

"It may be a little later," said this accurate person, "because the passengers are not always on time."

The stories of what might befall the augonauts who went to Dawson by sea had been spreading, and the *North Fork's* sailing drew as large a crowd as a popular *première*. At two the people were flocking over the cobbles and up the wide-shadowed length of the dock, at the end of which an apex of turquoise sea appeared, and which oscillated as with an earthquake under the wheels of immense drays.

The *North Fork*, a small coasting steamer, of that kind that go up rivers in the East, was already low in the water. From the lower deck to the roof of the cabin a bulkhead had been raised, and this was filled in, level with the cabin top, with coal.

On top of that sacks of potatoes and onions were tied, the contents only restrained from breaking forth by a lacing of cord. Two cranes were at work at bow and stern lowering freight into the hold.

And the usual number of black-faced, perspiring men were rushing hither and thither carrying at one time raw sides of beef, at another rolled-up mattresses, then sacks of flour, pieces of iron, sides of bacon, canvas bags bulging with their contents, trunks, fur coats—anything they happened to find in their way.

The confusion was worse than at the leaving of the *Humboldt*, for the crowd was greater, the vessel smaller, and the attempts to maintain system or order even more disregarded.

Every few moments trucks drawn by immense dray

roaring in, which in their turn backed and wheeled and stamped a way outward and inward, the drivers swearing at each other in friendly volubility, while their long whips hissed over the backs of their horses.

The departure of the *North Fork* was regarded as an occasion of special interest, since several sensational people were advertised among the passengers.

A lady who was to take a piano, a trick horse and a St. Bernard dog were looked for but not found. An actress who had had a lively divorce suit and was going to Dawson to open a dance hall, was another interesting figure who did not materialize. One family brought on a large supply of stringed instruments in nicely made, new cloth cases; but whether they were for the furnishing of a dance hall or merely the means of recreation of a musical party, was not known.

More women seemed to go this time than on any of the previous expeditions. The youngest female passenger was a little girl of three; the eldest, the mother of a family of ugly daughters who were going to open a boarding house in Dawson—"grub-stake" the boarders—and make a fortune.

They were plain, red haired, small and neat; all wore sailor hats and blue frieze coats. The enormous quantity of personal luggage they surrounded spoke well for the comfort of their future home. They had rolls of mattresses and blankets and coverlets, fur coats and capes, a pile of small trunks, several of the duck, sausage-shaped bags, a pail with a year's numbers of one of the ten-cent maga-



THE "HUMBOLDT'S" PROSPECTIVE MILLIONAIRES.

horses thundered up the wharf, the driver roaring for gangway. There was a pushing and scrambling to either side, the hind wheels were backed fiercely into the heart of the crowd, and the load of luggage thrown on the planks. The owners jumped out on top of it, and the officers and stevedores closed in upon the pile, whence a great shouting and cursing arose.

The truck went rumbling away, to be met by others,

zines—the first library for Klondike, a wicker rocking chair and half a dozen telescope baskets.

They fixed their cabins, two on the afterdeck, while the crowd sat high on sacks of potatoes and looked in enviously. Such cabins as they were! A child could not have stretched itself out in the upper berth. And the blankets and the chair and the mattresses and the fur capes overflowed to the deck among the coal and the