



A PAGE FOR JUNIORS



Bill and the Buffalo

By WILLIAM MAITLAND.

A True Story.

WHEN my uncle first took up a ranch in the far west, it was doubtful whether the raising of cattle would prove successful on account of the great herds of buffaloes that destroyed the land for grazing. Conditions soon changed, however. The buffaloes were slaughtered in such numbers that they became scarce, and my uncle, seeing that they would soon become valuable, corralled a dozen of them.

I was twelve years old when I went to live on his ranch, and those buffaloes were very interesting to me, so I spent many hours watching them when I could not accompany my uncle to cattle round-up. There was nothing to see but prairie as far as the eye could reach, and though I was very fond of riding and imitating the cowboys in all they did, I found it at times unbearably lonely during the first few months, so I was looking forward to a time of dreadful monotony when my uncle rode off with the cow-boys one morning, telling me he would probably be absent three days.

"Good bye, Bill, take good care of the buffaloes," he said, laughing as he rode away.

They were hardly out of sight when I saw a speck on the horizon in the opposite direction growing visibly larger. It soon developed into a band of horsemen, and I was over-joyed, thinking that the travellers would probably rest here and so help to while away the time. My joy was changed to fear when on a nearer view, I discovered that they were Indians making straight for the ranch. On arriving they dismounted and picketed their ponies not far from the house, and an old man with one eye and an evil countenance, who could speak a little English, asked to see my uncle. On finding he was absent from home, he produced a dirty envelope and handed it to the old steward.

"Let me read it," I said, drawing myself up to my full height, "I am here in my uncle's place."

The missive proved to be a letter signed by the governor of Fort Wayne, asking that a buffalo be delivered to the bearer, and stating that the government would pay for it.

"I cannot do this while my uncle is absent," I said. "Come back in three days and he will attend to it."

The Indians shook their heads and muttered amongst themselves.

"Why do you want the buffalo? We can let you have meat."

"Medicine man want it for heal sick," replied he of the evil eye.

I was suspicious of the written order, for it seemed strange to employ Indians as messengers, and told the steward to give them food. After a short discussion the band withdrew to a spot about one hundred yards from the house, where they lighted a fire and cooked their meat and some corn they had brought with them, after which they rolled themselves up in their blankets and went to sleep.

I woke frequently during the night and went to the window, but the Indians were sleeping peacefully in the moonlight. At daybreak, however, they were astir and prowling about the ranch. They renewed their request and we again tried to pacify them with meat, but all day long they hung around the place and gave us such black looks that we decided we might as well give them a buffalo or they would force us to do so.

We then led out the corral, a very ancient buffalo, and, handing him over to the Indians, we retired

some distance and waited curiously to see what they would do. They proceeded to shoot it full of arrows, and it dropped to the ground. Seeing us watching, however, old "evil eye" came and told us we must go away, for if the eye of the white man observed their rites, the healing charm would be lost. Accordingly we retired to a place of concealment behind some bushes, and watched the performance.

The Indians lay in a ring surrounding the dying buffalo at a distance of about 50 yards; then one crept snake-like through the grass, shot an arrow into his side, and crept back to his place; another

ACROSS THE BAY

By ESTELLE M. KERR



The Country Girl.

I live upon an island fair
With flowers, grass and trees,
And white sails on the water fit
Like sea gulls in the breeze,
And mighty ferry-boats start forth
Each hour of every day,
And bear the happy people
To the city 'cross the bay.

I see large steamships at its docks,
And churches with tall spires;
I watch the chimneys spurring smoke
From all the hidden fires.
I'd like to see the wheels go round;
I want to sail away
And live within the busy streets
That lie across the bay.

At night I watch the lights come out
And twinkle forth like stars,
Sometimes I think I hear the roar
And see the motor cars!
It's very still and lonesome here,
I wish that I could play
Within the merry city streets
Away across the bay.

followed, and then another, until each had contributed an arrow. Then they chanted a mournful dirge, crowding around the beast so that we could not see what they were doing. It was growing dark and the yellow glow from the sky gave an unreal appearance to the scene. The Indians that by daylight had seemed mean and disagreeable, now looked like fiends, and so great was their excitement that there was no knowing what they might do. Visions of tomahawks and scalping passed through my mind, and I wondered if we had not better mount our horses and prepare to fly for our lives. The old steward left me to watch while he went to saddle the horses, but I determined to stick to my post as long as possible, for what would my uncle do if he returned and found us gone and the Indians in possession? Besides, he had told me to look after the buffaloes, and now they might kill them all.

Just then I saw a far off cloud of dust; nearer it came and nearer; the Indians saw it, too, and under cover of the darkness, they mounted their ponies and made away. To my great joy I discovered that it was my uncle and the cow-boys returning sooner than they expected, and—tall boy though I was—I was soon sobbing in his arms.

My uncle was very much relieved to find that nothing worse had happened, and when I showed him the letter signed by the governor at Fort Wayne, he at once pronounced it a forgery.

In the morning we went to see the dead buffalo. The Indians had stripped off a piece of its hide from its head between the eyes and down the centre of its back. This was the portion evidently required by the medicine man who wished to heal the sick chief, but had it not been for the unexpected arrival of my uncle, I have no doubt they would have taken the rest of the hide, and the best part of the meat, of which they were very fond.

After this thrilling experience, it was some time before I again complained of the dull monotony of ranch life, but after that my uncle always left one of the cowboys in charge of the ranch when he was not able to take me with him.

Children in War-Time

HOWEVER brave a man may be, he is likely to become panic-stricken the first time he is under fire. Children, on the other hand, sometimes show remarkable courage, owing largely to their ignorance of the danger.

During the seige of Lucknow, the children who had grown pale and weak from long confinement in the stifling rooms where they were comparatively safe, were occasionally allowed to play in the courtyards in spite of the danger. Once their swing was carried away by a bomb-shell and bullets pattered about them, but they accepted this all as a matter of course.

In the memoirs of the late distinguished actress, Madame Helena Modjeska, she tells how, as children, she and her brother Adolphe were under fire in Crakon when it was attacked by the Austrians. There was a bombardment and fierce fighting at the street barricades. The children's mother ran into a cellar, telling them to follow, but they did not.

"I will not go to the cellar! I want to see!" declared Adolphe, passionately; and the little Helena, usually so obedient, was possessed by the same intense curiosity, and remained with him. Almost immediately there was a fearful crash, and a shell carried away the iron balcony and made a gaping hole in the wall of the house; then "with a noise like the snapping of whips the rifles began their work."

"Louder and louder grew the shooting, and with it the crash of broken window-glass falling to the floor with the bullets. Adolphe, who ran from one room to another picking up the bullets, pulled me with him to the corner room—the one most exposed to the fire of the Austrians. 'Hide in that corner!' he cried, pushing me forward, and then added, with open pleasure, 'There will be more bullets!'"

There were "more bullets," but when she saw a dying man on the pavement, she clung, weeping, to her brother, and both fled to the cellar.

COMPETITION.

For boys and girls under eighteen.
Which is preferable—country life or city life?

For the best letters in answer to this question there will be three prizes: First prize—Any three books, the titles to be selected by the winner from our Library list. Second prize—Any two books. Third prize—One book.

All entries must bear the name and age of the contributor, and be certified as original by parent or guardian. Contest closes Oct. 30th.