

INTRODUCTION.

As a means of liberal education and healthful recreation, no tour of equal length could be more desirable than that from the Atlantic seaboard to the ports of Southeastern Alaska. A most extraordinary panorama is thus presented. The masterful enterprises of American energy and genius which have developed our great commercial centers; the grand sweeping prairies, rolling plains and ample valleys of the middle West and the ever-changing glories of the Rockies, Sierras and Cascades, all furnish interest, beauty and grandeur which satisfy but never satiate.

As the tourist enters Alaskan waters new scenic wonders greet the vision. The lofty and shimmering summits of snow and the mighty rivers of the ice with their glistening cascades, present a spectacle unsurpassed in the majesty of its grandeur.

The Instigation.

When the steamer "Excelsior" sailed into the harbor of San Francisco in the summer of 1897, bringing nearly one million dollars in gold that had been wrested from the streams of the Klondike country, and the press dispatches announced the phenomenally rich discoveries of the royal metal that had been made on the Yukon River and its tributaries, the eyes of the civilized world were turned toward Alaska. The news inaugurated an exodus toward the gold fields without parallel in the annals of history; in fact the "yellow fever" became epidemic throughout the United States, and a majority of the members of our party were among those most seriously afflicted with this disease.

In accordance with a prearranged plan we assembled at Chicago, the great metropolis of the middle West, which, though little more than a half century old, has a population of nearly two million, and has justly earned its designation as "the magic city." The marvelous strength and almost inexhaustible resources of this young giant were demonstrated by the energy and genius displayed in the manage-