

wading was exchanged for climbing, which had sometimes to be done with hands and knees. Through the valley bottoms streams ran with many windings, and in a country of no bridges when water has to be crossed it must be forded, unless some traveller handy with his axe has passed before you, and the slim and slippery stem of a tree felled and thrown from bank to bank may offer a precarious chance of passing without a bath. Twenty miles of such walking would fill my day from dawn to dark. I could do it, but not so fast as more accustomed men. Sturdy prospectors weighted with their packs would pass me gaily, or pause to walk for ten minutes by my side. In this way I profited by many scraps of pleasant and instructive talk; but never once, though the men who passed me must have been often of the roughest kind, did I experience even a momentary fear of incivility. Usually our talk was of their work, their opinion of the country, the climate and the gold, their experience of other goldfields, and almost invariably of that great country for which everyone was homesick, known in the Klondike under the generic term of the "outside."

A large number of the men were married and had wives and children in the outside; and there was a pathos, not easy to express, in the readiness with which well-thumbed photographs would slip from mud-encrusted side pockets, to show to a perfect stranger the shape in which thoughts of home were journeying through the Yukon. Sometimes the picture was of a child, sometimes of a young wife, sometimes, more touchingly, of the middle-aged companion of a lifetime; and I might chance to hear that it was hard on the "old missis" to be left again. All kinds of men from every class of life were there. Americans, Canadians, Australians, and Englishmen were in the majority, but almost every European nationality was represented. One Frenchman, who had lost his entire outfit by the overturning of his boat upon some rapids, and had not even a blanket to lie down in, had saved a curl of his baby daughter's hair. He was cheerfully content, "Ma foi! I have got the thing I valued most!" And more than once the little packet that looked to ordinary eyes like a skein of yellow floss silk was pulled out of his trousers pocket for me to see.

The question of whether women that men respected could be brought into that country was one of perpetual discussion. Nowhere does one see so plainly as in districts of new settlement the need of woman as a home-maker. The majority of the men in the Klondike, excepting, perhaps, the very young, were in the literal sense of the term, "home" sick. They wanted a