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THE RUSH TO THE KLONDIKE.

ALASKA'S NEW GOLD-FIELDS—THEIR PRESENT OUTPUT AND FUTURE PROMISE.

BY SAM STONE BUSH.

I.—THE EXODUS.

IT took two and a half years from the first discovery of gold in California for the population of that territory to increase from 15,000 to 92,000. At least 100,000 prospectors will advance upon Dawson City and its vicinity in the first six or seven months of 1898—less than a year from the time when the world first heard of the new gold sensation. The days of '49 and the great Ballarat rush two years later were peaceful compared to this. Another dramatic fact—this army of gold-hunters will expend for transportation and supplies before the end of the year fully \$60,000,000—four times as much as the probable total output of Klondike gold!

In 1897, between July 17 and September 1, 8,886 passengers and 36,000 tons of freight were carried north from Puget Sound and British Columbia ports. Of this traffic the steamers bound for St. Michael took 1,248 persons and 12,000 tons of freight, while nearly all the balance went

number going through the Chilkoot; the rest—gamblers, tradesmen, and those who failed to get through—are living this winter at the pass towns. These figures were nearly doubled before January 1, but all the late departures went to Dyea and Skagway, and on account of



THE EMBARKATION OF THE ARGONAUTS. AUGUST 17, 1897.
(Showing the type of steamship used in transporting prospectors to Alaska.)



SCENE ON THE SEATTLE WHARVES AT A VESSEL'S DEPARTURE WITH PROSPECTORS.

to Dyea and Skagway, a part branching off to Juneau and Wrangell. About 3,600 got over the passes in this time, at least 3,000 of the

the late season halted for the winter at these places, both of which are growing with wonderful rapidity and fast becoming important towns. Dyea has passed Skagway in inhabitants and promises to be the metropolis of Alaska. The travel since January 1 has been the capacity of the ships, rates on them have advanced, and a further advance will likely be made as the crowds become greater on the approach of the "open season." Trade and transportation on the Pacific coast are convulsed; excepting in time of war, the century has seen no other such physical happening.

WHAT THE YEAR PROMISES IN DEVELOPMENT.

No statistics can be made of the 1898 exodus with any degree of accuracy, but from estimating the movement already well in motion, nearly, if not quite, 100,000 will try to get to the gold.

A majority of the photographs used in illustrating this article—fourteen by the author and six by Mr. J. F. Pratt—have not been published before.