'A sure cure,' spoke up everyone at once. Then H— broke in: 'So you've seen Father Judge?'

Everyone in the room looked up, as if a well-worn and interesting theme of conversation had been brought up.

'Oh,' I replied, diffidently, 'I really haven't seen anything of him much. B— was telling me down town that he is sort of popular about here.'

'Popular!' echoed H—, in protest. 'Don't use the word "popular" here. He's the finest man that God ever put a soul into. Where'd we all have been this winter without him, I'd like to know. He's just killing himself trying to take care of everybody.'

Then with a confident smile, as knowing the inevitable answer: 'What d'ys think of him?'

'I'm sure he's a good man,' I replied sympathetically, for all had joined in silent but friendly hearty approval of my friend H—, I continued:

'You're not a Catholic, H—?'

'Oh, that doesn't cut any figure here, Why, God bless me, here's a bunch of sixteen of us here now in the room, and not a blessed Catholic in the lot—unless it's Jack, over there. But Father Judge is making Catholics fast. Never preaches or talks doctrine or forms of faith, you know, unless you ask him or show him your mind is uneasy on that score. Not he just does all a mortal man can do for you, and evidently wishes he could do more. Then he jollies you and goes to church, and you feel you'd give one of your two useless legs if you could follow him. What! here he comes.'

As Father Judge entered the room with a brisk step and serious mien, every patient that could, raised himself up in bed, while all heads were lifted. Oddly enough there was a smile on every sick face—only the priest looked dull and old. He passed at once to the centre bed, containing the man I had heard named as 'Jack.' Jack had a rather uncomely, stolid face. He tried to raise as the priest approached, reached out and took one of the priest's hands tenderly in his own. H— and everyone else had stopped all conversation. All looked on. H— whispered softly to me:

'Jack's going to die. The scurvy's got up into his spleen and he's all swelled up. They all die when it gets there. Two died last week that way.'

I was sitting near Jack's bed. I watched the priest's solemn face slowly light up as from a glow within. The ago disappeared. Patient and priest looked earnestly into each other's eyes for a full half minute. Then in the softest tones ever heard from a man's lips, Father Judge said:

'I've been praying for you, Jack. If it is the good Lord's will, you're going to get well. The medicine is beginning to come down the river. Nurse will be here in a minute with what you need. Your good old mother is going to see you again if prayers and medicine can avail. Say your prayers, my boy. I'm going down to chapel again, and I'll leave your case in good hands.'

The priest smiled back the sick man's hair from his forehead, and then I saw the man was crying. As the Father turned away, Jack raised the hand he held to his lips and kissed it fervently, then buried his face in his pillow.

The nurse came in, and the Father personally administered the new medicine, with thoughtful care. He turned his attention to the rest of the sick men.

'Now, Mr. H—, those pillows don't look comfortable. I've got a better one down stairs. Just got it from a man who is going out. I'll send it up. Harry! What are you doing with your feet out of bed?'

'Let me make you comfortable, Williams—suiting the action to the words, and rearranging bedclothes. Then taking a position in the very centre of the room:

'I've got good news for you all. He looked around with a happy smile. 'There's a whole new load of potatoes just landed! What d'ys think of that! Now, I do hope the good Lord will not require me to steal them.'

The idea of Father Judge stealing potatoes caused a breach of the silence in a moment. The laughter was infectious. Breyonce laughed, Jack had wiped away his tears and spoke up behind the priest's back: 'No, don't you steal 'em, Father, I'll steal 'em for you,' at which there was another laugh.

'No, my boy,' answered the priest, 'we won't have to steal them. We'll just pray.' Then as a merry afterthought, it's quicker.'

Then suddenly becoming serious again and speaking softly:

'I wanted you to know that the chapel downstairs is finished and there will be services morning and evening. We cannot give too many thanks for what He has done for us this winter.'

He passed quietly around the room taking temperatures where the cases were most serious, with a cheerful word to all and a merry quip for every convalescent, petting the big fellows like great children, and every one of them looking the most profound gratitude.

When a nurse called him away, he hesitated just long enough to assume the most delicious Irish twang: 'Now, don't ye all be after getting d'wo-bearted. The boats do be coming in by hundreds, and I'm going out now to have them send ye down what's good for ye. Good-by.'

His departure was the signal for the letting loose of a perfect flood of talk. The knowledge that the Father would be presently among the host of new arrivals, purchasing, bargaining, and when his money ran out, begging for his dearly beloved skay, was almost too much for the many burning hearts present. I have never in all my eventful life listened to such a stream of admiration for a living man. Incidents of the winter were related, in which Father Judge had always figured in absolute self-forgetfulness. His never waning faith, that the Lord would provide for him and the sick was dwelt upon at length. At one time he had accepted charge of twenty more patients than were beds in the institution, or bedding for. Before dark, three bales of blankets were brought on an unknown sleigh, dumped at the door, and the drivers hurried off. At another time, he had to put his rapidly increasing patients in an upper, unfinished room, with only the ceiling overhead, and no roof to ward of the summer's storms, so plentiful in the Yukon. And, as if in answer to prayer, the storms relented and it was fine for three weeks, or until the last board of the roof was in place. Much earlier in the dead of winter, he had been unable to get a hole dug in the cemetery for the reception of one of the dead, and had himself worked with pick and shovel, until he was about to give up in despair, when in the semi-darkness, two burly men came in from the creeps with the story that 'it had been borne upon them that they were wanted at the hospital, and there they were to complete the grave and cover in the coffin.'

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Professor—'Why did you come to college anyway? You are not studying.'

Willie Babrah—'Well, mother says it is to fit me for the presidency, Uncle Bill to sow my wild oats; Sis to get a chum for her to marry; and Pa to bankrupt the family.'

Milburn's Sterling Headache Powders give women prompt relief from monthly pains and leave no bad after-effects whatever. Be sure you get Milburn's. Price 25 and 50 cts.

'What would you think, daddy, if Algeron Nocsch should suggest be coming your son-in-law?'

'Withdraw, my dear, while I think aloud.'

Maud—'Why don't you prefer Harry to Will? Harry is capable of big deeds.'

Gladys—'Yes, but Will owns some.'

Our store has gained a reputation for reliable Groceries. Our trade during 1910 has been very satisfactory. We shall put forth every effort during the present year to give our customers the best possible service.—R. F. Madigan.

There were many men in the Yukon that year who knew nothing and cared less for religion, and yet I felt, from hearing them talk, that the love and respect they bore Father Judge amounted almost to a religion. One man, an infidel, once said to me that the only time he ever felt that he

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