

luxuriously, and buy your meals as you go instead of taking food and cooking yourself. After a fairly satisfactory supper, you are shown into another cabin, the bunk-house, 18ft. by 20ft. Ten men are trying to cook their meal on a camp stove; around three sides of the cabin are bunks (with poles for "mattress"), two tiers high, and the room is thick with tobacco smoke, burning bacon, and reeking dog-feed.

You finally get a chance to boil some water and mix your own dog-feed, though not without considerable difficulty, and a stern insistence on the rights of your "turn," for more travellers have arrived, and are clamorous for the use of the stove. At last you roll in your blanket on the pole "mattress," and try to forget your sore, smoke-irritated eyes in sleep, but belated travellers still arrive, and the little camp stove is kept red-hot till nearly midnight, and the cabin is at a temperature at which sleep is out of the question. An endless discussion goes on as to distances between various road-houses—how tired you will get of hearing this debated—and in one corner there is a heated argument between three men as to the relative merits of the dogs Royal and Siwash as leaders. The reeking tobacco smoke, the steaming dog-feed, the noisy exclamations and oaths of the last arrivals, the dust and bark which is shaken down on your face by a fellow-sufferer turning over in the bunk above you—all these combine to make you rise and go outside, swearing yourself a fool not to be camped in a thicket of pine trees, your roof the sky, ablaze with those brilliant, winking thousands of stars, and the swiftly moving mystery of the Northern Lights. It is cold, deadly cold though, and you cannot stay out long, unprepared as you are; as your hand is on the door to re-enter, a crackling report, followed by a muffled boom, tells you the mighty frost-king has fired his minute gun, and given a long seam far out in the ice on the silent, motionless river. Returning to your bunk, you get a few hours' troubled sleep, and at 4 a.m. are

ice. The road-house to-night, however, is better, and a good night's sleep is worth a bank-note. The next day and the next are monotonously the same, only the food gets from bad to worse, till pork and beans are eaten off the same tin plate as bread and treacle; but your stiffness begins to wear off, your soreness to leave you, till you feel by the time you arrive in Fort Selkirk, 200 miles from Dawson, you can look forward with equanimity to whatever the 100 miles still before you may have in store. The little hotel at Fort Selkirk—my blessing on the hospitable



HUSKIES OF YUKON.

manager is called the Savoy, and is to other road-houses you have been sleeping in even as its princely namesake on the banks of the Thames is to a country public-house. You astonish yourself though not the excellent woman who ministers to your wants, for she has seen many such as you—by the largeness of your appetite, for do you not get soup, fish, meat, and pudding on separate hot and immaculate clean plates? "a four-plate racket" I heard a Westerner describe the meal as—and presently you retire to sleep in a clean bed, on a clean spring mattress, and dream you are spending some of the millions—alas! dream millions only you have made in the Klondyke within the luxurious walls of the other Savoy on the Thames Embankment.

The next day you push on, and meet, for a change, a howling wind and drifting snow, which stings the face like sand. The dogs toil on gallantly, but the drifted trail is heavy against the wind-storm, and you meet and look back enviously on three dog teams and six men who are blown past you into the dim mist of snow before you can catch your breath to ask "How far?" A short day's travel this one, which annoys you, so strong and tireless do you feel at the end of it. The wind dies down during the night; and next day—after a nightmare road-house, within even knottier poles than usual to sleep on, with more objectionable fellow-travellers than any you have so far encountered, and dirtier food than ever—you face the long trail again, in a temperature your thermometer tells you is 54 deg. below zero; you therefore scrutinise each passing traveller, and stop perhaps and enquire if your own face is "touched" with frost. The sun has not much power yet against such intense



WHITE HORSE RAPIDS.

awakened by the smoke and smell of burning bacon being cooked—God save the mark!—by one of the early risers. You count heads before leaving this bunk-house, and find there were twenty-four who passed, it is to be hoped, a better night than you did within its dirty walls.

The next day's travel is torture; you are stiff, sore as though you had ridden a pulling horse over a big country after being out of the saddle a year, and the soles of your feet swell and burn as though the walking was on hot lava rather than

cold, and it seems as if the father of light, knowing this, tries to add to his strength, for three brilliant sun-dogs, small suns themselves, surround their parent. You know them to be the after-math of the storm yesterday, but it is explained in a road-house that night that the sun-dogs "cause the cold," and the gentleman who makes this astonishing assertion snorts at your protest, and enquires how long you have been in the Yukon. "My first winter," you respond, weakly. "Huh!" he retorts, "an' you thinks you know better'n me about cold weather, eh? An' I've

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