

### THE DEATH BIRD'S MISSION

to Warn Travelers of Impending Danger.

Has Never Been Seen and Its Voice is Heard Only at Night—M. Quad's Experience.

Long enough before I, a lieutenant of infantry, made my first trip across the great Staked plains of Texas as an escort to a couple of civil engineers I had heard of the death bird of the desert. No living man had ever seen it, but there were plenty who had heard its notes, and its notes always meant danger. One might travel to and fro on the Staked plains for a year and never see a bird of any sort except about their edges. The only living things to be met with are serpents, lizards, scorpions and skulking wolves. The aridness and desolation are too much even for the buzzards.

The death bird, so the legend went, appeared only at night, and then no man saw him. His notes were peculiar, and no hunter could imitate him, but one hearing them in the silence of the night and the desert could make no mistake. Before making the trip an old hunter said to me:

"There is but one danger to look out for—the Apaches. They may follow you clear across the desert. They will not attack you by daylight, but at night, without your having seen a sign of them, they will creep upon you as softly as serpents and spiders. Listen for the notes of the death bird, and when you hear them take instant warning."

There were 16 of us in the party. Fourteen soldiers were supposed to constitute a force able to take care of itself anywhere. There was more anxiety as to our water and rations than as to the Indians who might dog our footsteps. It was midsummer, and the heat on that great surface of sand and alkali soil was simply terrific. After the first day, when we were clear of shelter, a march of six or eight miles was all any one was capable of. The nights brought cold breezes and recuperation, but they also brought a loneliness no person can describe. Men afloat on the wide ocean in a small boat hear strange sounds at night and are made afraid. Men on the desert are almost made crazy by the uncanny surroundings.

There is a chirp of a cricket or the howl of a coyote, it is not company. It simply adds to the loneliness. If the night is unbroken, then it is as if a heavy blanket had been thrown over your head to shut out the living world. We saw nothing of Indians. No one believed that a party took our trail. A faithful watch was kept, however, but after a few nights when I had come to realize how helpless we really were I found my self depending on that legend of the death bird. If we were menaced, he would warn us. We had been out a week when there came the blackest of black nights. It was black because it was moonless and a storm was gathering. Our tents were set up in a cluster, but they could not be seen at a distance of six feet. Three sentinels were on duty, but they could not see the sands at their feet. If the Indians had followed, there would never be a better night for a surprise. It would be no trick at all to creep within striking distance of the sentinels, and a volley of arrows and bullets sent through the tents must wound or kill most of us.

I was sitting in the door of my tent an hour after midnight, wondering how the storm would break, when there came to me from a point not far distant the notes of the death bird. They sounded a bit like the call of a hawk, and yet they were unlike. They were like words instead of notes. They were soft and clear, and from the very first they said to me:

"Look out! Look out! Look out! Danger! Danger! Danger! Death! Death! Death!"

I repeat that the bird seemed to be talking instead of crying out in its natural notes. I may have got this idea from my state of nervous apprehension, but so it was. I turned and woke up the two sleeping engineers and asked them to listen. They did not make a word as I did, but one of them whispered:

"That's a danger cry, or I never heard one. I tell you we are menaced by some great peril!"

Thrice the death bird called its notes, and then all was silence as before. A soldier was sent creeping away to call in the sentinels. A few rods to the north of us, as we had noticed when going into camp, the sands had been lashed with by some strong gale until the ridges almost formed a natural fort. With the greatest care and in the deepest silence we left tents and baggage, and, taking nothing but our water bottles and muskets, we crept out of camp to the north and by and by reached the fort. It was so dark that men had to be led for instead of spoken to, but at the end of half an hour we lay in line with our muskets resting on a sand ridge and pointing toward camp. One could tell by the feeling in the air that

the storm would soon break and that the first break would be a vivid flash of lightning. The men were instructed to fire with the flash in case it revealed Indians about.

At last, when we were all in a tremble with anxiety, the flash came. For a few seconds it was as if a great searchlight had fallen upon the desert. It was so blinding that every eye was closed for a second. When opened they beheld a band of 20 Apaches on hands and knees within 25 feet of the tents. A volley was fired straight into their faces and a second as another flash showed a few in retreat, and then we lay there in the pouring rain till daylight came. There had been in the band, as near as we could figure it, 21 Indians. We had fired without aim and the destruction wrought was due to luck or accident, but there were 16 redskins lying dead on the sands around the camp. Among these were a full chief, a subchief and five or six noted warriors. Our volleys had accomplished more than a year's campaigning with 600 soldiers. Indeed they brought peace for two years. Said one of the survivors to me afterward:

"We had planned to kill the entire lot of you. We heard the notes of the death bird and knew you would hear them also, but we didn't believe you would understand the warning. Had you not understood and moved away not a man of you would have escaped." For many days subsequently—aye, for many months and years—as I was posted along the desert or journeyed across it I looked for the death bird at morning, noon and night, but I never got sight of him. His mission was to fly only at night and to tell of peril.

M. QUAD.

**Lucky John H. Baronett.**  
Tacoma, April 17.—John H. Baronett, the Englishman for whom a fortune is awaiting in England, and who was supposed to have sailed from Tacoma last December on a wheat ship, proves to be one of the best known characters in the Northwest. Baronett is the brother of an English nobleman, who was recently killed in the South African war, his fortune reverting to Baronett. This nobleman at the outbreak of the Boer war, it is reported, raised a company of yeomanry, paying and equipping them himself, and taking them to South Africa.

The story of Baronett reads like that of the Wandering Jew. He is 70 or more years old, has apparently known poverty for many years of his life, and for years and years has lived in different parts of the west. Part of his life was spent on the sea where he was injured to all of the hardships met with by the sailor before the mast. For many years he lived in the Yellowstone National Park where he owned a toll bridge. Some ten or twelve years ago he sold this bridge to the government and since that time he has been mining in Alaska, Montana and Washington. He is an old-time typical western prospector, always carrying around a small piece of ore in his pocket to interest capitalists in his prospects, that have an extraordinary surface showing. Unfortunately he never seemed able to strike the "pay streak."

Baronett left England with a party of friends forming an expedition of adventurous characters who were seeking fortunes and pleasure in his small vessel named the Royal George. This vessel was wrecked on the coast of South America and Baronett and his companions were picked up and taken to Valparaiso. Baronett came on to Washington. His present whereabouts are unknown. Some months ago he left the Sound cities and it was thought he had gone to California, but investigation proved this to be untrue. It is now reported he is in one of the mining towns of Montana. A man by the name of Thomas Steele, from San Francisco, has sent word to Baronett's friends here that he is positive he can find the missing man within a few days stating that Baronett was an old comrade of his in Alaska and that he intends to come and assist in the search.

**C. P. R. Looses Officer.**  
It is announced that R. A. Corbet, chief clerk to E. J. Coyle, assistant general passenger agent of the C. P. R. between Ft. William and Vancouver, has tendered his resignation to accept the position of assistant to Henry Darling, manager of the White Pass & Yukon railway company's steamers on the Yukon river, between Whitehorse and Dawson. Mr. Corbet has been connected with the C. P. R. for a number of years and acted as its agent in Dawson and other places. He has always been on the alert and was ever awake to the company's interests. His departure from Vancouver will be regretted by a large circle of friends. Mr. Corbet's headquarters will be at Whitehorse. Mrs. Corbet and Miss Corbet, his mother and sister who reside on Berrard street will remain for the present.

Mr. Darling will have quite a staff of bright young men from Vancouver. There is E. A. Quigley who has been employed for a number of years in the customs service. He will act as purser on one of the company's steamers. "Chubb" will be much missed by a large number of friends and his loss will be felt by the Vancouver lacrosse club, of which he is the general secretary. Then there is Harry A. Johnson, one of the best known and popular

young men in the city, who with J. J. Hiller and William Cameron will also go north to act in the capacity of pursers on the company's steamers. Mr. Hiller resigned his position of general baggage agent of the C. P. R. several weeks ago. Mr. Johnson was his chief clerk. F. Victor Austin goes up from Victoria to also take a position as purser. Mr. Cameron has been for some time in the employ of the Union Steamship company. It is understood that a farewell supper will be tendered Messrs. Quigley, Hiller and Johnson by a number of their friends—Vancouver World.

**Giving Him a Rest.**  
The energy of one of the oldest inhabitants of a Massachusetts town is a byword among his neighbors and a trial to his grandchildren, who have not inherited their full share of his active temper.

His grandson John in particular suffers from the old man's untiring industry, for John is his assistant in the little grocery shop, where everything, from codfish to brooms, may be found. A purchaser of gingersnaps lingered one day to hear the noontime address delivered to poor John by his grandfather.

"Now, Johnny, I'm a-going home for my dinner," said the old man briskly, "and on the way I'll carry up these pails to Miss Manson and fetch back her kerosene can. I shall be gone upwards of half an hour. You'll have plenty of time to eat your luncheon, and while you're resting after that I wish you'd saw up that little mess of wood that lays out by the back door and split it up for stove kindling, for the weather's turning sharp a'ready."

"Most likely I'll be back 'fore you get out of work, and anyways I don't want to keep you at it all the time, so if there's a few extry minutes jest set down and make out a bill or two. The fust of the month'll be upon us 'fore we know it."—Youth's Companion.

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"Oh," replied the master potter, "your highness will screw up the taxes, and I shall make pots."

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