

OCTOBER IN ALASKA

BY MISS DORA LECRONE, *Unga, Alaska*



HAVE you ever seen an untouched land, a land quite undisturbed and primeval? Such is Alaska. Here sight-seeing auto, so dear to the heart of the tourist, and its glib-tongued companion, the megaphone, are unknown, but the hand-writing is everywhere and he who can may read and interpret. It may not appear, however, to the eager, anxious throng who are attracted by the convention and complexity of the busy city, but those who long for life strong and simple, for freshness and freedom, for distance and mystery, will be more than content in the wilds of Alaska.

Unga, the island on which we are located, is one of the Shumagin Group, lying seven hundred miles west of Seward. It is about twenty miles wide. The eastern coast is broken by a shallow bay which extends nearly three miles inland. Steep, rugged rocks, projecting, form a gateway to this bay. At this portal, nestling snugly between the hills surrounding it, lies the town of Unga. At the head of the bay is our suburb, Apollo Gold Mine, familiarly known as "The Camp."

Apprehending that summer was growing old, and that stern winter would soon be upon us, we took advantage of October's sunny blue to go forth exploring our island home. Accordingly on the first day of the month with Agate Beach as our destination, we climbed a half-mile across the hill, stopping short at a deep rocky ledge, perhaps one hundred feet high. To make the hazardous descent required grim effort, but when it had been accomplished and we found ourselves on a beautiful sequestered beach, cobbled with wave-worn pebbles and enclosed by great walls of wind and wave-beaten rock, we knew that our expedition had been worth while. Legions of bright, transparent agates, reflecting in their hearts the images of their life-long companions, the seas, clouds, and mountains, were scattered along the beach, so that we felt almost as though we were walking a street in the New Jerusalem. Then we found a delicate, diaphanous, iridescent object, six or eight inches in diameter, and we knew that for the first time our eyes were beholding a jelly fish. High up on the beach, near the rocks, is a quantity of pumice which came from Katmai volcano, two hundred miles away, at the time of its eruption more than a year ago.

We wanted some agates to take home with us, and those we coveted most were shining in the wet path of the ebbing and flowing waves. So we played a wild game with the chasing breakers, and how gleefully they chuckled when they slipped up on us unawares and almost suc-