

IDLE ISLAND

By
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STORY FROM THE START

On the verge of serious collapse, she is overworked, Gay Delane, successful New York artist, comes rest at Idle Island. She finds a cottage, the "Lone Pine," from an island character, the "Captain," and his sister, Alice Andover, "administrators." Gay finds the cottage is tenanted by an elderly lady, "Auntalmiry," who consents to move to another house, the "Apple Tree," leaving from which Gay discovers she was the face of a Chinaman peering in the window.

CHAPTER II—Continued

Roused by this rude thought from the sweet fantasy of dreams, she got up from the couch, and felt about her with unscrupulous groping hands. Deciding, logically, to follow the walls until she came to the kitchen door, knowing she would find matches over the kitchen gas stove, she crept along the wall to the left, working her way, hand following hand, until she found them at last, struck two together, hurriedly, and was glad to have the full light of electricity flooding the room. Doors and windows stood open to the night as when Auntalmiry left in the afternoon. But on consulting her watch, Gay was amazed to find it was the hour of midnight.

"Well, I sleep," she said philosophically.

On the kitchen table she found her basket of groceries, and feeling somewhat refreshed she took a real interest in inspecting its contents and arranging them neatly on shelves in the little wall cupboard. Carefully she closed and locked the doors and windows.

She opened a can of prepared soup and heated it, made toast, opened a jar of pickles.

For the first time since she left New York, she was sufficiently rested to feel a mental reaction to her environment.

She arranged her modest supper on a tray, and took it to the wall-seat by the window which looked down over the bay. The wriggling, wrinking lines of many little colored lights in the black showed where boats rode out the night at anchor. Intermittently the black was mellowed, turned to white mist, by the sliding rays of a lighthouse searchlight.

"Nice," she said to herself. "I like it. I'm glad I came. Auntalmiry is a dear, the Captain is a lamb, and that administrator person who tries to be so very bossy is a kind, sweet, generous fraud."

Remembering then that she had not yet so much as seen the upper story of her new home, she left the tray in the window, and, cup of soup in her hand, went up at once to explore, switching on the lights of the stairway from the lowest step. She found it modest enough above the stairs, but clean and fresh, all to her liking. There was a large closet on the landing, and to the left, a nicely appointed bathroom. The bedroom was large and cheerfully bright in furnishing, a bed, an old bureau, a commode and two small chairs matched.

Her natural energy somewhat restored by the long sleep, Gay carried her bags upstairs and unpacked them, folding the little silken garments away into drawers that smelled sweetly of cedar. She had brought with her nothing but the bare necessities for wearing. Her weariness had been so great that her only desire, her only thought, had been to escape, escape from work, escape from the city, find rest.

Gay Delane, not a New Yorker by birth, had become one by labor. Work was her daily bread. She counted accomplishment the end of life, success its great reward. With Gay Delane there was no interest as to one's possession, from whence one came, nor from what family line had sprung. The sole point of personality to her was this: "What is he doing? What has he done?"

The death of both parents in quick succession had thrown her upon her own resources at the age of seventeen. The last of the family funds, the insurance, all had gone into a final year of practical preparation for life-work, in which, with the inconspicuously blended driving of necessity and desire, she had studied stenography, and at the same time continued her classes in art under the best teachers obtainable.

"I've got to work—but I am going to paint," she said.

From the strictly clerical work she had been obliged to accept at first, bread-and-butter work she called it, she had gradually worked away from it, getting into things more to her taste and her talent, and at last, when she was able, abandoning it altogether. Black and white copies of style figures, fashion pages, back work of illustration, all grist to Gay; and always through the formative years, she kept some hours, mostly at night and on Sunday, for more advanced study.

For the definite business of earning a living, she had a remunerative connection with the advertising house of Burnham and Morey, for whom she did conventional paintings in bright colors at their order. The work not only paid very well, but was varied in type, usually interesting, and exercised the artistic virtues of a quick eye and finger for striking color effects. But always, besides this, she

kept on, studying better things, painting in all her hours of leisure the things her heart desired.

From the day she had entered upon the study of stenography, in her seventeenth year, Gay had never allowed herself time for a full and complete vacation, sufficient to give both soul and body temperance. She said she hadn't time, there was too much to learn, too much to do. Even her one memorable trip abroad, although it continued over a year, had afforded her no rest, for in addition to her studies she had taken with her also a contract for a series of pictures for the Sunday Magazine, so that she returned to New York at last alive with zeal, aflame with ambition, and far less rested than when she went.

But outraged flesh and violated nerves claimed their revenge at last for the eleven years' defiance. For fully six months before the final June torrent of heat forced her into full surrender, she had been a prey to quivering nerves that jangled in a jaded body, and when the inevitable forced itself upon her, she accepted it with a certain joy. If she must rest, she would make that rest a sport. If she must go into retirement, the exile should be a luxurious one. Perhaps—who knew?—even on a good little island of idleness might lurk some stimulant for an ardent though flagging spirit. Adventure, perhaps, amusement certainly, or even—ah, Romance!

Gay, most ardent of free-soul advocates, decried though she did the



She Counted Accomplishment the End of Life.

hampering confines of marriage, turned always sensitive heart-strings to the strumming fingers of Romance.

Marriage, Gay argued, was not designed for the ambitious worker. For the complacent, for the self-satisfied, for the indolent, all very well; perhaps; but marriage and ambition, passion for accomplishment, were never messmates. Gay's first romance, tender sweet blossom of her ardent young womanhood, joyously promised the full fruitage of marriage "when the war is over," lay buried with the soldier who did not come back. And Gay's first passion of grief soon subsided into a philosophical reflection that perhaps after all it was better so, that she was not domestic, not the type for humdrum home life. That experience confirmed her in her determination to live alone. Alone, but not lonely. Free, but not unloved.

Ah, if on the good and idle island should come a fresh awakening for her stilled affections!

"Lumley Lane, for instance," she thought whimsically. "Lumley the lobster-man. A stern and silent nature, bronzed and bearded."

She smiled to herself as she turned

Pine Dresser Finally Got Back to America

There is no telling how much an antique piece may travel before it comes to rest in the hands of an appreciative collector or a museum. Recently a pine dresser was imported from England with some English furniture. The dresser stuck out like a sore thumb among the English pieces, and the dealer quickly spotted it. The wood, the hardware, the workmanship, the style, all proclaimed it American. A wealthy collector purchased it and then set out to find how the dresser had ever strayed from the shores of America. He discovered, after lengthy correspondence, that an American family had gone to England

Young Swan Good Eating

The meat of the cygnet or young swan is a greatly esteemed delicacy and "swanpits" are maintained for the fattening of these birds. A royal license is required for the keeping of swans in England, the birds formerly having been exclusively the property of the crown.

out the lights and slipped into bed. The room was steeped in the essence of evergreen. Gay slept, glad for the silence of the Idle Island.

Next morning she wrote a note to her friend, Nancy Moore, asking to have her cases crated and shipped to her, with her palette, her canvases, say many of the pretty useful things of her studio which would add to the charm of her new home.

"It is the Land of Leisure," she wrote, "the Land of Emotional Leisure. It is Idle Island, the World of Wasted Effort, the Center of Silence. Every one works, but the work amounts to nothing. Every one is intensely busy, but it is the business of passing time. Every one is persistently intent on doing, but it is the doing of nothing at all. Soft, slow, unburied."

"Hello!" It was a human voice that boomed out upon the silence like a neighboring foghorn that aroused Gay from the mellow mildness of her pictures.

She ran to the door, startled at the sudden vocal crash in the stillness, startled more greatly when she saw the enormous apparition at her door. An immense man, a monster of a man, with a tuft of bristling orange-colored beard, and a great shock of bristling orange-colored hair, and a great round face like a giant orange, with pink-rimmed pale blue eyes.

"Hello," he boomed again, with a broad pink smile of greeting.

"Hello," stammered Gay.

"Lobsters," he shouted. "Auntalmiry says lobsters."

"Ah, yes." A fleeting reminiscent smile for the lobster-man of her fancies. "You are the Lobster-man?"

"Yup. That's me. Lumley Lane. How many?"

She told him to bring her a lobster twice a week.

"Lobsters," he shouted, "run about fifty or sixty cents."

Lumley said his woman would boil them for her without extra charge. He frowned portentously. "She'll boil them, that is, long as she's able. She's—expecting."

"Expecting?" Gay echoed faintly.

"Yup. Increase!" His facetious grin was illuminating.

"Oh, how nice!"

"Well, yes. Unexpected. Very. Been married twenty year now. Not in' doin'. All of a sudden—yup, there you are!—She's skeered," he volunteered cheerfully. "She's afeerd o' dyin'." She says it ain't according to natur'.

"Oh, tell her not to be frightened," Gay comforted. "It often happens. And is there a hospital on the island?"

"She won't go to no hospital. She says she don't trust these newfangled nurses, highly-tighty. She'd rather trust to the women comin' in, the old way."

"If I am here then I'll be glad to help, if I can," Gay offered generously. "I was in the hospital for five months during the war, in training, and I'm not a bit highly-tighty."

"Well, now, that's real neighborly. First-rate. I'll tell my woman you said so. She'll be countin' on ye."

"Oh, I am quite expert with babies. It was the only thing they had time to teach us before the war ended. They seemed to think the army wasn't going to do much but increase the population."

Lumley Lane burst into a loud haw-haw, and set off down the hill.

Gay ran to her desk and added a postscript to her letter to Nancy Moore.

"I am not going to have an affair with the lobster-man, after all, dear. He is not as stern and silent as I expected. Besides, he is expecting."

CHAPTER III

Midsummer was gala time for all the chilly little islands of the North. Every day the Community house on the bay shore beneath Gay's grassy hill slope was open for bridge and tea, and every Saturday night offered its New England shore dinner, followed by dancing to the strains of a real jazz orchestra with saxophone accompaniment, playing the popular song

Elephants That Burn

Mixed metaphors are not by any means uncommon. Sometimes they are merely inept; occasionally they are ludicrous. In England the other day the Salford city council emitted a gem.

The question under municipal debate was whether Salford wanted to have an exhibition hall. There seems to have been a considerable difference of opinion. Said one speaker:

"I do not want the council to get their fingers burnt with a white elephant!"

bits of the season not more than twice removed. There were ante parties, leading parties, beach parties, bathing parties. At dusk every fine night she could count the silvery lines of half a dozen or more shore parties, where clams were baking, potatoes roasting, or lobsters boiling.

But Gay did not share in the gaiety and the summer holiday life of the island. She reveled in rest, in freedom from the nervous pressure of an impatient city jugging her elbow. When her usual and pains arrived, she installed a studio in one corner of the big bright living room of the Lone Pine, and felt at peace with the world.

Auntalmiry was her friend. Auntalmiry was everybody's friend. She was a sort of uncondemned institution, she went with the island. But although Auntalmiry no longer worked for a living, not as we speak of working for a living, she earned her keep, because she did what she could. Whenever there was fruit to can in the house of a native islander, jelly to make, or tomatoes to pickle, Auntalmiry, although not hired for the occasion, was always there, always at work.

For fifty years, she had presided at the arrival of all the small expected-ones around Evergreen. She had sat up with the sick, mourned with the sad, wept over the dead. She kept everybody's children while mothers went shopping, played bridge, or had more children.

And for all these things, as Auntalmiry gave in service, she was paid in kind. Winter apples, potatoes, squashes, jellies and canned fruit filled her larder. She had a charge account at the Pier grocery store, but her monthly bills were rendered, not to her, but to the administrator, as was right.

Auntalmiry had her own bank account, too. It was a small bank account, but like the widow's oil and meal it never diminished, but rather grew a little, curiously, now and then. Its nucleus was her identical bank account of thirty years before, when she was obliged after a severe illness to give up, once and forever, all actively remunerative labor.

No one, however, considered Auntalmiry an object of charity nor did she so consider herself. She did what she could. She received what she needed.

"Why, it is socialism," Gay cried enthusiastically. "The very principle of socialism, applied, effective and practical!"

But Mrs. Andover drew herself up coldly. "Not by any means," she said sternly. "Such an ideal! Socialism is one of those new-fangled notions brought over from Russia or one of those bolshevik countries. We don't hold to such things on our island."

With the familiar and much loved paraphernalia of her profession about her, and with all of her pretty personal possessions to soften the rugged austerity of her surroundings, Gay settled down with comfortable anticipations of long and lovely leisure for leisurely work. Every day she went out for a long walk through the shivering little forest that backed the cottage, and down to the rocky shore, and as strength returned, her spirit of adventure quickened also. Each day she fared farther, always with greater joy, and daily daring steeper cliffs and rougher walls of rock.

Comprising in all some seven hundred acres, the island had originally been occupied exclusively by three families of sturdy seafaring stock: the Wallaces, the McAndlers and the Marlings. The first settler of all was the grandfather of the present Captain. He, always referred to as the First Captain Wallace, had come there with his sons and daughters, his servants and his boats, and settled down to carry on a wide and prosperous fish and lobster trade, incidental to his sailing trade. His children had married, cottages sprang up in the woods and the wild growth every year was pushed farther and farther back to make way for gardens, orchards and lawns.

Others came to the island, some for holidays, some in service, and married, and remained. The early teachers of the little public school grew old in labor, and retired to private life, but did not go away. Lobster trappers came for a season, and settled for life. Later, as modern conveniences added comfort to island life, many who were engaged in clerical or professional work in Portland built permanent homes near the ferry landing, and crossed the bay to their work in the morning, and back to their island homes at night.

While many of the later generations of Wallace had gone into professional work and removed to other states, many also remained on the island, where they had married and intermarried, so that fully half the native population was linked up together by ties of blood or marriage, and oftentimes by both, a network so intricate that only the more obvious forms of relationship were given acknowledgement.

The island was three or more miles in length, barely one mile wide, a rugged line of rock fronting the Atlantic along the east, and drifting down gradually to a slow low valley slope of emerald green on the bay shore. A motor road led up from the landing beyond the Captain's house, and there at the bend, turned backward along the shore. But leading the other way, into the forest, were only dwindling trails. In the foreground of the forest lay a long row of pretty summer houses, fringing the woods and looking off down the grassy slope to the bay.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



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HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

Cookie Dog
"What's your dog's name?"
"Ginger."
"Does Ginger bite?"
"No, Ginger snaps."—Stone Cutters' Journal.

Want Supplied
Roger Kahn, millionaire arman and musician, said at a dinner in New York:

"We hear lots of stories about the conceit of movie actresses, but none about the conceit of movie actors. Here goes, then, to supply a long-felt want."

"A movie actor, on his return from his vacation, went about with his sleeves rolled up so as to show the big, bulging biceps on each arm. He was very proud of them. He got all his friends to feel how hard they were."

"Gosh, what a muscle!" a friend would say. "How did you raise it?"
"Rowing!"

"No," the actor would answer. "It comes from hugging girl admirers!"

Faithful
He—"Why do you want to sing with me?" She—"To help share the responsibility."

A friend who is never in need is a friend indeed.

Too many men who have good ideas are unable to make good.

The Cream of the Tobacco Crop



"Hoot, Mon, Luckies dinna hurt my throat or wind," says Sir Harry Lawder, famous Scotch Comedian.

"I've smoked Luckies for years and all this time I've been active in my work which demands a clear voice for singing and good wind for dancing. 'It's always a bra bricht moonlicht nicht with Luckies—Hoot, Mon, they dinna hurt my wind or throat.'"

Harry Lawder

"It's toasted"

No Throat Irritation—No Cough.

