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One argonaut after another has testified to the tremendous muscular exhilaration experienced in crossing the Chilkoot even with the thermometer at all sorts of numbers below zero. And this is simply natural. The freezing purifies the air they breathe, the cold stirs the blood and muscles to action, the fare is plain but wholesome, and there is that great solitude to feed the soul and that feeling of comradeship—truth to your fellow-man—all of which give health to the body and mind. There has been an honesty remarked in these first dwellers in the Yukon basin and in the travelers over the passes, and it is due to the absolute dependence of every man on the other for protection. It was the same in the early days of California, and changed and was lawless in the extreme while the Government was learning how to make the law effective, and it will be the same way on the Yukon, no doubt.

#### HARDSHIPS AWAITING THE GOLD-SEEKER.

Let no one start out, though, without clearly realizing that the Yukon country is still far from a pleasure resort. The camp life and work of the miner on the Klondike is one of great hardships, the climate and the long winter nights hedging it in with ever-present and harsh limitations. It is a routine of sleep until you wake and work, build fires and cook the brief fare until you sleep. The thermometer goes down to forty or fifty degrees below in January, and sometimes lower, while in the summer-time it will go to one hundred degrees above, and when the mercury is highest the mosquitoes will be the densest. The latter are one of the greatest trials that the pioneer has to encounter, and the most hardened emigrant from the Jersey flats will be surprised at the vicious onslaughts of these little plagues, who have actually been known to drive the deer and bear into the water for shelter.

The wise prospector will pay especial attention to the matter of reaching his destination in time to get comfortably settled and build his house before the long winter sets in. Tents are used for camping until a permanent location is made,

and then a "shack," or log hut, generally of one room, is erected. A dirt floor usually answers, and the roof is thatched with boughs, on which is piled mud a foot or two thick; this soon freezes, making a very warm house if the sides are also banked with mud and the logs chinked in the same way.

#### HOW THE MINERS LIVE.

The best fire is one built on a square piece of masonry two feet high, much like a blacksmith's forge, and the smoke from this feeds through a pipe, like an inverted funnel, which hangs from the center of the roof, and is fixed to be raised or lowered. About this fire the miners sit in their idle hours, often the meals are eaten off its edge, and many a game of "California Jack" is played across its corners. This open fire in the center of the room is an idea probably copied from the natives. The latter not being so sensitive to smoke let it escape through an opening left in the roof, like their tepee, or cone-shaped tent of poles and mud, being constructed with the apex of the cone left open for the smoke. The supplies, or sacks of flour, meal, bacon, beans, coffee, salt, and the few luxuries, are stored in the same room and jealously guarded. Their shrinking bulk is watched with fear, while the miners declare that the gold is most carelessly



A PICTURESQUE HABITATION ON CHILKOOT TRAIL—WAITING FOR SPRING TO PROCEED NORTH.



THE CHILKOOT SUMMIT IN WINTER.