The Easton Gazette.

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For years, an ever-shifting shade
The sunshine of thy visage made;
Then, spider-like, the captive caught
In meshes of immortal thought.

Even so, with half-averted eyes,
Day after day I pass thee by,
Till, suddenly, a subtler art
Enshrined thee in my heart of heart.
—John B. Tabb, in Cosmopolitan.

Defense of the Concho.

BY HARRIET J. WHITNEY.



'TWAS young Len from th'old Troule place thet came lopin' over weth th' news; an' I don't reckon his bronco c'd o' held th' pace three minutes longer, when th' boy rolled off an' cried t' me, as he loosed th' cinch t' ease th' sorrel's breath:

"Rope yer best horse, Steve, an' an' load all yer guns! fer th's fifty Piegan imps howlin' down the valley, gatherin' stock an' swearin' t' raid an' burn th' Silver Concho!"

"Th' Silver Concho!" cried I, weth a gasp o' horror. I've been called "Coeur d'Or Steve," hunter an' guide, in th' North Country since long before th' cattle ranches came, an' it's nothin' new fer me t' fight redskins; but if th's a creature on th' face o' God's earth thet I despise an' dread it's a Piegan Blackfoot, weth his sneakin' ways, only like a flash an' gone, weth blood in his tracks, before y'c'n git th' charge in yer Winchester er th' saddle onto yer rayuse.

"Silver Concho!" said I, knowin' thet Perry Winston's wife was alone over there weth her baby an' th' Chinese cook. Is th' news straight, Len? How'd y' hear about it?"

"Dead straight! Ben got it in Shoste-te an' drove up t' th' place an hour ago weth th' sickest lookin' stock y' ever saw him hold th' strings over."

"An, now, Steve, if y'll give me a fresh horse—fer y' c'n see thet Monte's clean busted—I'll go an' bring th' roundup in. I don't reckon y'll want t' stand off no fifty Piegans single-handed, not fer very long, an' th' boys is yer only show. There're on Painted Robe, an' it's fifteen miles over. Thet pinto o' your 'll do it in an hour an' a half, an' th' boys won't save up their stock none comin' back, so y' c'n count on help in from three t' four hours, Steve, if y' c'n hold th' redskins level thet long."

Lord, how we did work! Ropin', an' saddlin', fillin' and strappin' on ca'tridge belts, an' chargin' guns an' Winchesters. Thankin' th' Lord thet th' ca'tridge keg was more'n half full; an' loadin' 'em into every corner o' our clothes, where we c'd make 'em stick.

We made a quick job o' it, fer I knew th' nature o' th' red cusses I'd got t' deal weth too well t' take any chances on Ben's havin' got much th' start of 'em, though he'd brought his heavy coach—Ben drives th' Orleans an' Fort Sublette coach; an' they say he's th' best reinsman in th' Northwest. Three Fingered Ben down th' big Canyon o' th' Argali, a thing hardly ever done before or since, t' bring th' news; an' counted on havin' got a few hours over th' thievin' rascals, while they was pickin' up stock in th' upper basin.

'Twas nigh sundown when our broncos struck th' trail down th' coulee, on a sliugin' lope; an' I took a look back at my shack, thinkin' most likely it 'u'd be in ashes before I saw th' place ag'in.

Th' little valley lay quiet enough. 'Twas late in th' fall, an' a touch o' smoke in th' air made me think o' burnin' ranches. A jackrabbit skittered by a headlong pace as if warnin' us t' hurry along. An' th' chatter o' th' prairie dogs had a sort o' piercin', unnatural sound. Our horses' feet seemed t' keep time to a sort o' tune—"Piegans, ride fast! Piegans, ride fast!" beat out by th' click of th' fallin' hoofs, an' th' hoot o' an' owl chimed in on th' same key.

Len's road lay th' same as mine fer a couple o' miles, but we scarcely spoke till th' trail branched, an' singin' out, "Hang on by th' skin o' yer teeth till we get there!" he turned t' th' left an' struck out fer th' big plateau in th' Lower Lake basin, while I kept on down th' coulee t' th' Silver Concho ranchhouse.

I didn't have t' put quirt or spur t' my horse; he knew what I wanted by th' tone o' my voice an' th' touch o' my hand on th' rein, an' was layin' off th' ground th' very best he knew how. 'Twas six good miles from th' bend, an' it gave me time t' study about th' job I had on hand. A white man always feels like he c'd whip about five times his own weight in redskins, but I knew