INSTALLMENT 17

Dusty King and Lew Gordon had built up a vast string of ranches. King was killed by his powerful and unscrupulous competitor, Ben Thorpe. Bill Roper, King's adopted son, was determined to avenge his death in spite of the opposi-

CHAPTER XXII—Continued Jim Leathers, in spite of his warning to Kane, made no effort to move out of the light. Standing square in the door, he drew his gun. A bullet splintered into the casing beside him as the report of a carbine sounded from somewhere beyond. Jim Leathers fired twice; then stepped inside, closed and barred the heavy

For a moment the eyes of Kane and Leathers questioned each other. "Dry Camp Pierce," Kane said.

"Naturally." "If it don't beat hell that they should land in at just this minute-" Leathers was very cool and quiet now. Deliberately he pulled on his sheepskin. "Get out the back, untie the ponies and get your man

aboard.' "Jim, seems like we stand a better chance here, way we are, than running in the open, what with-" "They'll burn us out if we try to

hold. Get going, you!" Dragging Roper after him, Kane plunged into the dark of the back room. He swore as he rummaged for his rifle, his sheepskin.

Leathers neither swore nor hurried. Moving deliberately, he blew out one lamp, hobbled across the room to the other. Then all hell broke loose at once.

The single frosted pane of the teninch window at the end of the room smashed out with a brittle ring of falling glass. In the black aperture appeared the face of a boy, pale and wild-eyed, so young-looking that he might almost have been called a child. The heavy .44 with which he had smashed the window thrust through the broken pane; it blazed out heavily, twice.

Jim Leathers, staggering backwards as if he had been hit with a log ram, fired once, from the level of his belt. The face vanished, but a moment after it was gone the hand that held the gun dangled limp within the room. Then the gun thudded on the floor, and the lifeless hand disappeared.

As Leathers went down, a broken roar of guns broke out in the storeroom. Leathers groped for his gun, tried to rise, but could not.

Roper, who had been dragged into the dark storeroom by Red Kane, felt the swift sting of the wind as the back door was smashed open, and was able to tear free as the guns began. He stumbled over piled sacks, and flattened himself against the wall. The blind blasting in the dark of the back room lasted long enough for three guns to empty themselves. Their smashing voices fell silent with an odd suddenness. as suddenly as they had opened. In the dark a voice said, "In God's name let's have a light!"

After what seemed a long time a match flared uncertainly, and Roper's quick glance estimated the changed situation. In the back room now two men were down—Red Kane he said, "Now you go and keep Miss ing for which she groped. In the and another whom Roper immediately recognized as an old King-Gordon cowboy called Old Joe.

The dim flicker of the match was augmented to a steady glow as a lantern was found and lighted. Roper did not recognize the other man in the room-the cowboy who had lighted the lantern with one hand, send him back, with some trumpedhis smoking six-gun still ready in the other.

The stranger stooped over Old Joe. "You hurt bad?"

"It's only my laig, my laig." The other stepped over the inert here." body of Kane to the door, and surveyed the silent kitchen.

Leathers, and got him hard!" He stepped back into the rear "You're Bill Roper, aren't

you? Where's the others?'

"There aren't any others. They all went out on Dry Camp's trail, after his raid day before yesterday.' "No others here? You sure?"

"Kane and Leathers are the only ones here." Old Joe, both hands clasped on

his smashed leg, spoke between set teeth. "Where's Jody? For God's sake find Jody!"

The King-Gordon cowboy whom Roper did not know, went out, his spurs ringing with his long strides. "Jody isn't here," Roper told Old Joe disgustedly. "She got loose two days ago."

"The hell she isn't here! She come here with us!"

"With you? But you're from Gordon's Red Butte camp, aren't you? I thought Jody went to Miles City with Shoshone Wilce."

"She never went to Miles. She knew Leathers was bringing you here, from what she'd heard him say. She come to us, because we was the K-G camp nearest here, and she wouldn't hear of nothing but we come and try to crack you loose. Shoshone Wilce-he's daid."

Bill Roper was dazed. "I thought

-I thought-" The other cowboy now came tramping back into the cabin, an awkward burden in his arms; and this time Jody Gordon herself followed close upon his heels. Her face was set, and the sharp flush across her cheekbones did not conceal her fatigue.

THE STORY SO FAR: tion by his sweetheart, Jody Gordon, and her father. After wiping Thorpe out of Texas. Roper conducted a great raid upon Thorpe's vast herds in Montana.

Both Thorpe and Lew Gordon placed heavy rewards upon Roper's head. He they heard the sound of running horses. Bill Roper started to say, "Jody, | downed Jim Leathers. The sobs that how on earth-"

Jody did not seem to see him; she appeared to be thinking only of the slim youngster whom the cowboy carried. The cowboy laid the limp figure on the floor of the kitchen, ripped off his own neckerchief and spread it over the youngster's face. Jody Gordon methodically shut the

door. Then she dropped to the floor beside the fallen youngster, lifted his head into her lap, and gave way to a violent sobbing. The highkeyed nervous excitement that had sustained her through the hard necessities of action was unstrung abruptly, now that her work was done; it left nothing behind it but a great weariness, and the bleak consciousness that this boy was dead because of her.

Roper and the King-Gordon cowboy stood uncertainly for a moment. Then the cowboy picked up Leathers where he lay struggling for breath, carried him into the back room and put him down on a bunk. For a moment he hesitated; then closed the door between the two rooms, leaving Jody alone.

"Seems like the kid got Jim Leathers; but Jim Leathers got the

"Daid?" Old Joe asked. "Deader'n hell! Jody takes it aw-

The cowboy cut loose Bill Roper's

hands, and together they lifted Old



Gordon company."

Joe onto the other bunk. Roper cut Marquita free.

"Get me that kettle of water off the stove," Bill Roper ordered Marquita; and when she had brought it Gordon company for a little while." Marquita left them, closing the door behind her.

Old Joe kept talking to them in a for herself and for Bill-and somegaspy sort of way, as they did what how for that foolish house in Ogallathey could for his wound.

"The kid was scared to death to the plain. come. Jody seen that, and tried to up message or something. Naturally he seen through that and wouldn't go. Now most likely she blames rain? Where are you when their herself that he's daid. Lucky for us | guns speak? Who prays for them at that Leathers' main outfit wasn't dawn, knees down in this God-for-

"You mean just you three was going to jump the whole Leathers out- swung, lazily assured, across a 'Jim Leathers! Somebody got Jim fit, and the Walk Lasham cowboys,

> "Not three-four," Old Joe said. "Don't ever figure that girl don't the doorposts and it seemed to Jody, pull her weight. We been laying up watching her, as if Marquita were here on the hill since before dusk. She aimed we should use the same been Jody's, and that she had lost stunt you used at Fork Crick-bust now. into 'em just before daylight. Then somebody fires off a gun down here, and she loses her haid, and we come on down. It was her smashed her horse against the door, trying to bust it in. She blindfolded him with her coat-threw it over his haidand poured on whip and spur, and she bangs into the planks. Broke his neck, most like; cain't see why she wasn't killed-'

"Just you four," Roper marveled, 'were going to tackle the whole works, not even knowing how many were here?"

"We tried to tell her it couldn't be done. But you can't talk any sense into a woman, once she gets a notion in her nut."

## CHAPTER XXIII

Marquita, closing the door of the storeroom behind her, for some moments stood looking down at Jody Gordon.

Jody still sat on the floor, upon her lap the head of the boy who had



## R.A.F. Fledglings Train Here

This is John Staples of London. He is one of a hundred British boys being fashioned into pilots for the Royal Air Force at the Lakeland school of aeronautics. There are some 550 such students in the U. S. altogether, all of whom are getting expert training far from the bomb-rocked airdromes of the homeland.

was captured by Leathers and Kane,

two of Thorpe's men. Leathers' girl,

Marquita, loved Roper. She made a des-

perate but futile effort to save him. The

men were preparing to hang Roper when

convulsed her were dying off now,

leaving her deeply fatigued, and pro-

"You might as well get up now,"

American words she used. "The

got there is dead as a herring."

foundly shaken.

on . . ."

"Why?"

with this Billy Roper."

"Why do you say that?"

kind of man is not for you."

"Because I think you are in love

"Es claro," Marquita said. "It is

At first Jody Gordon did not an-

swer. But behind the softness of

Marquita's voice was a cogency as

strange as her American words-a

cogency that would not be ignored.

Here Jody found herself facing a

woman whom she could not possibly

have understood. Marquita's care-

less, even reckless mode of life, her

uncoded relationships with men-

there was not an aspect of Mar-

ery value of which Jody was aware.

Jody incorrectly believed she her-

Marquita's glance swept the room

-the bare chinked walls, the dead

boy. Her glance seemed to go be-

yond the door, where they were

dressing Old Joe's wound; beyond

the walls, to the cold wind-swept

prairie, where men still rode this

"What do you know," she said-

of Marquita seemed to have a mean-

silence that followed, it came to

Jody that the night's fighting was

not yet over, that she must still fight

la, with its tall tower overlooking

"Do you ride with them?" the

gentle, inexorable voice went on.

"Do you share their blankets? Do

you ride under their ponchos in the

Marquita paused, and her body

shadowy angle of the room toward

working now over the wounded men.

a barrier between what might have

"You don't have to bar the door,"

Marquita's hands came away from

The words were so indolently ca-

denced that they might have been

spoken in Spanish. And at their soft

assurance something awoke in Jody

Gordon . . . Something was still

worth fighting for. Perhaps it had

nothing to do with Bill Roper, but it

flowed deep into the roots of her

life: deeper than her life with one

man-with any man-could ever

As Jody looked at Marquita,

strange things came to her, that she

herself could not have put into

all her kind would presently pass.

own voice. "I guess I was wrong,"

echo of Marquita's own directness.

softly. "Si, that is what I wanted

(TO BE CONTINUED)

what you wanted to tell me?"

you to know."

flow.

the doorposts. "I know I don't."

the closed door that had hid Roper,

night, though morning was close.

"I don't understand you."

self would have died.

these men?

saken snow?"

Staples is typical of these sky fighters whose average Marquita said. Her soft Mexican slur gave an odd turn to the blunt age is 23. Air cadet Staples was given this Uncle Sam fight's over; and that boy you've bunny mascot by Florida admirers. -



Young Britons who came to America because they wanted wings to fly and fight with the Royal Air Force are shown marchplain. And it's a pity; because this ing back to the hangars after an instruction flight.



'what can you know of the lives of Over in the bomb-cratered homeland they call it "tonic," but Jody lifted her head, then, and they like the pop they get in the canteen at the Lakeland school looked at Marquita; and again the better than the home product. simple words and the mask-like face



Florida watermelon.

Left: Students who are being fashioned into sky fighters for the R. A. F. take time out for play. Cricket is tops with them.



Marching to the mess hall for breakfast.

## SEWING





You pay less for Clabber Girl but you use no more . . . Add to this Clabber Girl's half century record of perfect baking results and you will see why millions of proud homemakers use Clabber Girl, exclusively.

Order a can of Clabber Girl from your grocer today. You will be amazed when he tells you the price. You will be delighted with your baking results.

Utmost Isolation

Half way between Cape Horn

This is even more open than

not even an islet. The most re-

mote island is Kerguelen in the

southern Indian ocean. It is rough-

y 3,000 miles from the Cape of

Good Hope and nearly the same

from Cape Leeuwin in Australia.

St. Paul's island, 600 miles north

of Kerguelen, is almost equally

isolated.



BAKING POWDER

Privilege to Listen It is the province of knowledge to speak, and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.-Oliver Wendell Holmes.

