

Entered as Second-Class Matter at Postoffice, Indianapolis.

INDIANAPOLIS, THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1928

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NOBODY'S GIRL

By ANNE AUSTIN author of the PENNY PRINCESS COPYRIGHT 1928 BY NEA SERVICE

CHAPTER I

THE long, bare room had never been graced by a picture or a curtain. Its only furniture was twenty narrow iron cots. Four girls were scrubbing the warped, wide-planked floor, three of them pitifully young for the hard work, the baby of them being only 6, the oldest 9. The fourth, who directed their labors, rising from her knees sometimes to help one of her small crew, was just turned 16, but she looked, in her short, skimpy dress of faded blue and white checked gingham, not more than 12 or 13.

"Sal-lee," the 6-year-old called out in a coaxing whine, as she sloshed a dirty rag up and down in a pail of soapy water, "play-act for us, won't you, Sal-lee? Tend like you're a queen and I'm your little girl. I'd be a princess, wouldn't I, Sal-lee?"

The child sat back on her thin little haunches, one small hand plucking at the skimpy skirt of her own faded blue and white gingham, an exact replica, except for size, of the frocks worn by the three other scrubbers. "I'll tend like I've got on a white satin dress, Sal-lee—"

Sally Ford lifted a strand of fine black hair that had escaped from the tight, thick braid that hung down her narrow back, tucked it behind a well-shaped ear, and smiled fondly upon the tiny pleader. It was a miracle-working smile. Before the miracle, that small, pale face had looked like that of a serious little old woman, the brows knotted, the mouth tight in a frown of concentration.

But when she smiled she became a pretty girl. Her blue eyes, that had looked almost as faded as her dress, darkened and gleamed like a pair of perfectly matched sapphires. Delicate, wing-like eyebrows, even blacker than her hair, lost their sullenness, assumed a lovely, provocative arch. Her white cheeks gleamed. Her little pale mouth, unpuckered of its frown, bloomed suddenly, like a tea rose opening. Even, pointed, narrow teeth, to fit the narrowness of her delicate, childish jaw, flashed into that smile completely destroying the picture of a rather sad little old woman which she might have posed for before.

"All right, Betsy!" Sally cried, jumping to her feet. "But all of you will have to work twice as hard after I've play-acted for you, or Stone-Face will skin us alive."

Her smile was reflected in the three oldish little faces of the children squatting on the floor. The rags with which they had been wiping up surplus water after Sally's vigorous scrubbing were abandoned, and the three of them, moving in unison like mindless sheep, clustered close to Sally, following her with adoring eyes as she switched a sheet off one of the cots.

"This is my ermine robe," she declared. "Thelma, run and shut the door. . . . Now, this is my royal crown," she added, seizing her long, thick braid of black hair. Her nimble, thin fingers searched for and found three crimped wire hairpins which she secreted in the meshes of the plait. In a trice her small head was crowned with its own magnificent glory, the braid wound coronet-fashion over her ears and low upon her broad, white forehead.

"Say 'A royal queen am I.' 6-year-old Betsy shrieked, clapping her hands in ecstasy. "And don't forget to make up a verse about me, Sal-lee! I'm a princess! I've got on white satin and little red shoes, ain't I, Sal-lee?"

Sally was marching grandly up and down the barrack-like dormitory, holding Betsy's hand, the train of her "ermine robe" upheld by the two other little girls in faded gingham, and her dramatically deepened voice was chanting "verses" which she had composed on other such occasions and to which she was now adding, when the door was thrown open and a booming voice rang out:

"Sally Ford! What in the world does this mean? On a Saturday morning!"

The two little "pages" dropped the "ermine robe"; the little "princess" shrank closer against the "queen" and all four, Sally's voice leading the chorus, chanted in a monotonous sing-song: "Good morning, Mrs. Stone. We hope you are well." It was the good morning salutation which, at the matron's orders, invariably greeted her as she made her morning rounds of the state orphanage asylum.

"Good morning, children," Mrs. Stone, the head matron of the asylum, answered severely but automatically. She never spoke except severely, unless it happened that a trustee or a visitor accompanying her. "As a punishment for playing at your work you will spend an hour of your Saturday afternoon play-time in the weaving room. And Betsy, if I find your weaving all snarled up like it was last Saturday I'll lock you in the dark room without any supper. You're a great big girl, nearly six and a half years old, and you have to learn to work to earn your board and keep. As for you, Sally—well, I'm surprised at you! I thought I could depend on you better than this. Sixteen years old and still acting like a child and getting the younger children into trouble. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Sally Ford?"

"Yes, Mrs. Stone," Sally answered meekly, her face that of a little old woman again; but her hands trembled as she gathered up the sheet which for a magic ten minutes had been an ermine robe.

"No, Sally," continued the



Sally

first thing you know, and then I won't have any Thelma," Sally smiled at her.

"Say, Sal-lee," Clara wheeled, "why didn't nobody ever 'dopt you? I think you're awful pretty. Sometimes it makes me feel all funny and cry-ey inside, you look so awful pretty. When you're play-actin', she amended honestly. Sally Ford moved the big brush with angry vigor, while her pale face colored a dull red. "I ain't—I mean, I'm not pretty at all, Clara. But thank you so much. I used to want to be adopted, but now I don't. I want to hurry up and get to be 18 so's I can leave the asylum and make my own living. I want—"

"But why wasn't you adopted, Sal-lee?" Betsy, the baby of the group, insisted. "You been here forever and ever, ain't you?" "Since I was four years old," Sally admitted from between lips held tight to keep them from trembling. "When I was little as you, Betsy, one of the big girls told me I was sickly and awfully thin and scrawny when I was brought in, so nobody wanted to adopt me. They don't like sickly babies," she added bitterly. "They just want fat little babies with curly hair. Seems to me like the Lord oughta made all orphans pretty with golden curly hair."

"I know why Sally wasn't 'dopted," Thelma clamored for attention. "I heard Miss Pond say it was a sin and a shame the way old Stone-Face has kept Sally here, year in and year out, just 'cause she's so good to us little kids. Miss Pond said Sally is better'n any adopted nurse when we kids get sick and that she does more work than any 'big girl' they ever had here. That's why you ain't been 'dopted, Sally."

"I know it," Sally confessed in a low voice. "But I couldn't mean to the babies, just so they'd want to look pretty a bit and let somebody adopt me. Besides," she added, "I'm scared of people—outside. I'm scared of all grown-up people, especially of adopters," she blurted miserably. "I can't sashay up and down before 'em and act cute and laugh and pretend like I've got a sweet disposition and like I'm crazy about 'em. I don't look pretty a bit when the adopters send for me. I can't play-act then."

"You're bashful, Sal-lee," Clara told her shrewdly. "I'm not bashful—much, except when visitors come and we have to show off our company manners. I hate visitors! They whisper about us, call us poor little things, and talk they're better'n us."

The floor of the big room had been completely scrubbed, and was giving out a moist odor of yellow soap when Miss Pond, who worked in the office on the first floor of the big main building, arrived leading a reluctant little girl by the hand. To the four orphans in faded blue and white gingham the newcomer looked unbelievably splendid, more like the "princess" that Betsy had been impersonating than like a mortal child. Her golden hair hung in precisely arranged curls to her shoulders. Her dress was of pink crepe de chine, trimmed with many yards of cream-colored lace. There were pink silk socks and little white kid slippers. And her pretty face,

though it was streaked with tears, had been artfully coated with white powder and tinted, on cheeks and lips, with carmine rouge.

"This is Eloise Durant, girls," said Miss Pond, who was incurably sentimental and kind to orphans. "She's feeling a little homesick now and I know you'll all try to make her happy. You'll take charge of her, won't you, Sally dear?"

"Yes, Miss Pond," Sally answered automatically, but her arms were already yearning to gather the little bundle of elegance and tears and homesickness.

"And Sally," Miss Pond said nervously, lowering her voice in the false hope that the weeping child might not hear her. "Mrs. Stone says her hair must be washed and then braided, like the other children's. Eloise tells us it isn't naturally curly, that her mother did it up on kid curlers every night. Her aunt's been doing it for her since her mother—"

"I don't want to be an orphan," the new one protested passionately, a white-slipped foot flying out suddenly and kicking Miss Pond on the shin.

It was then that Sally took charge. She knelt, regardless of frantic, kicking little feet, and put her arms about Eloise Durant. She began to whisper to the terror-stricken child, and Miss Pond scurried away, her kind eyes brimming with tears, her kind heart swelling with impractical plans for finding luxurious homes and incredibly kind foster parents for all the orphans in the asylum—but especially for those with golden curly hair and blue eyes. For Miss Pond was a born "adopter," with all the typical adopter's prejudices and preferences.

When scarcely two minutes after the noon dinner bell had clanged deafeningly, hundreds of little girls and big girls in faded blue and white gingham came tumbling from every direction, to halt and form a decorous procession just outside the dining hall doors, Sally and her new little charge were among them. But only the sharp eyes of the other orphans could have detected that the child who clung forlornly to Sally's hand was a newcomer. The golden curls had disappeared, and in their place were two short yellow braids, the ends tied with bits of old shoestring. The small face, scrubbed clean of its powder and rouge, was as pale as Sally's. And instead of lace-trimmed pink crepe de chine, silk socks and white kid slippers, Eloise was clad, like every other orphan, in a skimpy frock of faded gingham, coarse black stockings and heavy black shoes.

And when the marching procession of orphans had distributed itself before long, backless benches, tables covered with torn, much-scrubbed white cloth, Eloise, coached in that ritual as well as in many others sacred in the institution, piped up with all the others, her voice as monotonous as theirs:

"Our heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this food and for all the other blessings, Thou giveth us."

Sally Ford, keeping a watchful, pitying eye on her new charge, who was only nibbling at the unappetizing food, found herself looking upon the familiar scene with the eyes of the frightened little new orphan. It was a game that Sally

Ford often played—imagining herself someone else, seeing familiar things through eyes which had never beheld them before.

"Because Eloise was a 'new girl,'" Sally was permitted to keep her at her side after the noon dinner. It was Sally who showed her all the buildings of the big orphanage, pointed out the boys' dormitories, separated from the girls' quarters by the big kitchen garden; showed her the bare schoolrooms, in which Sally herself had just completed the third year of high school. It was Sally who proudly showed her the meagerly equipped gymnasium, the gift of a miraculously philanthropic session of the state legislature; it was Sally who conducted her through the many rooms devoted to hand crafts suited to girls—showing off a bit as she expertly manipulated a hand loom or ran a quick seam on a sewing machine.

Eloise's hot little hand clung tightly to Sally's on the long trip of inspection of her new "home." But her cry, hopeless and monotonous now, even taking on a little of the institutional whine, was still the same heartbroken protest she had uttered upon her arrival in the dormitory: "I don't want to be an orphan! I don't want to be an orphan! Sal-lee!"

"It ain't—I mean, isn't—so bad," Sally comforted her. "Sometimes we have lots of fun. And Christmas is awful nice. Every girl gets an orange and a little sack of candy and a present. And we have turkey for dinner, and ice cream."

"My mamma gave me candy every day," Eloise whimpered. "Her men friends bring it to her—boxes and boxes of it, and flowers, too. God was mean to let her die, and make an orphan out of me!"

And because Sally herself had frequently been guilty of the same sinful thought, she hurried Eloise, without rebuking her, to the front lawn which always made visitors exclaim. "Why, how pretty! And so homelike! Aren't the poor little things fortunate to have such a beautiful home?"

For the front lawn, upon which no orphan was allowed to set foot except in company with a lawn-mower or a clipping shears, was beautiful. Now, in early June, it lay in the sun like an immense carpet, dotted with round or star-shaped beds of bright flowers. From the front, the building looked stately and grand, too, with its clean red bricks and its big, fluted white pillars. They were the only two orphans in sight, except a pair of overalled boys, their two heads bare to the hot sun, their lean arms, bare to the shoulders in their ragged shirts, pushing steadily against whirling lawnmowers.

"Oh, nasturtiums!" Eloise crowed, the first happy sound she had made since entering the orphanage. She broke from Sally's grasp, sped down the cement walk, then plunged into the lush greenness of that vast velvet carpet, entirely unconscious that she was committing one of the major crimes of the institution.

Sally, after a stunned moment, sped after her, calling out breathlessly: "Don't do that to the flowers, Eloise! We ain't allowed to touch the flowers! They'll skin you alive!"

But Eloise had already broken the stem of a flaming orange and red nasturtium and was cuddling it against her cheek.

"Put it back, honey," Sally begged,

EYES OF STATE TURN TO CITY CAGE TOURNEY

Sixteen Regional Winners Start Friday in Tilts for Title.

PROVIDE POLICE GUARD

Special Bus Service From Circle to Butler Gym Is Arranged.

Be there a Hoosier youth with heart so dead he does not know that the finals of the seventeenth State high school basketball tournament begins in the Butler University Field House here Friday at 9 a. m.?

The hopes and hearts of several hundred thousand Indiana high school students and older fans centered toward Indianapolis today as sixteen high school basketball teams and their hordes of followers made final preparations for the climax of the State's great winter pastime.

As the advance ranks began to arrive today, Indianapolis made final moves to welcome the visitors and enjoy the event herself.

Police Chief Claude M. Worley announced that police will work twelve-hour shifts Friday and Saturday.

Assign 75 Policemen

Seventy-five officers will be assigned to handle traffic and crowds at and near the gym.

"Efficiency and courtesy will be our slogan. The police will leave nothing undone to make the stay of the visitors happy," Worley said.

The new Butler Field House, which will hold 15,000 fans, is located at Sunset Ave. and Forty-Ninth St.

Police and tourney officials advised that the best motor routes to the scene from the downtown section are out Capitol Ave., Meridian or Illinois Sts. and west on Forty-Ninth St.

No motor traffic will be permitted on Forty-Ninth St., west of Capitol Ave.

The end of the Illinois-Fairview street car leaves passengers six blocks from the gym. Those taking a Central Ave.-Meridian Heights car to Forty-Ninth St. are four blocks from their destination.

Butler University officials declared everything has been done to put the field house stands and playing floor in excellent condition.

Reinforcing of the stands has guarded against a repetition of the collapse such as occurred at the Butler-Notre Dame game a week ago Wednesday, they said.

The bleachers have been finally approved by the city building department, according to Fred W. Connell, board of safety president. "We have taken every precaution to prevent recurrence of last week's accident at the State cage tourney and engineers are confident that the temporary bleachers are safe for Indiana's youth. The university complied with the order of the city in every way. Parents of Indiana high school youths need have no fear of sending their children to the State meet," said Connell.

herself committing the unpardonable sin of walking on the grass. "There isn't any place at all you could hide it, and if you carried it in your hand you'd get a licking sure. But don't you cry, Eloise. I'll tell you a fairy story in play hour this afternoon."

The two, Sally's heart already swelling with the sweet pain of having found a new child to mother, Eloise's tear-red eyes sparkling with anticipation, were hurrying up the path that led around the main building to the weaving rooms in which Sally was to work an extra hour as punishment for her morning's "play-acting," when Clara Hodges came shrieking from behind the building.

"Sal-lee! Sal-lee Ford! Mrs. Stone wants you. In the office!" she added, her voice dropping slightly on a note of horror.

"What for?" Sally pretended grown up unconcern, but her face, which had been pretty and glowing a moment before, was dull and institutional and sullen again.

"They's a man—a farmer man—talking to Stone-Face," Clara whispered, her eyes furtive and mean as they darted about to see if she were overheard. "Oh, Sal-lee, don't let 'em 'dopt you! We wouldn't have nobody to play for us and tell us stories! Please, Sal-lee! Make faces at him when Stone-Face isn't looking so he won't like you!"

"I'm too big to be adopted," Sally reassured her. "Nobody wants to adopt a 16-year-old girl. Here, you take Eloise to the weaving room with you."

Her voice was that of a managing, efficient, albeit loving mother, but when she turned toward the front steps of the main building her feet began to drag heavily, weighted with a fear which was reflected in her bloodshot eyes, and in the deepened pallor of her cheeks. But, oh, maybe it wasn't that! Why did she always have to worry about that—that was she 16? Why couldn't she expect something perfectly lovely—like a father coming to claim his long-lost daughter? Maybe there'd be a mother, too.

The vision Sally Ford had conjured up fastened wings to her feet. She was breathless, glowing, when she arrived at the closed door of the dread "office."

(To Be Continued)

The event which changes the course of Sally Ford's life takes place in the next chapter.

No Booze Tax

In filling out his Federal income tax report, one northern Indiana man clearly explained his stand on the Volstead act, according to George L. Foote, collector of internal revenue. At the bottom of the tax blank was written:

"I protest use of this money in enforcement of the prohibition law."

More than \$800,000 was collected from income tax payers Tuesday and a larger sum was expected today, Foote said.

Midnight, Thursday, is the final time for paying the Federal tax without penalty.

LIFE ON VENUS HELD POSSIBLE

Dietz Says Chance Greater Than on Mars.

Possibilities of the planet Venus being inhabited probably are greater than the possibilities of life on the planet Mars, David Dietz, Scripps-Howard Science Editor and Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, told students at Shortridge High School today.

Dietz presented an illustrated lecture upon the subject of astronomy, entitled "A Trip Through the Universe," before 2,000 students.

"Most astronomers are of the opinion that our earth is the only inhabited planet in the solar system," Dietz continued.

"Measurements made with the thermocouple, a very delicate electrical thermometer, indicate that the planet Venus is probably as warm as the earth, or twice as warm."

"But the planet Venus is surrounded with such heavy clouds that astronomers have been unable to see its surface."

"If these clouds are so dense that sunlight can not penetrate them, then the planet must be lifeless, because life as we know it is not possible without sunlight," he said. Stereoscopic slides used by Dietz to illustrate his lecture included pictures of the moon, sun, planets, stars and nebulae.

A daily column on science written by Dietz will appear in The Times, starting Monday.

SPEEDWAY WILL HAVE SCHOOL, BOARD RULES

Bond Issue Hearing Leads to Decision.

Speedway City, recently incorporated as a town, will have its own school, the State tax board has ruled as a result of the hearing held by it on petition of Wayne Township citizens for permission to issue a \$90,000 bond issue to be used in the erection of additions to three schools, at Speedway City, Bridgeport and Ellettsburg.

Citizens of Speedway City remonstrated to the issue, saying that if it were permitted it would cut down the bonding power of the new town. Investigation revealed that the township school at Speedway City was in the heart of the new town. The tax board ruled that if the school is in the heart of the city it must be purchased by the new community.

Appraisal of the valuation of the school will be made by three persons, one selected by the township trustee, Vestal H. Davis; another by the town, and the third by the State board of accounts. Hearing on the bond issue will be held again on March 26.

MAN WHO SUED SELF FACES COURT CONTEST

Woman's Heirs File Answer Unique Case at Wabash.

By Times Special

WABASH, Ind., March 15.—Didrick S. Korporal learns that he can't even sue himself without somebody objecting.

Recently Korporal, as a private citizen, sued himself for \$2,125 as administrator of the estate of Mary Korporal, claiming the money was due him in payment for care given her while she was insane.

Heirs of Mary Korporal have filed an answer in the one-man suit, declaring the administrator did not work around decedent's home as operated her farm several years without making an accounting.

TEN ADMITTED TO BAR

Indianapolis Association Receives New Members.

Several attorneys were admitted to membership in the Indianapolis Bar Association at a meeting Wednesday afternoon in Circuit Court. They are: Paul Rhoads, deputy prosecutor; Clyde H. Jones, D. M. Patrick, Thomas C. Batchelor, Ray H. Briggs, Wilbur H. Royse, Alfred H. Berman, Maurice L. Mendenhall, Joseph Sexton and Rae W. Powell.

A standing committee on amendment of laws headed by William A. Piekens, was instructed by President Emory W. Johnson to prepare recommendations to the Legislature.

CITY METAL MEN ELECT

Homer Selch was elected president of the Indianapolis Sheet Metal and Warm Air Heating Contractors Association at the organization's headquarters, 431 S. Delaware St., Wednesday night.

Other officers chosen were: Charles M. Sigmon, vice president; Harry Peterson, secretary, and Michael Gray, treasurer.

Brandt Downey of the Central Lien Company spoke on "A Standard Form of Contract for the Association." State President W. S. Waters lead a discussion on cutting down overhead costs.

PROBE BEGUN IN CHICAGO ON OIL DONATIONS

Lumberman and Secretary for Wrigley Called to Tell of Bonds.

ROY WEST SUMMONED

Many Middle West Party Leaders Will Face Senate Quiz.

BY C. C. NICOLET

CHICAGO, March 15.—A subcommittee of the Senate Teapot Dome investigating committee came to Chicago today in search of the trail of \$60,000 in Liberty bonds.

Edward Hines, wealthy lumberman, was called as the first witness. Senator Nye (Rep.), North Dakota, and Norbeck (Rep.), South Dakota, arrived from Washington this morning to conduct the hearing, held in a Federal courtroom.

Many of the forty-three witnesses summoned by the committee were out of the city. Thomas E. Wilson, packer; E. F. Carey, president of the Pullman Company, and George F. Getz, co-promoter of the Dempsey-Tunney fight here last September, were in the courtroom waiting to testify.

Political Leaders Called

Roy O. West, secretary of the Republican national committee, and Homer Galpin, chairman of the Cook County Republican committee, were added today to the list of witnesses subpoenaed. James Conroy, coal dealer, also was asked to testify.

Hines said he contributed to the Republican national committee in 1920. He was not sure of the amount, but thought \$2,000 was about right.

He said fire in his lumber offices destroyed all his records previous to the fall of 1924, and he had no records of contributions in 1921, 1922, 1923 or before October of 1924.

He said he contributed \$5,000 on Oct. 8, 1924, and \$500 on Oct. 24. He did not remember a \$1,000 contribution in 1921, 1922 or 1923.

Hines at times had possessed Liberty bonds, but never had received any from Upham, Harry F. Sinclair, Col. Robert E. Stewart, chairman of the Board of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, or any other prominent Republican, he said.

Attended no Conference

Hines said he attended no conference in 1923 at which a Republican party deficit was discussed. The second witness was William Henry Stanley, secretary to William Wrigley, Jr., who offered records of contributions of \$1,000 and \$25,000 to the Republican national committee by Wrigley in September and October, 1920. Stanley said he handled all Wrigley's personal finances and securities.

Stanley said the chewing gum magnate contributed to the G. O. P. \$10,000 in September, 1922, and \$10,000 later in the year. There was no contribution in 1923, but \$25,000 was contributed in June, 1924, he added.

"Do you know whether Mr. Wrigley was reimbursed for any of his contributions," asked Nye.

"I know he was not," said the witness.

Wrigley formerly owned Liberty bonds of the 3 1/2 per cent issue, which included Sinclair's \$50,000 allotment, he said. He promised to provide the serial numbers later, for comparison with the Sinclair bond numbers.

Reynolds Denies Knowledge

Isaac Mayer, attorney for both Wrigley and George M. Reynolds, asked permission to make a statement.

Mayer read a telegram from Reynolds, president of the Continental National Bank, Chicago, who is in California, in which Reynolds said he knew "nothing whatever of any nature or character concerning the Sinclair bonds which I note by the press the committee is trying to trace."

"I never saw or heard of any of these bonds," the telegram said. "I never was approached by anyone upon the subject of these bonds in any way or form."

John F. Jelke Jr., president of the John F. Jelke Company, testified in lieu of his father, who was out of the city.

The elder Jelke contributed \$300 to the Republican national committee in 1922, and \$2,300 in 1924, but made no contribution in 1923, the son testified.

SELFISH BUSINESS PAYS

Speaker Says Interest in Worker Really Rewards Firm.

Modern business is honestly selfish and is not afraid to say so, Floyd A. Allen, assistant to the president of the General Motors Corporation, declared Wednesday at the Kiwanis Club luncheon at the Claypool.

Corporations have learned that it pays to take an interest in the employee, his family, the community and the things which go to make human happiness, he said.

CARTER TO QUIT POST

Public Service Commission Engineer Will Retire April 1.

No successor has been selected for Earl Carter, chief engineer of the Public Service Commission, who has handed in his resignation effective April 1, in order to enter private consulting work.

Carter has been with the commission since 1917, when he became assistant to H. O. Garman. He succeeded the latter six years ago.