

HIGH, WIDE AND HANDSOME starring IRENE DUNNE and RANDOLPH SCOTT NOVELIZED BY HENRY LACOSSITT

CHAPTER I

Sally knew that she sang and danced as never before. There was something about this country, this Western Pennsylvania, that got you. It was a sturdy country with sturdy people, who knew they were building toward a great nation. For this was 1859 and the United States of America was still young.

Here in Pennsylvania the Dutch and English and Irish farmers were wrestling a new empire from the Alleghenies. They looked as if they were conscious of their strength; they radiated vitality.

Sally, fired a little by their spirit, danced and sang with greater verve and abandon. No matter if she was just a performer in her father's "Doctor" Watterson, he called himself—tawdry medicine show; no matter if Mac, their helper and general factotum, would presently appear disguised as an Indian and perform ridiculous contortions on the platform beside her to advertise the "famous," if entirely fake, "Indian Wizard Oil!"—Sally felt all at once more important than ever before. She knew, in that moment that she was beautiful, that her blue eyes sparkled, that her figure was the personification of grace as she danced. She sang:

"High, wide 'n' handsome, I'm ridin' wide 'n' high. Run, if I horse, run, Wish you was a bird so you could fly...."

The crowd stirred by her mood, joined, for it was a familiar lyric. Beside her, Doc Watterson, burlesque of elegance in stovepipe hat, frock coat and carrying a stick, beamed. It looked like good business, here in Titusville.

Sally finished her dance and Doc began his spiel:

"This little girl with the golden voice and twinklin' toes is my daughter. Once a pale and sickly child, weak in the limbs—until she started to take Indian Wizard Oil!"

It was familiar to Sally. She stood smiling and looking over the crowd and then her eyes widened, her smile faltered a little. Looking squarely at her from where he sat in a buggy, a young man grinned at her. Beside him, an old lady looked at her with frank disapproval, but in the man's eyes was a look of wonder and admiration.

It pleased her because he was, she could see, long of limb and broad and he had a noble head on his shoulders, and she smiled back, but the next instant she was alarmed.

A teamster, pulling up beside the buggy, almost upset it with his wagon. The young man turned, eyes flashing anger, and rose in the seat.

"Hey, Scanton!" he shouted. "Watch where you're goin'!"

The teamster, a lowering man, with hard eyes, spat.

"D'you Cortlandts think you own the whole square?"

"No," said Sally's young man, "but you could 'a asked me. I would 'a pulled over."

"Well pull over now!"

It was at once a threat and a command. Sally's heart caught.

"Not an inch!" said the man in the buggy.

It might have developed and the people in the square sensed it, for they turned from the wagon behind the fight, but at that moment Mac made his entrance. I was indeed startling.

With a screeching warwhoop and bedecked with feathers and fringes, he sprang from the wagon behind the platform to the front of the stage and began what he thought was a savage dance. The astounded spectators, including the two principals in the argument watched him, while Doc began his spiel again.

Sally disappeared into the wagon. Her thoughts were on the smiling man in the buggy as she pattered about the stove, preparing dinner, for that was another of her duties. She had a few minutes before she must appear again on the platform. But she was curious. The young man in the buggy....

She pulled aside the curtain by the stove and looked out. The man in the buggy was watching Mac and listening to her father's scold oratory, but something diverted his attention and he looked her way. Again their eyes locked and a slow nice grin came over his face. It was a nice face, ruggedly handsome and a half-smile started at the corners of Sally's mouth. Then she remembered herself. It really wasn't right.

With a show of anger, she yanked yanked it so violently that it fell across the curtain across the window again, yanked it so violently that it fell across the stove—but Sally didn't notice that. She was confused by her emotions, by the young man in the buggy stirred her. And she did not notice, as her father recalled her to the platform, that the curtain began to smoke a little.

Outside again, the crowd had been whipped to an excited curiosity. With Mac, Sally went among them, distributing the bottles of oil.

"My daughter is a ministering angel," declared her father. "The oil is free. Just twenty-five cents for the bottle. You wouldn't expect us to give away the bottle too—would you now?"

Curious, the people took the bottles, uncorking them, sniffing the contents. Sally, passing the teamster, the one who had started the trouble a moment before, handed him one. Insolently, he gripped her wrist, held it.

"Thanks," he said, leering. "Ye're the best lookin' ministerin' angel I ever see."

She jerked away, hurried to the next rig, but was mortified to discover that it belonged to the young man with the smile. And again they stared, his smile quizzical. And though Sally knew she should hurry on she lingered, fighting back her own smile. She was startled when the old lady said:

"Hand me a bottle, young woman, long's it's free."

Sally handed it up, but the young man intercepted it. "I'll take it grand-ma," he said. He uncorked it, sniffed

it, grinned down at Sally. His eyes twinkled.

"Why," he said, "this is nothin' but rock oil—just plain Pennsylvania rock oil, lady."

Sally's eyes blazed. "You don't know what you're talking about!" "Oh yes I do," said the hateful young man. "It seeps right through the ground around here. Just ordinary oil. Guess I oughta know."

"You oughta know!" she declared. "How would you know anything? Why you—you—How dare you—"

She probably couldn't have finished anyway; but just at that moment a shrill voice sounded over the square.

"Godalmighty!" it screamed. "The wagon! it's afire!"

Sally's curtain had caught.

Immediately following the scream, the wagon burst into flames. Sick with

anxiety, Sally ran through the milling crowd to the platform, started through the door into the blazing wagon. The flames drove her back. But there were things in there. Her father and Mac—Mac was Indian no longer, but just excited Irishman now—were fighting the fire, but someone had to save those things—her best dress, her father's Sunday shirt—everything they owned in the world that meant anything to them was in there.

Frantic, she started again, reached the door, when arms caught her, lifted her. She looked up into the serious, concerned eyes of the man in the buggy. And even in that moment she felt that they were curiously protective arms. Yet she struggled.

"Let me go!" she screamed. "Let me go! I—Oh I hate you!" Behind her the wagon blazed fiercely.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

Laketon

MRS. MARIE OBERST CORRESPONDENT

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Cobleigh visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Crispell Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Marion Ide of Benton visited Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Booth on Sunday afternoon.

Jackson

MRS. GUS SPLITT CORRESPONDENT

Mrs. Sarah Ashton celebrated her 82nd birthday on Friday.

Bert Smith is recovering at his home after being seriously ill.

Mr. and Mrs. John Shultes are rejoicing over the arrival of a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Bonning and children spent Sunday at Dushore.

Warner Franklin of Allentown spent Saturday with his brother Norman.

Mrs. Corey Smith entertained the Jackson Ladies' Aid Wednesday of last week.

Mrs. Jerry Kester of Hillside spent Sunday with her daughter, Mrs. Corey Smith.

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Cease entertained the young married people's club on Thursday night.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Reakes entertained relatives from New Jersey over the week end.

Mrs. Fred Shouldice will entertain the Jackson Ladies' Aid the first Wednesday in December.

Miss Freda Shouldice of Kingston spent Sunday with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Shouldice.

Mr. and Mrs. Newell Kester of Trucksville spent Sunday of last week at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Spitt.

Mrs. George Russ, Martha and George, Jr. of Fernbrook, visited Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Spitt on Saturday evening.

Mrs. W. D. Cease was guest of honor at a surprise birthday party at her home Saturday evening, November 6, the occasion being her 79th birthday.

If all the land in the United States were to be equally divided, there would be between sixteen and seventeen acres for each inhabitant.

PHOTO-FLASHES of the Week

Collage of photos with captions: R.A.F. Fire Fighting Demonstrations, Eagle Becomes Odd Pet, London, England—The sort of shoe that shoemakers dream about, There is Cedar Wallpaper, Bull's-Eyes, Cook-Books Vie With Radio Scripts, Hollywood in Sports, On the Gridiron, Hair Styles for Women, Dictatorship in the Air, Test of Fire.