

TO KLONDIKE BY BALLOON.

Mr. Antoine Varicle of the French Geographical Society, who recently arrived in New York, intends to make a balloon trip from Juneau to the Klondike. The New York Sun states that there are about a dozen persons in the party. Arthur Tervagne, LL. D., is the secretary of the expedition, and is also correspondent of the Figaro.

Mr. Varicle, the head of the expedition, is a man of about 46 years of age, and a well-known engineer and inventor in France. He invented a new method to direct a balloon with the aid of a rope and a steering sail, and this method he has succeeded with in two trips, the one from Paris to Theneuil in the south of France, the other from Paris to Hamburg.

The balloon is cylinder-shaped, has a sail beneath it, and is equipped with electric lights and a search-light. The expedition carries with it all the modern instruments of geographical and topographical science. Carrier pigeons will be employed to send back news of the progress of the expedition.

The balloon will carry about 7,300 pounds. A feature of it is the "autolesteur," as its inventor, Mr. Varicle, calls it. "Automatic ballasting apparatus" is perhaps the proper translation. It enables the aeronaut to direct the balloon to a certain degree. The members of the expedition are stopping here only until news comes from Juneau that the apparatus is ready for generating the hydrogen with which the balloon is to be inflated. When that is ready the party will go directly to Juneau, and, if the wind is favorable, the trip to the Klondike will be made at once.

Photographs will be taken from the balloon en route. The cost of the expedition is borne partly by the French Geographical Society and partly by the members of the party.

Mr. Varicle apprehends no accident, and believes that Andree is not lost. He thinks that we shall hear from Andree in September or October. If the trip to the Klondike is successful, he contemplates making a balloon voyage to Spitzbergen and another over the Sahara. A geologist and a chemist accompany the party.

SALE OF RAILROAD CHARTERS.

At a recent general meeting of the London and Vancouver Finance & Development Company, Limited, recently held in London, England, it was announced that the company had sold its two British Columbia railroad charters at a cash profit of £4,000. The company had also acquired a number of promising British Columbia mine prospects, and though more capital was greatly needed and must be got in, the company would that day declare a dividend of 20 per cent. on a paid-up capital which appears to be £36,207.

MORE AUSTRALIAN KLONDIKERS.

The arrival this week in Vancouver, by the steamship Cape Otway, of rather more than 200 Australian travelers to the northern gold fields has naturally gladdened the hearts of the local outfitters. The coming of these venturers—most of whom are practical miners of good physique—tends to corroborate the estimate that Australia will send this season to the Yukon a mining contingent of between a thousand and two thousand persons, a total that will more probably run nearer the larger than the smaller figure. Many of the Antipodeans now setting out for the north hail from the gold fields of Western Australia. They are accordingly accustomed to a hard and trying climate, though its severity results from exactly opposite characteristics to those of the Yukon, the Westralian mine country being a blazing hot and arid land. In one respect it, however, fully resembles Klondike in being a land of barren desolation as regards practically everything save gold.

LONDON LETTER.

[From our own Correspondent.]

March 26, 1898.

In one respect at least Canada has been generously treated. I refer to the way in which her mines have been brought to the attention of Europe by various writers, both in the press and by the more solid and pretentious essays and booklets which have already appeared on this side. Some of the latter can hardly claim to be included in the category of books; they are mere pamphlets, and not likely to enjoy more than the ephemeral existence meted out to the productions of the ordinary run of pamphleteers in all ages. But they serve their turn, and are excellent advertisements for the Dominion and her mining resources. As, however, these are mostly for home consumption, and are hardly likely to reach your side, I am taking the trouble to collect briefest details of the chief ones issued during the past six months, thinking that they may possibly be of interest to those of your readers who may desire to follow all the developments on this side, and will forward same in an early dispatch.

Generally speaking, the British Columbia market, with a few exceptions, has been firm in the face of adversity. While prices in the general mining section have been crumbling away British Columbia and Klondike shares have held their own, apart from the exceptions mentioned, and we all hope that it will not be long before the fledgling will be strong enough to run alone. At the present time it is in lending strings, but then this is an experience which young markets like young children have to undergo. B. A. C's. have been flat in sympathy with the alarming weakness of all the Whitaker