

Mercer of the 8th infantry has been detailed in his place. Captain Beck has made a record that will stick to him the rest of his life, for administrative integrity and absolute obedience to the spirit and the letter of the law. The yielding to the demands of the cattlemen that Captain Beck be removed is weakness. Lieutenant Mercer is a young and untried man, but as he is a soldier there is reason to hope he will follow the precedent a soldier has set and especially that of the policy of the Indian office concerning the leasing of Indian lands.

"Soldiers of Fortune," by Richard Harding Davis, is finished in the June number of Scribner's magazine. It is an interesting tale of love and war—highly sophisticated New York and Newport love and South American war, three dozen cannon firecrackers under a barrel, a terrifying noise, but over in a moment, without the suspense that accompanies international disagreements. Stephen Crane's chiaroscuro eye would have regretted the absence of red in the middle foreground. His reports to the papers of such a struggle would have plaintively referred to the absence of any real war effects, making it impossible to register the impressions on his vulgar little nose and eyes in three hundred pages of padded copy. In the story a South American republic is seized by General Mendoza, the head of the army. The president of the republic is killed and General Mendoza announces himself dictator. After twenty-four hours of sleepless rule he is shot, the vice-president released from prison and the republic re-established, through the offices of Robert Clay, an American civil engineer, ten feet tall by actual measurement of the furniture he leans on in Gibson's pictures. He is Harding's hero and Mr. Harding creates an atmosphere of hero worship around him thick enough to start a new religion. Harding can heroic almost as thoroughly as Du Maurier can. His method is to dehumanize him by de-vesting him of all faults, have Gibson draw his picture supernaturally tall, set a tall, lovely woman to worshiping him and the effect of a superior being in a crowd of worshipers is complete. Robert Clay is as good as Miss Jane Addams, as polite as Van Bibber, as strong as Sandow, as wise as any pundit and with the splendid military resources of a Napoleon. No woman, married or single, can read his stories without being filled with an uncomfortable dissatisfaction with what she has drawn or with impossible aspirations to secure what is not in the market. Even the minor characters, which the author slings in just for good measure, are great prizes—considering the market. Ted Langham, whose father has twenty millions, is a brave, well-mannered lad who plays foot ball and is modest still. Yet because the interest must not be diverted, neither he nor the other masculine eligibles are allowed any sweetheart. In spite of the lack of lady-loves, the war plot and the love interest the readers of Scribner turn first to "Soldiers of Fortune," when the magazine comes out. I have even read it before looking at the funny pictures in the advertisements, and that is highest praise. The love making and the story end with Clay telling his fiancée where he is going to take her on their "tour."

Buffalo Bill has a whole page of the *New York Journal* to tell of the vanished buffalo of the Nebraska prairie. There is none to say the stories are not true though since the animals are nearly extinct they have a "once upon a time" flavor.

Buffalo Bill is the beau ideal of border romance of the small boy's furthest and highest dreams of accomplishment

and renown. The most thrilling dime novel cover ever printed falls below Buffalo Bill's reality. It is unnecessary to describe him to Nebraskans. His really fine eyes, chiseled nose and mouth and modeling of head and neck, make a scout that any juvenile publishing house would be glad to receive copy from. The New Yorkers consider him an ideal Nebraskan and with true story teller's talent Buffalo Bill is living up to his loot and keeping the reporters interested.

"I was then employed by the contractors building the road as a buffalo hunter, to supply fresh meat for the hundreds of men at work on construction of the road, and during one summer killed 2,280 head of buffaloes myself with one gun. I used a breech-loading Springfield rifle, and have it yet. It was a simple enough job, but a man had to know his business or he was liable to leave it and everything else mighty suddenly. I had to charge in among the galloping thousands of animals and shoot them down right and left while racing along with them, selecting such as would be good meat, and taking care that my horse should not be hurt by their rushes or be thrown. If by any accident I had got down on the ground I would have been trampled to shreds in a few minutes."

HERE'S A CLOSE CALL.

"The narrowest escape of my life was in such an adventure. The slopes of the plains often lie like terraces, with steps or breaks in elevation about four feet high, running in a straight line as far as the eye can see. I was out one day on foot and saw an enormous herd of buffaloes coming straight toward me on a gallop. It was too big a herd for me to run off to the flank either way. I could not possibly outrun them, and if I stood still in their way they would trample me down almost without observing me and leaving mighty little of me for anybody else to observe afterward. As my only chance I threw myself down lengthwise at the foot of one of those little benches, crowded in as close as I could, and lay still while the herd galloped and jumped over me. Not less than 5,000 passed right over me, and I got up unharmed, but it was a very close call."

A HAIRBREADTH ESCAPE.

"In those days if a man got lost on the plains in winter and could not make his camp—night coming on and perhaps a blizzard—he would shoot a buffalo, take out all its insides and crawl in there to keep from freezing. One night we lost one of our men and the next day set out to hunt for him about where we thought we would be likely to find him inside a buffalo. We found the buffalo and him inside it sure enough, but if we had not, the carcass would have been his tomb instead of his shelter. The weather was terribly cold and the buffalo had frozen solid around him, so that we had to chop him out. He was all right though when we got him out and thawed."

Jack Stillwell, the celebrated scout, who went for reinforcements when General Forsyth had his great battle on the Aricacee fork of the Republican, had a thrilling experience inside a buffalo on that occasion. He crawled out from camp through the Indian lines surrounding General Forsyth's command and had made some ten or fifteen miles on his way when daylight overtook him and he found himself right among the horses belonging to a big camp of Indians. He was too close to get away, light as the day was getting to be, and the only thing he could do to save his life was to crawl into the old, dried up carcass of a buffalo that providentially happened to be within reach. There he stayed the entire day until he could crawl away in the dark and continue his journey. While he was in the carcass the Indians tending their horses were passing and re-passing frequently, and some times they even sat upon his shelter.

After many mistaken reports as to the date of publication of James Lane Allen's new novel, *The Choir Invisible*, it was published a few days since by the Macmillan company. The first large edition of the work was entirely sold on the day of publication, and a second is being hurried through the press as rapidly as possible. Curiously enough at the same time that they are publishing this story of John Gray's life they are

issuing also a new edition of a book which, according to the novelist's story, exerted a strong influence on his hero at a critical moment in the story. The reference is to Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*, which is, perhaps, scarcely so well known as it should be.

Feathered Visitors at the Capitol.

Having occasion to call at the capitol a few days since I treated myself to a stroll through the grounds and renewed my acquaintance with the little feathered visitors there. I had taken but a few steps from the south entrance when I came across a group of those boisterous, mischief-making little chaps—the English sparrows, upon a ledge above a window. Three of them with feathers ruffled, blustering and chattering away. Two of these little chaps were trying to out do each other in their attention to the third, a little brown Mice, who was receiving them quite coolly. Now when two such ardent little wooers pay their respects to the same little lady something unusual happens. They don't remain good friends long. And so it proved with them, for down they came to the ground, their beaks locked in each other's feathers, turning over and over in their efforts to punish each other. Their little brown eyes fairly ablaze with rage, I watched them for a few moments; then thinking it time to stop this royal battle I proceeded to calm their ruffled feelings by throwing them a handful of wheat which I had in my pocket. They, with some of their friends who soon came for a share of the feast, became interested in picking up the wheat, forgetting all about their trouble of but a moment before.

Out in the grass a short distance from where I was standing, were four of our always interesting little friends, the robins. Mr. Robin, his wife and two children were taking their lunch of worms. These two young robins were large and well feathered for so early in the spring. When I first saw them I thought they were young birds. How amusing it was to watch them running from one parent bird to the other for the worm they had just dug up. They would open their little yellow mouths for it when the old bird would carefully tuck it in. Then with a swallow and a look that tasted like more they would cock their wise little heads and wait till the patient old bird had found another. What a num-

ber of robins there are on the grounds this spring. More than I have ever seen there before. In the crotch of an ash tree I found another little fellow who had not yet learned to fly. He to was taking his breakfast from his little red breasted mate. Where ever I went that bright morning I found them, in the flower beds, on the lawn and up in the trees, some of them singing, others busily engaged in the, to them, all absorbing work of catching a nice fat worm for lunch. Off to the right not far away, down from a maple came a naughty Blue Jay, uttering his shrill cry, startling a beautiful red headed woodpecker who had been quietly eyeing me from the trunk of a decaying tree. At his old tricks of giving the alarm, he had been watching me from his leafy retreat and at the same time espied a grasshopper which he made off with to a neighboring tree, where he proceeded to make his breakfast on young hopper. My next little entertainer was a fly catcher, or as he is better known, a bee martin, perched on the twig of a small tree in that part of the grounds near Sixteenth and H streets, where the trees are small. In the bright sunshine he sat with feathers all ruffled up, looking as if he was half asleep. His actions belied his looks, however, for in an instant he had smoothed down his feathers and with a quick dart off he went, and with fluttering wings he held himself suspended in the air. Then a quick snap of the beak making a noise at times like the rapidly opening and closing of a pair of pincers, told the fate of another fly or moth. Then back he came to his perch ready for the next unsuspecting victim.

The small pocket magazines published by the Frederick A. Stokes Co., contain just the right kind of summer vacation stories. The names of the best story writers in the country, such as A Conan Doyle, Stockton, Weyman, Brander, Mathews, etc., appear in the prospectus. The book is small but printed in large type. Just the thing for a summer afternoon.

Sutton & Hollowbush have invented a cough drop. They call it the S. & H., Sutton & Hollowbush, and it is a good one. Stop and get one on your way to the theatre. It will save you a spasm of coughing.



Mr. Searly—I want to tell you something Clara, I have wanted to tell it long time.
Miss Winem—I I think, that is, I have suspected it.
Searly—Thank Heavens, then you can't say it is "so sudden."