

# THE SMOKY YEARS

By ALAN LE MAY W.N.U. Release

## INSTALLMENT 19 THE STORY SO FAR:

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 opposition of his sweetheart, Jody Gordon, and

her father. Roper conducted a series of great raids upon Thorpe's vast herds, first in Texas, then in Montana. Jody was deeply shaken when Marquita, a saloon hostess, convincingly explained that Roper loved Marquita, and not her. Believing that her love was unrequited,

Jody left the man she loved. Lew Gordon finally realized that Roper was right in fighting Thorpe and Lasham, and went gunning for them. Roper met him shortly before the two gunmen appeared. This was the moment Roper had been fighting for during the smoky years.

### CHAPTER XXVI

They buried Lew Gordon at Miles City. That dot upon the northern prairie marked, in effect, the farthest north reached by that great and dramatic uprush of power which had welled up out of Texas, carving new trails, opening new vast countries, driving herds unnumbered, under the name of King-Gordon. Jody thought that her father would have wanted to lie there.

After that was done with, Jody went back to Ogallala.

All through the spring news kept trickling in. A swift bankruptcy was sweeping Thorpe's loosely grouped organizations. Wiped out of Texas by the so-called Rustlers' War, broken in the north by the Great Raid—the shaken power of Ben Thorpe crumbled fast, now that Thorpe himself was dead. A once unbeatable organization, powerful from border to border, was going down in such utter debacle as, no man could check.

And as Thorpe's power vanished into the gunsmoke in which he had died, a strange new prestige began to attach itself to the name of the man who had destroyed him. Only a little while ago Bill Roper had been an outlaw, a hunted man with a price on his head, in whose behalf few men ever dared speak a good word. But now that his enemies were down, it seemed that the whole length of the Long Trail held men who professed themselves his lifelong friends. Like coyotes after rain, Bill Roper partisans were rising up, a score here, a hundred there, where not one friend had been, during those smoky hours of his greatest need. Already men were less ready to remember what weapons he had used in fighting fire with fire than to remember simply that he had won.

Three governors had issued blanket pardons for what he might or might not have done. He could have had almost any position he wanted near the top of any one of three or four of the great cattle companies. He could have had almost anything he wanted, then.

But Bill Roper—where was he? Nobody seemed to know. His own raiders—Tex Long, Hat Crick Tommy, Dave Shannon—now swaggering wherever they pleased amid a curious acclaim, did not know. And if Dry Camp Pierce, that one most trusted of all Bill Roper's men, knew where his leader was, he held his tongue.

Jody Gordon was making every effort to find out Bill Roper's whereabouts.

The weeks passed, and the new grass came on the prairie, and still there was no word. Two or three times a week, after the first spring flowers began to show, Jody Gordon rode out to the pile of stone with its wooden cross that marked Dusty King's grave, putting there little handfuls of blue Indian hyacinth and white anemone.

And then suddenly one day as she sat her horse before Dusty King's cross she knew that Bill Roper was alive, that he was near, that he had come. The note that she had seen Bill Roper cut in the arm of Dusty's cross to mark the death of Cleve Tanner was well weathered by this time; but now, sharp and freshly cut in the opposite arm of the cross, was a second notch that had never been there before.

A choking lump rose instantaneously in Jody's throat, and she spun her pony in its tracks as instinctively her eyes swept the plain and the low hills. So freshly cut was the new notch upon the cross that it seemed Bill Roper must still be no more than a few minutes away.

In the clear light of the late afternoon she could make out every detail of the rambling little town of Ogallala, but nowhere was there to be seen any horseman. She turned her pony and rode home with a strange, empty, gone feeling, because for a moment Bill Roper had seemed so near and now was nowhere in sight.

When she had unsaddled she went into the tall white house by the back way, and walked through it slowly, preoccupied, wondering what she should do.

Then, as she came into the front room, her hand jumped to her throat, for someone was waiting for her there—a woman who stood up as Jody came in.

For a moment Jody Gordon hardly recognized Marquita. Only a little time had passed since they had faced each other in a remote cabin set in Montana snows, yet Marquita looked unmistakably older; and the live, sultry fire behind her dark, slanting eyes was gone.

"I lied to you," Marquita said at last. "I'm not sorry for that. I'd lie to you again, for the same reason, or for less reason. But this time it didn't do any good. So I thought I might as well tell you."

"You lied to me?"

"I told you I was Bill Roper's girl. You naturally thought I was at Walk Lasham's camp because Bill Roper was there." Marquita's voice sounded curiously metallic and

old, without that sultry fire to back it up. "Well, that wasn't so."

"You mean—you mean to say—"

"Well," Marquita said, "he did not belong to me, not even for one minute, in all my life. How do you think you would like that, in my place?"

"But—at the Lasham camp you said—"

"I know I did. I would have got him if I could, in any way I could. I even came here because I knew he was coming here. But now I can just as well tell you it's hopeless, and I'm through. After all, I don't need to run after any man; not any more."

"You mean—you're willing to let him go—even if—"

"Let him go? I never had him." An odd edge of contempt came into Marquita's voice, but whether for Jody or herself was not plain. "Can't you get that through your head?" She turned toward the door impatiently.

Jody Gordon supposed that she ought to thank Marquita for having come here, for having made the confession which she had made, but she was confused, and the words would not come. Instead she said, "Do you know where he is? Is he well? Is he safe and all right?"

Marquita's smile was mocking. "You want me to find him and send him to you?"

"I think," Jody said, "he'll come."

"Okay," Marquita said, and she pulled open the door.

"I want to tell you something," Jody said. "I want to tell you I appreciate your letting me know—"

Marquita flashed a queer, hard smile; there was bitterness in it, more bitterness in her smile than in her words. "Keep your thanks to yourself." Then she was gone.

After a moment Jody heard the hoofs of a team, and the wheels of the carriage in which Marquita had come—and gone—slicing the deep mud.

Yet, Bill Roper did not come.

When two days had passed a panic caught Jody Gordon, and she began to haunt the vicinity of Dusty King's cross. She believed that Roper would not leave the Ogallala country without visiting once more the grave of Dusty King.

But it was the evening of the fourth day, before Roper came.

### CHAPTER XXVII

Sitting her quiet pony beside Dusty King's pile of stone, Jody Gordon saw Roper riding toward her when he was still a long way off. Roper was not alone. Beside him rode a little grasshoppery figure in disreputable clothes which Jody recognized as that of Dry Camp Pierce. Somehow Dry Camp had managed to rejoin his chief when the others could not. It was typical of Dry Camp that he was riding beside Bill Roper now; would always be typical, so long as both of them should live.

The two riders hesitated at the five hundred yards. Roper said something to Dry Camp Pierce and after a moment or two Dry Camp turned his horse and went back. Bill Roper came on alone. Perhaps he feared this meeting more than anything he had ridden into yet—but she knew he would not turn.

It seemed to Jody Gordon that

time lagged forever as Billy Roper's pony slowly approached; it seemed to her that that slow approach was characteristic of all that had happened to them—delay, and delay, while wars were fought, and raids struck in, all through those smoky years in which they had been apart.

And yet, at last, when he stopped his horse beside her, and they looked at each other, there was something between them still, as if the smoky years themselves had built a wall.

Bill Roper said, "Hello, Jody. You're looking mighty well."

Jody said, "I'm all right."

There was a pause, curiously awkward; in the pause, Jody's horse struck at the cinch with a hind foot, tormented by an early fly.

"You didn't come to see me," Jody said.

"Well," Bill Roper said slowly—"I didn't know if you'd want me to."

"Don't you know that you're half of King-Gordon? And I'm the other half."

"Jody—people like you and me can't go by things like that—things like legacies and wills."

Jody's voice was very quiet, yet it must have seemed to Bill Roper that she cried out. "You're going to leave me to carry all this, just by myself?"

"Lew Gordon left a sound organization," Bill Roper said, his voice dead. "You have many men, and good men, too. The works will roll, I think, with Thorpe gone."

Once more the long, strangely poignant silence. And to Jody it seemed a terrible thing that what they both wanted was the same thing, and that yet the smoky years somehow managed to stand between them.

Jody Gordon turned away from Bill Roper, and faced Dusty King's cross, clean-lined and slender, and there was something in her face that was enduring. It was the face of a woman who turned to the future without trace of doubt or fear; and she was the loveliest thing that Bill Roper would ever see.

"Jody," Bill Roper said uncertainly. "I want to tell you something. Other men will have to fight other wars; but my part of all that is finished. I'm not sorry my gun is hung up. I hope it's hung up forever. Once I thought that when Thorpe was smashed, my work would be through—but now I see it's only begun. I think we're going to build something pretty fine, if you'll stay by me."

Jody smiled a little. Without taking her eyes from the cross she reached her hand toward him, and took his.

"All the anger and the hate has gone out of me," Roper said; "and if you can only some day understand that my riding with the wild bunch was—was what I had to do—"

He fumbled for words, and stopped.

"Give me your knife," Jody said.

"My—my what?"

She turned, and herself drew his skinning knife from the sheath at his belt. Then she stepped to the ground.

"In justice," Jody said; "in justice, and in memory of courage."

With her own hands she cut the third notch upon the cross, deep and clean.

[THE END]

## Fashion Feathers Your Hat And Braids Your Fall Suit

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



FEATHERS on your hat and braiding on your suit, coat, dress or costume ensemble. These are two of the most outstanding trends for fall and winter.

If you would make a dramatic and high-styled approach to fall, take your cue from the two ladies of fashion pictured in the foreground of the accompanying illustration. Note how smartly fashion feathers their hats and braids their handsome wool costumes.

You can indulge in as little or as much as you please in this matter of braiding, but whether it is just a wee dab of braiding here or there, or an all over blanketing of braided design, when it comes to toponch style prestige braiding's the thing this season!

See the ensemble pictured to the left. It is a masterpiece of artistry in both color and costume design. It is the sort of coat-ensemble that takes you places in "style," is ideal for travel or town wear. You will wear it to dinner at fashionable restaurants, or to the matinee. It has a red gabardine reefer with a black velvet collar and cuffs embroidered with red soutache braiding. The sheer wool dress carries out the same color scheme. The hat is a crushed Homburg with two stream-lined quills.

To the right is a youthful suit of beige wool with forest green soutache braid on lapels and upper sleeve.

The new greens this fall are fascinating. Milliners are enthusiastic about soft, subtle greens in felts, velvets and feathers. The jaunty feather hat has sprightly birds' wings to give it height and its melon green color is a perfect complement to the beige and green suit.

So far as the new hats are concerned they are staging a veritable riot of feathers. Casual wide-brimmed felts, this season, mostly of the picturesque vagabond type, are in ravishing colors aided and abetted with spectacular vividly colored pheasant quills. Referring to the three hats shown above in the picture note in the upper right corner a gray felt vagabond gaily sporting a bright pheasant quill. This stunning headpiece tops a yellow sweater worn over a gray dress.

Centered in the trio is a black beret that glories in a snow white novelty quill. Berets have certainly come into their own this season. And you are supposed to wear 'em any way that is most becoming. Some like 'em posed in daring profile effect, others position 'em back over their pompadours, others dash 'em down over their eyebrows, but pose 'em as you will berets are making conversation that is punctuated with thrills every step of the way. And keep an eye on the dramatic manner in which they are feathered, if it's exciting moments you crave.

Completing the trio of smart feathered creations shown above is a black hat accented with a gray feather bird that blends with a monkey fur jacket of an unusual shade of light gray. While all types of feathers are to be seen on the new hats, milliners are giving special emphasis to pert little wings, birds and all-feather hats.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

### Wear White Jersey Under Your Fur Coat

College girls who seek something other than the usual black or colored date dresses will hail with delight the advent of the new white jersey frocks that are designed to wear under brown or black fur coats. This dress is proving to be one of the highspots in a co-ed's life. As a rule the white jersey dress is styled with classic simplicity but with exquisite detailing in the way of drapes, tucks and sometimes trapunto quilting. For those who have a yen for color there are white jerseys that are gaily embroidered in bright yarns. Others flaunt glittering gold buttons and gilded kid trimpings.

### Now You Can Wear Your Vitamins on Your Head

A new process has been discovered whereby the casein in skimmed milk can be used to make a fiber which blends with rabbit fur to make felted material for hats. One pound of this fiber is produced from about 30 pounds of skimmed milk. Since imports of hatter's rabbit fur are now limited because of war conditions, there is a large market for this domestic product. Bossy's in the hat business now—classy hats from contented cows!

### Embroidery on Suits

There is no end to the embroidery story this season. The newsy part of the tale is that embroideries appear on sedate suits and wool daytime dresses, as well as on dressier modes. Long evening capes have embroidered yokes. Daytime jackets and blouses are also ornately embroidered.

### Taffeta Dirndl



Smart young sophisticates do not like to give up the picturesque dirndl skirt that has been such an outstanding favorite during the past summer. That is why many of the most voguish taffeta and wool costumes on the fall and winter style program continue to exploit the dirndl after the manner here shown. Sheer wool and taffeta are combined most attractively in this stunning afternoon dress. The fitted bodice of sheer wool has a brown taffeta facing at the V-neck, and the sleeves show the new drop shoulder treatment. Crisp brown taffeta is shirred on at the natural waist. The hat is a veil-trimmed rolled-brim dark brown felt. The whole effect is soft and feminine and true to the tradition of elegance.

## History in the News

By ELMO SCOTT WILSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

### Camp Cavalcade

SHADOWY figures in a cavalcade of American history—such are the men behind the names of the great army cantonments scattered all over the United States, where young Americans are learning to be soldiers in order to defend their country when the need arises.

On January 23, 1861, Louisiana-born Capt. Pierre Gustave Tontant Beauregard (1818-1893) was appointed superintendent at West Point. He had been graduated there in 1838, and served for 14 years as a lieutenant of engineers, during which time he had fought in the Mexican war and had been twice wounded in the capture of Mexico City. On February 20, 1861, he resigned his commission to offer his services to the new Confederate government. He was placed in charge of the defenses of Charleston, S. C., and so it fell to his lot to start the Civil war when he ordered his gunners to open fire on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. He also was in command of the Confederate forces at the first real battle—Bull Run—three months later and he served throughout the war, taking part in many important battles until he surrendered with Gen. J. E. Johnston to General Sherman in April, 1865. Camp Beauregard near Alexandria, La., bears his name.



F. G. T. Beauregard

The war which started when General Beauregard gave the order to fire on Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, S. C., came to an end near Appomattox Court House, Va., in 1865. The last charge there was led by Gen. John Brown Gordon (1832-1904) who stormed Union breastworks and captured some artillery in a desperate attempt to break through Grant's encircling hosts. Georgia-born Gordon had been in it from the beginning, starting as a captain of infantry and rising to the rank of lieutenant-general. After the war was over, he returned to Georgia to practice law, was sent to the United States senate in 1873 and remained there until 1880. Then he served as governor of his native state from 1886 to 1890 and again served in the senate from 1891 to 1897. A camp near Chamblee, Ga., perpetuates the fame of this soldier-statesman.

What Blackstone is to students of the law, Upton is to the students of military science.

So a camp near Yaphank in his native state of New York honors the memory of a great teacher of soldiers, Emory Upton (1839-1881), famous author of "System of Infantry Tactics" and "Military Policy of the United States." Upton was not merely a theorist—he learned the science of war on the battlefield. Graduated from West Point in 1861, he had his baptism of fire as a lieutenant of artillery at Bull Run, where he was wounded. From that time on he was constantly in the thick of the fighting and was repeatedly wounded. He fought at South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, in the Wilderness campaign, at Spotsylvania, with Sheridan in the Shenandoah and in the expeditions which captured Selma, Columbus and other cities in Alabama and Georgia. By the end of the war he had received all brevets from major to major-general in the regular army but held merely a captain's commission. After the war he commanded at West Point and devoted himself to the writing which has made his name synonymous with "military tactics."

Camp Joseph T. Robinson, near Little Rock, Ark., originally named Camp Pike for Brig. Gen. Zebulon M. Pike, was renamed in 1937 in honor of the veteran Arkansas congressman and United States senator who died that year.

A Famous Bugle in the United States army is the property of Staff Sergeant Frank Witchey, veteran bugler of the Third Cavalry. Witchey blew taps on the horn when the Unknown Soldier was buried in Arlington cemetery and he used it for the same purpose at the funerals of ex-President Woodrow Wilson, William Jennings Bryan, Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, Lieut. Gen. S. B. M. Young and many other prominent Americans.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

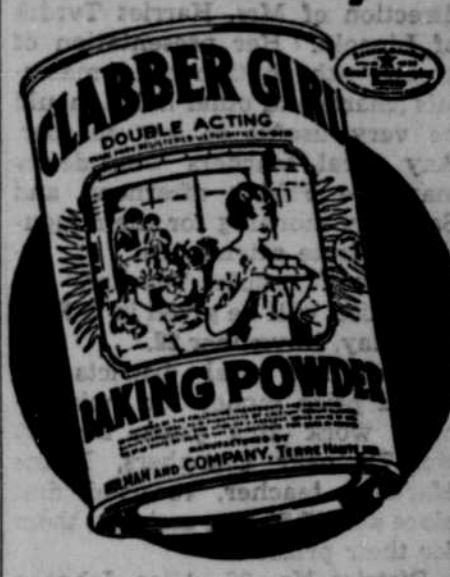
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## Vanished Men BY GEORGE MARSH

Around the campfires in the Canadian wilderness men began muttering over the mysterious disappearance of six frontiersmen who had hit the Chibougamau Trail and never returned. They were in terror of Jules Isadore and his right-hand man, Tete Blanche.

But Garry Finlay, brother of one of the missing men, marched into the forbidden country with two others and Flame, his giant airdale. Neither bullets nor poison could hold them back. At last, scorched by the leaping flames of a forest fire, they solved the mystery of the missing men and brought retribution upon the murderers.

Read this swift-moving adventure story of the mysterious Hudson Bay country—

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BEGINNING NEXT WEEK!