The MELODY GIRL

by RUTH DEWEY GROVES
AUTHOR OF "THE HUSBAND HUNTER," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVI

"ALL'S right with the world—" Beryl turned swiftly to Tommy. "Isn't that a wonderful line?" she exclaimed rapturously. "Look at that harbor! No, don't, for you'd be sure to drive us straight into the sunset. You couldn't take your eyes from it."

Tommy grinned and swerved the car, pretending to lose control of it. Beryl laughed. "It knows which is its sunny side," she said. "I never knew a nicer brought-up car, did you?"

"I never did. It curtsies every time it sees a Lincoln."

"So much better behaved than its new brothers and sisters," Beryl said snootily.

"Better get your nose down before some bee mistakes it for a buttercup," Tommy told her.

And so they drove along, carefree and merry. If each had a dark cloud in memory it was kept for private viewing and never brought out to spoil the sunny hours they spent together.

Beryl was particularly happy this day. It was Sunday and the grocery store was closed. Tommy too was released from his labors in a garage. And tomorrow he would return to college—to night classes, keeping the new job, making his own way and proving to Beryl's entire satisfaction that he always paid his debts in full.

It had not been easy for him. Pol Larkin had given him a nasty beating but Tommy considered himself lucky to escape without a cracked head. And his uncle's attitude when Tommy went back home had made it impossible to ask help of him. Tommy had stayed one night, refusing to accept Beryl's offer. The next night he slept at the garage. In fact, he slept at the garage until he received his first pay. Then he took a cubbyhole in a nearby rooming house.

Beryl loved him deeply. She wondered at times if Tommy realized this. She'd tried to place all that had passed upon a basis of friendship. Tommy wasn't conceited. She had that to count on. He'd always accepted her in a matter-of-fact way. Of course another boy . . . but she'd always been in Tommy's life. "Just like that wart in his thumb," she thought whimsically.

Beryl, hopelessly in love with him, lied about Irene. When he asked for news of her sister and there was no news she invented some. Oh yes, they'd had a letter from Irene on Tuesday (but it might have been two Tuesdays past).

She could trust her mother not to give her away in this practice for Mrs. Everett said little of Irene's communications to them. Mr. Everett was less reticent, but Tommy rarely encountered him, for Mr. Everett was working late at the store these days. His helper had been let out for lack of funds and work that Mr. Everett had done in the day time he was doing now at night.

Beryl and her mother made the salads and cakes to increase the family income but most of Beryl's time was spent in the store. Shortly after she resumed her duties as cashier she realized with sinking heart that the business was headed toward disaster. All her own funds were exhausted, spent in large sums to the New York specialist.

When she spoke to her father about this state of affairs he acknowledged wearily that he knew it as well as she did. "I've begged your mother to write to Irene to help us out," he confessed, "but she says we ain't no business bothering Irene."

"She knows Irene," Beryl commented dryly. "If that girl's generous, then Shylock was a Santa Claus. Look at the things she's sent mother, a pair of silk gloves and rubber exerciser!"

A few days later Mr. Everett appeared at the store with a brighter face than Beryl had seen him wearing for some time. "You mother's written to Irene," he explained.

"That's great," she said, and turned hastily away.

As the days passed and nothing was heard from Irene the brightness vanished from Mr. Everett's face. Beryl knew that he had quarreled with her mother, but when she was present Mrs. Everett would say nothing. There was a look of stubbornness on her mother's face that Beryl heard Mr. Everett describe as mulish.

Perhaps her mother didn't realize how things were. "I guess," Beryl said to her one day, "you don't know how serious it is with Dad. He's pretty badly in debt. He's got to have a life line or he'll sink."

The lines of stubbornness deepened around her mother's compressed lips.

"You might have thought of that," she answered, "when you wouldn't take care of yourself. Irene is married and gone. It seems to me the ones to help are those at home."

Beryl bit her lip to keep back a sharp answer. There would be something in what her mother said, were it not for the many dollars of her earnings that had gone into the family exchequer.

"I am doing all I can," she said quietly.

"And I've done all I can," her mother retorted. "I've stood over this stove and baked until I'm black in the face. Irene was the only one with sense enough to look out for herself and I'm not going to hurt her pride for the sake of some who criticized her."

Beryl knew that she was the "some" referred to. "I don't want her to help me," she said. "I could get a job if I didn't have to help Dad in the store. And I can't see that it would hurt Irene's pride to do something for her mother and father."

"You can't? Don't you suppose that it would humble her to ask Gaylord for money for her family?"

"I suppose it would, a bit," Beryl admitted. "But I'm sure Gaylord wouldn't mind if she were grateful."

"Well, I wrote to her once about it and she hasn't answered. I'm not going to do it again!"

Beryl was quieted by the finality in her tone. The task she'd been about was finished. She took off her smock and rolled down her sleeves.

"I'll take the salad to the store," she said hurriedly. "Is the cake iced?"

"No, you'll have to come back for it."

"I haven't much time. It's Saturday, you know," Beryl reminded her.

"You don't need to tell me! Hasn't every Saturday seen me chained to this kitchen for a month?"

Beryl felt suddenly very sorry for her. Perhaps she was suffering in silent disappointment—too loyal to Irene to complain.

"Never mind the icing," she said. "I'll whip a bottle of cream at the store."

"And suppose the cake doesn't sell?"

"Mrs. Barstow will take half of it, and Tommy will buy the other half. We're going on a picnic tomorrow to celebrate Tommy's return to college."

Beryl could not be depressed with the prospect of a picnic with Tommy, especially when it marked a signal triumph. Before starting she resolutely put trouble behind her. And the whipped cream cake was sold as a whole besides all the salad. Beryl decided she must make more of the salad since people had begun to ask for it. Perhaps the Everett craft could be floated on salads and cakes.

She remarked to Tommy when she served him store cookies that ships ought to have spires made of spun sugar and keels of chocolate and oars of peppermint sticks and he asked her if she were rational.

"What's that about the path to your door?" she said dreamily. "I think I'm going to start one on stepping stones of brownies and deviled eggs. Maybe I'll get a stand out here somewhere in the country and serve hobo sandwiches . . . you know, Tommy, people have to eat and if you make it a pleasure for them—if I made something better than anyone else made it and . . ."

Tommy reached out and took her hand. "Cut it out," he said huskily and Beryl said, "Making a success of anything is thrilling, Tommy," for she knew that he was contrasting a career running a lunch stand with one as a singer.

She had to be very careful with Tommy in some respects. He had changed. To Beryl he was vastly more interesting than he had been before. He was repentant and gentle and sympathetic when he was serious.

After a bit she managed to turn the conversation into a discussion of Tommy's future. She had a beautiful time listening to him, and watching the sun glint through the autumn leaves on his hair. Tommy would be somebody some day.

They drove home in mellow dusk. Most of the way they had the road to themselves. Beryl's old car shot past other vehicles easily. Some drivers swore at and others envied the young couple.

Beryl closed her eyes that night with a happy sigh, and did not wake the next morning until her mother came to show her a telegram from Irene.

(To Be Continued)

"Double Cross"

HORIZONTAL

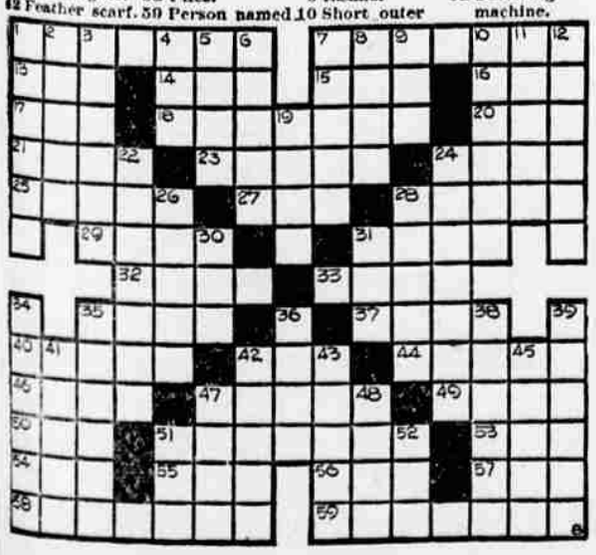
1 The itch.
7 Head of the English Boy Scouts.
13 Pussy.
14 Spring.
15 Wine vessel.
16 Monkey.
17 Cabin.
18 Toured.
20 Large.
21 Cowheaded goddess.
23 Three and four.
24 Genus of frogs.
25 Brutal.
27 Obstruction in a stream.
28 Writer's mark.
29 English school.
31 Rod.
32 Notion.
33 Taste.
35 Pledge.
37 Animal.
40 To mitigate.
42 Feather scarf.
44 To arrange cloth gracefully.
46 Ulcer.
47 Rubbish.
49 Heavenly body.
50 Data.
51 Paper cover.
53 Wrath.
54 Handle of a jug.
55 Bronze.
56 Age.
57 Kiln.
58 Flies.
59 Person named for office.

SATURDAY'S ANSWER

RUSSIA BASHAN
KIN ASP AGE ROT
OST CLASSIC COR
REID ERATO BASE
ANDES APE LADEN
N YAWL D CUTE D
LIONHEART
D BENT I BEET B
ADORE ERA SNORE
NITS OVERT SMUG
CAT ERASERS AMA
ELL LAD NID TEN
SENILE AMAZON

VERTICAL

1 Head of American Boy Scouts.
2 Reason.
3 Clothes.
4 Distinctive theory.
5 Series of epical events.
6 Surfeited.
7 Seraglio.
8 Last word of a prayer.
9 Insane.
10 Short outer coat.
11 To think.
12 To nullify.
19 Egg-shaped.
22 To cloy.
24 Forest wardens.
26 English author. Sir Oliver ——?
28 Beaten.
30 Born.
31 Soft mass.
34 Marble.
35 Auto shed.
36 Cleansing substance.
38 Soldier's food allowance.
39 Cylindrical and smooth.
41 Additional money premium.
42 Metal.
43 Quaking.
45 To analyze.
47 Elm.
48 Valiant man.
51 Existed.
52 Battering machine.



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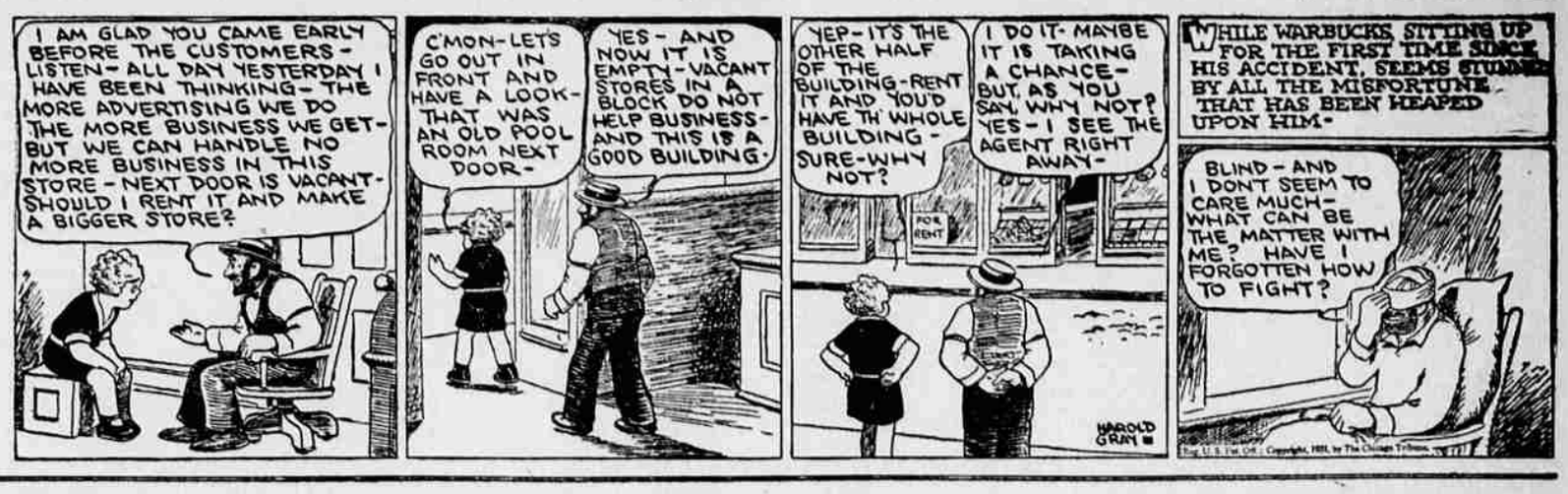

TIM TYLER'S FLYING LUCK

By LYNN YOUNG

POLLY AND HER PALS

By CLIFF STERRETT

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

Hey! Willie!

By MARTIN

BRINGING UP FATHER

By GEORGE McMANUS

MICKEY MICE

By WALT DISNEY