

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION FOR THE CRUISE.

In the summer of '97, the great Klondike fever swept across our land, and carried many of our strong, able men into its vortex and swept them away to the great Northwest to seek their fortunes in a land with all the casualities and horrors of a cold Arctic climate. Many never returned to the dear ones who awaited them, and whether a wife or a mother, she must weep for him who now lies at rest in the icy embrace of some prospector's hole.

I know not what tempts me to write this book, but the inspiration of a sad experience that clings to me and seems to say—"Show me to the world, keep me hid away no longer, but let the world know of this horrid deception that lurks around our peaceful homes, destroying our peace of mind until we know no rest, and through our fancied thoughts of riches and vain endeavors to procure them, come to the conclusion that the wealth we most needed was in the homes that we so longed to see."

I had read of the great finds they had made in Alaska, and often wished that I had the ways and means of reaching there, but it was a long, disagreeable journey to make as I lived in the town of B—, in one of the eastern states, and consequently cost considerable money, so I felt that I must overcome my great desire and remain at home.

It was in the month of August when my wife, after reading a paragraph in the papers, of a woman in Klondike who took out with her dish-pan sixty dollars