

BY OCEAN AND RIVER

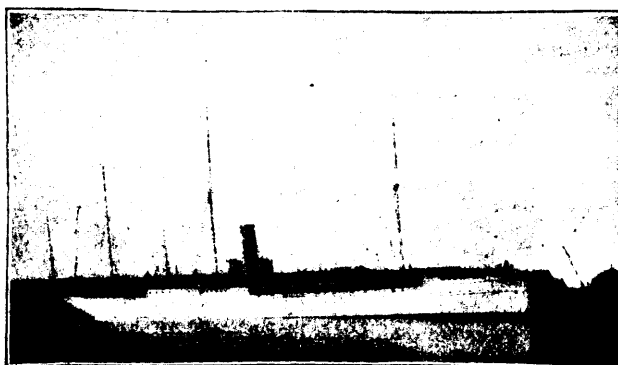
To the Great Yukon Gold Fields.

Never before in the history of mining was there such a mad rush to a new Eldorado as that setting in for Canada's northern gold fields. Never has existed a more alluring region for treasure-seekers, and never were there such facilities for spreading the news to every corner of the known world. Six months ago, people were appalled at the thought of thousands going to the Yukon. To-day, the invading army is numbered in the hundreds of thousands. A Wall Street financial firm recently ascertained from the mayors of all the cities and towns in the United States a rough estimate of the numbers in each intending to set out for the Yukon, and found that the total exodus from the United States alone is likely to exceed 200,000. Probably as many more treasure-seekers will leave other parts of the world; so that the northern gold fields have every prospect of a population of half a million within two years.

Heretofore, the vessels of the Canadian Pacific Navigation Co., of Victoria, B.C., sailing from that port and Vancouver, and those of the Pacific Coast Steamship Co., sailing from San Francisco and transferring passengers at Seattle, Wash., and Victoria to other steamships of the same line for northern points, have been ample to accommodate all passengers, but with the rush to the gold fields the northern waters have become fairly alive with boats, and countless numbers of vessels are under construction for the new traffic. At one time the C.P.N. Co.'s steamers made regular trips during the summer months from Victoria and Vancouver to Alert Bay, Ft. Rupert, River's Inlet, China Hat, Gardiner's Inlet, Port Essington, Ft. Simpson, Ft. Wrangel, Sitka and Juneau. Of late years their steamers went only to Ft. Simpson and intermediate points; but recently an extended service was announced to Queen Charlotte Islands on the first of each month, and steamers have gone on the Yukon route, leaving Victoria and Vancouver weekly for Wrangel, Juneau, Dyea and Skagway. The Pacific Coast Steamship Co.'s boats conducted excursions from San Francisco, Puget Sound ports, Vancouver and Victoria, to Sitka and northern points, transferring passengers to the north bound steamers at Seattle and Victoria. These were, practically, the only vessels of importance plying between Pacific Coast ports and the southern coast of Alaska.

But travellers bound for the interior of Alaska, for the great unknown country on each side of the Yukon River, generally entered the region by another and longer route. They took ship with one of the two big trading companies, the Alaska Commercial Co., or the North Am-

erican Transportation and Trading Co., which practically controlled the trade of the vast interior. The boats of the trading companies ran between San Francisco, calling at Pacific ports, and St. Michael's, an island 70 miles north of the Yukon's mouth. St. Michael's was the headquarters of Arctic and Yukon trading. Here miners and traders were transferred from the ocean vessels to the shallow-draught river steamers, which carried them 1,370 miles up the Yukon to Forty-Mile Creek. The fame of the gold fields has transformed the face of the far northern seas. Where two trading companies and two navigation companies once monopolized all traffic, there are now hosts of vessels, ready on being prepared, to handle the greatly increased travel. Twenty-six vessels were scheduled to sail from Vancouver and Victoria for northern points



THE C.P.R. CO'S S.S. ATHENIAN.

between Feb. 10 and March 31, and this without including the craft leaving Seattle and San Francisco and not calling at Canadian ports. One ship-builder alone has orders for 14 new steamers for Yukon travel. Old vessels are being overhauled to join the fleet of north-bound steamers. To keep account of the different transportation companies, preparing to handle the traffic, would be impossible, but brief mention of a few of the vessels booked for northern ports will give some idea of the activity among shipping circles.

THE C.P.R. CO'S STEAMSHIPS.

First in importance are the two steamships, the Tartar and the Athenian, recently purchased by the C.P.R. Co. from the Union Steamship Co., of London, Eng., which pos-

sesses the largest and finest fleet of any of the lines conducting a service from England to Cape Colony. Both the steamships have been employed in the trade for the South African gold and diamond fields.

The Tartar was built by Aitken & Mansel, of Glasgow. She is classed 100 A1 at Lloyd's, and is three-masted, schooner rigged. Her gross tonnage is 4,425; length, 376 ft.; breadth, 47 ft.; depth, 33.3 ft. She is fitted with triple expansion engines, by T. Richardson & Sons, of Hartlepool, the diameter of cylinders being 36, 58 and 94 ins., respectively, length of stroke 60 ins., and working pressure 160 lbs. She is fitted throughout with electric light, and has refrigerating plant and cold chamber for the storage of fruit, vegetables, milk, etc. From the commencement of her career in the South African mail service the

Tartar has been a great favorite with passengers. She has a character for comfort and speed only exceeded by a very small number of the vessels employed in the South African trade.

The Athenian was also built by Aitken & Mansel, of Glasgow, and has always been regarded by passengers as a most comfortable vessel to travel by. She is a three-masted schooner, classed 100 A1 at Lloyd's, of 3,882 tons. Length, 365 ft.; breadth, 45½ ft.; depth 29 ft. In 1886, when the demand for higher speed in the Cape mail service was observed, the Union Steamship Co. put her in the hands of T. Richardson & Son, of West Hartlepool, who converted her engines from the compound system to the more modern and neces-

sary triple expansion type, thereby materially increasing the speed of the ship at sea with little addition to the expense in coal.

As was the custom when the Athenian was built, the first-class accommodation was put aft, on the main deck, the cabins being extremely lofty. The dining saloon is large and airy, extending right across the ship, tastefully decorated and with a fine staircase leading from it on to the spar deck. On the upper, or spar deck are a few deck cabins, which are highly prized by passengers who are fortunate enough to secure their berths in them. The second-class accommodation is nearer the middle of the ship, just forward of the engines, and may fairly be described as comfortable and clean, with perfect ventilation. Smoking-rooms are provided for both first and second class passengers on the upper

deck. The third class accommodation is in the fore part of the ship, four berth cabins being provided, each berth being fitted with patent wire mattresses in the place of the old wooden bunk. She is fitted with refrigerating apparatus and electric light.

Both vessels have been thoroughly overhauled and refitted since they passed into the possession of the C.P.R. Co. Great interest was excited at Southampton on Feb. 5 by the departure



THE C.P.R. CO'S S.S. TARTAR.