

The MELODY GIRL

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

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

Beryl started with surprise, spilling a few drops of the chocolate on her party dress. The accident did not distress her. Beryl felt she would be glad when all the things the Velvet Girl had bought were gone. They reminded her of Beryl too painfully of past glories.

Her nervousness was a different matter. She was distressed over it for it was growing so noticeable that people were beginning to comment. Beryl felt she could not stand the prying eyes that followed her.

Tommy hadn't seemed to notice. He was too startled at the peremptory summons.

Beryl went to answer the door-bell and her hand shook visibly when she took the telegram that was delivered to her by a young man who said he'd wait to see if there might be an answer.

Beryl asked him to come in out of the bitter wind that was howling across the porch. The telegram was for her mother.

It would be from Irene, of course, and all probability it was a commonplace message, but who could receive a wire in the middle of a stormy night and not have premonitions of evil?

Beryl told herself she was silly to feel this way about it. Nevertheless she was reluctant to take the message to her mother who was calling down the stairs to know what the matter was.

"It's a telegram," Beryl said and handed the envelope over unopened. Her mother, leaning down the stairs, took it eagerly.

Beryl went to the few remaining steps and waited. Her mother had good eyes and it was not necessary for her to put on glasses before she could read the message.

She was not filled with foreboding, as was Beryl, but neither was she on the verge of nervous prostration.

Besides she had reason to suppose the telegram might be the full, filial of her greatest wish—word of Irene's reconciliation with Gaylord.

She read it hastily. Suddenly Mrs. Everett shrieked.

Every one came running, even to the messenger boy. Beryl caught her mother in her arms as she collapsed, but she could not have supported her for long had not Mr. Everett come to her aid.

Tommy halted near the head of the stairs, just behind the messenger boy, and waiting until Mr. Everett and Beryl had got the woman into her room.

"Gee, do you suppose somebody's dead?" the messenger boy whispered. "I knew it was bad news—I was told to wait for an answer but, gee, I hate deliverin' them death notices!"

TOMMY did not answer. Presently Beryl reappeared to pick up the telegram. Her mother's outcries had not made clear what news it contained. Beryl read the message aloud to Tommy, and then she wanted to laugh.

The impulse horrified her. How could she laugh when her sister was hurt?

"Beryl, don't!" Tommy said sharply. He could not stand the sounds of her crying—crying that was prompted by a desire to laugh. To Tommy who never had witnessed real hysteria—only Irene's raging imitation of it—this was a horrible thing.

"They sometimes give 'em a good slap," the messenger boy advised him, but Tommy was deaf to such advice.

He took Beryl by the arms and shook her—not because he thought it was the best thing to do but because he wanted to make her listen to him. His action was instinctive, the force it is natural to exert in a moment of desperation.

It quieted Beryl. After a minute or two she said, gasping, "I'm sorry. Get me a glass of water."

Tommy got the water. Beryl drank it in sips, as though her throat were choked.

"You nearly scared me to death," Tommy told her. "What made you do that?"

Beryl bit her tongue to keep from laughing again.

FINALLY, the messenger boy reminded them that he was waiting for an answer, and Beryl, with Tommy's help, composed one which they addressed to Irene at the hos-

pital in Oakdale, where Gaylord had said she would spend a few days to recover from her injury.

"Nothing to worry about," Tommy said to Beryl when he was taking his leave.

Beryl felt that he was hiding his own feelings in order to reassure her, but she was incapable of making an effort to offer him comfort in return.

After he was gone she wondered if comfort would have been superfluous, for on reading Gaylord's wire a second time, she sensed a coldness, almost an indifference to Irene's plight. It was almost like a message a stranger would send as a duty.

Had Tommy noticed this? Would he conclude from it that Gaylord and Irene were still estranged? If that were so, Tommy couldn't be terribly upset over Irene's injuries which Gaylord called "slight."

Being assured of a chance to win her for himself would be the big thing to Tommy. Irene could recover from slight injuries, but Tommy was sure to feel he never could recover from losing her a second time.

Beryl went to talk with her mother, but she said nothing of her impression of Gaylord's message.

"Oh, my poor baby," Mrs. Everett wailed over and over. "Out there in a hospital without her mother!"

"She got her husband," Mr. Everett, who had come back from getting himself a drink of something, declared. "Now don't you begin meddling!"

Mrs. Everett turned upon him ferociously. "It's all your fault!" she exclaimed. "You and Beryl! You didn't want Irene here, either one of you. You made her humble herself to go back there."

If you'd let her alone, Gaylord would have come for her. Oh, my poor baby! Maybe Gaylord's lying. Maybe she's hurt badly! Maybe she's dying!"

Mrs. Everett kept it up until she had her husband thoroughly frightened and Beryl too began to wonder if Gaylord had held back the true report of Irene's condition—perhaps paying the way for more serious news.

But that would be silly. Why should he? He didn't care enough about them to do such a thing.

She hadn't learned yet what his trouble with Irene was, but if it were Irene's fault and not his then Gaylord probably disliked the whole family.

He couldn't be the brute Irene said he was, but it was conceivable that he wasn't a saint, either.

Beryl could see no reason why Gaylord should conceal the true facts of the accident from them, but to quiet her mother she promised to send a wire to the hospital authorities for further information.

She got it off as early as she could next morning and in due time they had word confirming what Gaylord had told them.

Irene had suffered severe bruises and lacerations of the scalp and face, but she was in no danger of losing her life.

Beryl, without mentioning it to her mother, also inquired if Irene was being given the best medical care available in Oakdale. The inquiry was made to ascertain for her own satisfaction if Gaylord was assuming the financial responsibilities of Irene's care.

The answer was in the affirmative and Beryl was relieved of a burden, for she did not know where funds could be raised to pay her sister's expenses. No one would receive the best of anything unless the expense was guaranteed by a reputable person.

She felt confident that Gaylord was looking after Irene as far as money was concerned.

THEY did not hear from him again for several days. Those days were terrible for Beryl. Her mother kept to her bed and refused to see any one, for Irene had written them a pitiful letter in which she declared she had done her best to make up with Gaylord but he was "just the same toward her," and when she got well she would have to come home.

She repeated that she would try not to be any trouble to them because they'd all been so good to her. She'd work hard and help with the

cooking and try to forget how she was suffering now.

The letter broke her mother's heart and Beryl and Mr. Everett suffered in consequence. Mrs. Everett declared so frequently and so earnestly that they had been cruel to Irene that at last Beryl asked herself if it couldn't be possible that they were.

She looked back over the years in which she had grown up with Irene and it seemed to her that she'd never liked her sister.

"Perhaps I didn't try to see her good qualities," Beryl told herself in a moment of self-analysis. "I have no right to judge her. No one has. She's just the way she is. I have no standards are the only standards."

She strove very earnestly to conquer her dislike for Irene's character as a whole and to dwell upon the endearing traits that Irene possessed.

There were not many, but she realized with a shock that sifted from the general selfishness and self-will of her sister, there were bits of sweetness.

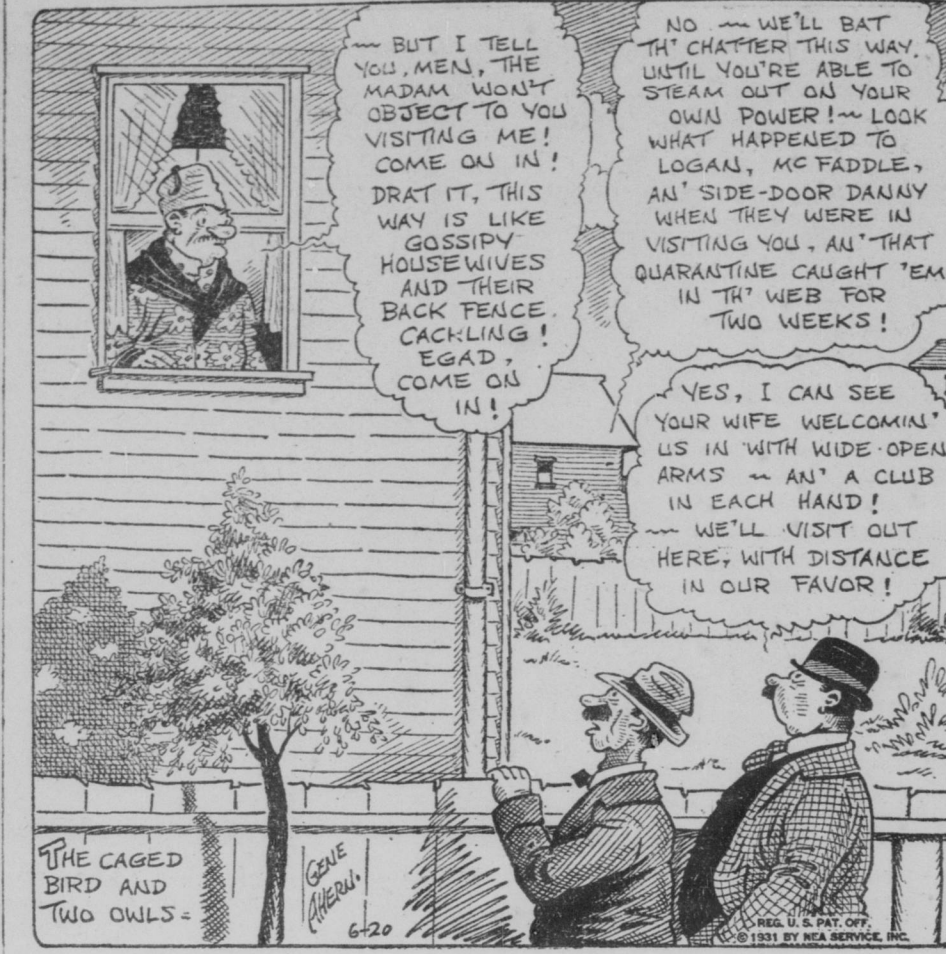
"Perhaps I antagonized her, drew out the worst in her," Beryl reflected. And perhaps I'm not even now as honest as I think I am. If it were not for Tommy I might feel differently.

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

—By Ahern

OUT OUR WAY

—By Williams



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

—By Blosser

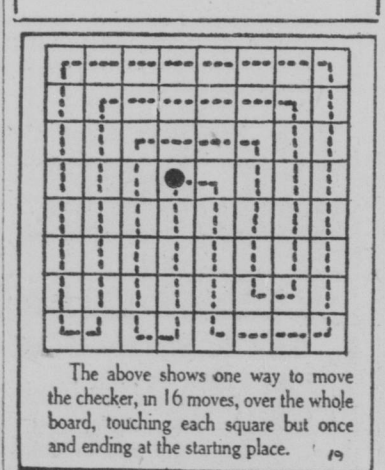


WASHINGTON TUBBS II

—By Crane



- HORIZONTAL**
- 1 Kentucky
 - 2 Churchill
 - 3 Price
 - 4 Documents
 - 5 Discussed
 - 6 To conciliate
 - 7 Stranger
 - 8 The Greek "H"
 - 9 Flower leaf
 - 10 Elk
 - 11 Trap
 - 12 Chest bones
 - 13 Urgent
 - 14 Longfellow was a famous
 - 15 mouse
 - 16 Told
 - 17 To join again
 - 18 Muscle
 - 19 Common-place
 - 20 Visage
 - 21 Weird
 - 22 Prophet
- VERTICAL**
- 1 Lion's cage
 - 2 Church off
 - 3 DASHING
 - 4 OATMEAL
 - 5 CLEVER
 - 6 LATER
 - 7 UPAS
 - 8 PUTTER
 - 9 SILO
 - 10 REN
 - 11 WAITER
 - 12 KLINER
 - 13 BASTER
 - 14 GUESTS
 - 15 HUSSAR
 - 16 GANGES
 - 17 BOTHER
 - 18 CUDGELS
 - 19 RAKER
 - 20 BRIDES
 - 21 RE
 - 22 IRIS
 - 23 TEASES
 - 24 FIRE
 - 25 ADOLO
 - 26 LOANED
 - 27 DAVE
 - 28 RAMMER
 - 29 DECAN
 - 30 DREGS
 - 31 STARTLE
 - 32 cial
 - 33 Destruction
 - 34 Honey
 - 35 gatherer
 - 36 Bird of the night
 - 37 Coat
 - 38 More fastidious
 - 39 Radio howls
 - 40 Valley
 - 41 To pierce
 - 42 Dry
 - 43 Age
 - 44 Wing



Answer for Yesterday

The above shows one way to move the checker, in 16 moves, over the whole board, touching each square but once and ending at the starting place.

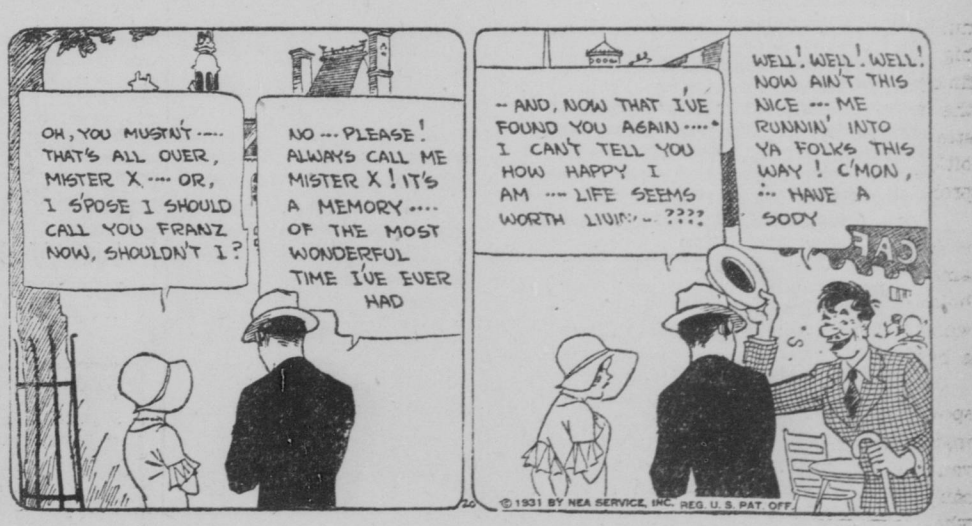
SALESMAN SAM

—By Small



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

—By Martin



TARZAN, LORD OF THE JUNGLE

—By Edgar Rice Burroughs

