

THE EVENING TIMES-STAR, SAINT JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, APRIL 20, 1925

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## LIFTED TO STARDOM WITHOUT HAVING SOUGHT FILM CAREER

Sally O'Neil, Ordered to West by Doctor, Stumbles Into Limelight.

HOLLYWOOD, April 18.—Six months ago Sally O'Neil was a school girl with no greater ambition than to graduate with honors.

Today she is playing a motion picture role written and at first destined for the screen's most noted actress, Mary Pickford.

Also there is the prediction of Marshall Neilan, famous director, that in a surprisingly short time she will be one of the outstanding stars.

"It all seems too wonderful to be true," declares this pretty 17-year-old girl.

"Just a couple of weeks ago I had never been inside a studio, or had any hopes of seeing the inside of one."

"And now all this—oh, I just can't tell you how enthusiastic I am."

Hero of this modern Cinderella story is Chance, Fate, Kismet or what you will. Thousands of girls—extra-hammer daily at the studio gates vainly seeking the chance that came to her unsought.

Not Sally. She was never in an extra line, or peeping through a acting director's window.

Fate Takes Hand.

Born in Bayonne, N. J., in 1908, first name of the future shadowland celebrity was Chotile Noonan. Her father, now dead, was T. F. Noonan, ex-judge of the State Supreme Court.

After usual preliminary education, Chotile entered the convent of Notre Dame, New York City, and was there until fate—in the nature of heart trouble—took a hand.

"Winters here are too rigorous for

## Fate Kind To Sally



DOCTOR ORDERS HER WEST, SHE STUMBLES INTO LIMELIGHT

you," the doctor told her. "Go west."

She did, choosing Los Angeles.

Pending the time when her health would permit her to re-enter school, Miss Noonan decided to see Los Angeles. Amongst other places was one of the city's best known hotel ballrooms.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Chotile, Marshall Neilan had struck a snag in motion-picture production.

She Qualifies.

Agreement had been reached, some months previous, for Neilan to direct Mary Pickford in a play he had himself written.

But at the last minute Miss Pickford

decided upon another story and another director, so Neilan found himself with a perfectly good story and a great ambition to screen it. All he lacked was a heroine.

Fate again stepped in by sending Neilan and his wife, Blanche Sweet, to the same ballroom on the same night Miss Noonan was there.

She danced by the table of the director and his wife.

"The very girl," said Miss Sweet.

"You took the words from my lips," replied Neilan.

The next day a film test was taken and passed by Miss Noonan—now become Sally O'Neil—with high honors.

## Ben Hur Film Will Have Cost, \$3,000,000 When Completed

BY LINCOLN QUARBERG  
United Press Staff Correspondent  
HOLLYWOOD, April 18.—More than \$2,000,000 has been lavished the last 12 months on the filming of "Ben

Hur" in Rome, Italy, and today the picture is back in the throes of production at Hollywood.

Fully another six months with an additional outlay of \$1,000,000 will be required to complete the picture of General Lew Wallace's famous novel. It is estimated by officials of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, producers.

The entire "Ben Hur" company has returned to Hollywood from the Eternal City where many of the scenes were filmed, admittedly under difficulties. Directors, players and cameramen are working overtime to speed production and retrieve lost time; the picture is ready for release to the public.

In the returning troupe were Roman Navarro, who plays the part of Ben Hur; May McAvoy, who portrays the role of Esther; Carmel Myers, the exotic and passionate Iras; Francis X. Bushman, interpreter of the mighty Messala; Kathleen Key, who plays Tirzah; Claire McDowell, in the role of Ben Hur's mother, and Nigel de Bruin, as Simoes, the hunch slave.

No Political Troubles.

Director Fred Niblo, who brought the players back to the States, denied on his return that the political situation in Italy and labor troubles with Italian workmen had interfered with progress of the picture in Rome.

"The weather was not favorable in Italy and it would have delayed our production plans several months had we remained in Rome to complete the picture," he said.

"The Italian government offered us every co-operation and we employed thousands of Roman workmen and extras for some of the most important and picturesque scenes of the production."

Niblo added, however, that the Italian workmen were somewhat slow as compared to Hollywood's expert technical crews and that the elaborate sets and structures required as background for the various Roman settings were not constructed as rapidly as expected.

Expenses mounted rapidly, too, it was pointed out, when the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer company was compelled to lease 400 acres of ground upon which to build the exterior sets, including the Jopa Gate of Jerusalem, the Tribunal, Jerusalem streets and

city, and the Circus Maximus, where a portion of the chariot race was filmed.

Blacks Imported.

Other items which drew heavily on the producers' exchequer included the importation of 40 black men and women from Tripoli, North Africa; a caravan of camels from the heart of Egypt; 20,000 costumes from Berlin and the building of a veritable fleet of galley ships for the Roman naval battle which was filmed at Leghorn, a seacoast town jutting into the Mediterranean.

The final million, however, will be spent in America, and the Arizona desert will provide a setting for the most thrilling portion of the chariot race.

But the question remains, will movie fans pay more than \$3,000,000 to see the story on the screen and assure a profit for the film producers?

## N. Y. HIPPODROME TO BE DEMOLISHED

World's Largest Playhouse to Give Place to 15-story Bank Building.

NEW YORK, April 20.—The Hippodrome, after 20 years still the world's largest playhouse, will be torn to New York as a result of a real estate deal which will transfer the Sixth avenue block to a leading Wall street banking house before the end of the week.

According to reports, the building will be demolished after the B. F. Keith lease expires in October, 1926, and replaced by a 15-story bank and office building.

A price of \$4,000,000 is reported for the theatre and the site, which 20 years ago represented an investment of \$2,700,000.

The theatre has a 200-foot frontage in Sixth avenue and 240 feet on each side street. It was said that the proposed building of a subway under Sixth avenue and the prospects of removing the "L" structure had decided the fate of the building, and that this time the sale of the property would go through without a hitch.

## Tom Mix Sees London Mayor

LONDON, April 20.—Tom Mix, American movie actor, visited the Mansion House, official home of the Lord Mayor of London, and presented that dignitary with a five-gallon sombrero, similar to the one he recently gave Governor Smith of New York.

Mix also presented the Lord Mayor's wife with a Mexican blanket. After an hour's visit in the Mansion House Mix went to the Tower of London.

Crowds of London's ardent admirers of the cowboy, but were somewhat disappointed when he negotiated the maze of traffic in the vicinity of the Mansion House and the Bank of England in an automobile instead of astride his famous pony.

ORPHANS ENTERTAINED.

Sixty children from the New Brunswick Protestant orphanage were entertained on Saturday evening by the Excelsior Class in St. Andrew's church. Special cars took them to the church, where supper was served and games played.

Miss Helen MacKay was convener and was assisted by Misses Sylvia Ferguson, Helen Woodrow, Agnes Montgomery, Isabelle Walker, Jessie and Annie Porteous, Jean Douglas, Myrtle Megarity, Eileen McAllister and Marion Earle Mrs. Herman Sullivan.

557 PASSENGERS LAND.

HALIFAX, April 20.—The Cunard liner Laconia, White Star liner Doric, Swedish-American liner Stockholm, and North German Lloyd liner Lutzow docked at Halifax over the weekend to land 557 passengers, mostly for places in Ontario, and Western Canada.

Want a Job? Use the want, ad. page.

## Pauline Garon Explains Why She Smokes Pipe

Pauline Garon of the younger set of screen stars, caused at least a mild tremor in Hollywood when she quit cigarettes and took to smoking a pipe.

Some of the older stars flipped the ashes from their monogrammed cigarettes and registered horror when the actress appeared on the set with a man-sized briar which she smoked with perfect unconcern. Others, however, failed to record even a temporary shock.

"It's merely because I like a pipe and there's less danger of fire with one," explained the actress. A cigarette is more apt to burn the end of one's dressing table or set fire to the things hanging on the wall.

"It may look funny at first, but I expect girls will be smoking pipes soon just like the men. Why not?"

THUR.—FRI.—SAT.

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MARY ROBERTS RHINEHART'S Hospital Love-Tangle Mystery

## "K--THE UNKNOWN"

NURSE SIDNEY PAGE, HER HEART FILLED BY DREAD, stood before the closed door of a hospital operating room where the man whose wife she had promised to become lay, his life dependent upon the surgical skill of a famous man.

Intruding into her sorrow came another woman from whose tear-stained face stared agony of soul and from whose teeth-whitened lips came babbling facts that changed Sidney Page's dread to horror—the man she was to have wed had been shot while coming from a secret rendezvous with the woman who crowded for place of vantage before the door. Then the story grows more complex.

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