

THE DIVA'S RUBY

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BALLINGER TELLS OF YEAR'S WORK

Report of the Secretary of the Interior Received.

PROBLEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Development Through Private Enterprise Under National Supervision and Control Desired—Reclamation Service Discussed.

Washington, Nov. 27.—The annual report to the president of Richard A. Ballinger, secretary of the interior, was made public to-day, and makes interesting reading. The report covers a portion of the time under the administration of James R. Garfield, and Mr. Ballinger gives him credit for his earnest and efficient services.

Secretary Ballinger comments on the old public land statutes, and continues:

"The liberal and rapid disposition of the public lands under these statutes and the lax methods of administration which for a long time prevailed naturally provoked the feeling that the public domain was legitimate prey for the unscrupulous and that it was no crime to violate or circumvent the land laws. It is to be regretted that we, as a nation, were so tardy to realize the importance of preventing so large a measure of our natural resources passing into the hands of land pirates and speculators, with no view to development looking to the national welfare.

Must Continue Prosecutions.

"It may be safely said that millions of acres of timber and other lands have been unlawfully obtained, and it is also true that actions to recover such lands have in most instances long since been barred by the statute of limitations. The principal awakening to our wasteful course came under our predecessor's administration. The bold and vigorous prosecutions of land frauds, through Secretaries Hitchcock and Garfield, have restored a salutary respect for the law, and the public mind has rapidly grasped the importance of safeguarding the further disposition of our natural resources in the public good as against private greed. Notwithstanding this, it is necessary to continue with utmost vigor, through all available sources, the securing of information of violations of the public land laws and to follow such violations with rigid prosecutions.

Use Private Enterprise.

"On this present policy of conserving the natural resources of the public domain, while development is the key-note, the best thought of the day is not that development shall be by national agencies, but that wise utilization shall be secured through private enterprise under national supervision and control. Therefore, if material progress is to be made in securing the best use of our remaining public lands, congress must be called upon to enact remedial legislation."

Mr. Ballinger then gives in detail his recommendations for the classification of public lands, and the features of a measure which he advises for the direction of the disposal of water-power sites.

The Reclamation Service.

Concerning the reclamation service, the report says in part:

"In view of the importance of a speedy completion of existing projects and their proper extension, and of the necessity in 1913 of an adjustment between the states by which the major portion of the funds arising from the sale of public lands within each state and territory shall have been expended so far as practicable within such state or territory, and in view of the importance of making a beneficial use of waters already appropriated or capable of appropriation to which rights may be lost for nonuse, I believe an urgent appeal should be made to congress to authorize the issuance of certificates of indebtedness, or of bonds against the reclamation fund, to an aggregate of not exceeding \$30,000,000, or so much thereof as may be needed."

Energetic reorganization of the Indian bureau is in progress, says Mr. Ballinger, and he recommends that the Indian warehouses at New York, Chicago, Omaha, St. Louis and San Francisco be closed as soon as possible. A more advanced policy respecting the maintenance, improvement and operation of the Yellowstone and Yosemite national parks is urged on the government.

Contracts Made on Feast Days.

The fixed date for Easter is probably a matter of little concern in the United States, but of great importance in continental Europe, where rent and other contracts are written on such feast days rather than on New Year's or the 1st of May.

On Maneuvers.

Army Service Corps N. C. O. in charge of forage (to officer's groom who has come for extra rations for a horse)—"Have you brought a requisition?" Groom—"No. Ain't got none with us, but I've brought a bucket."—Punch.

Good for Something.

Subbute—"What do you intend to do with that lot you bought in Swamp-hurst?" Comment—"I am thinking of making a fishing preserve of it."—Brooklyn Life.



The Man at the Wheel Struck Two Bells.

"With those hands," he silently reflected, "it's either a lady or a thief, or both."

Barak took several little twists of tissue paper from the bag, laid them in a row on the tablecloth and then began to open them one by one. Each tiny parcel contained a ruby, and when the young man counted them there were five in all, and they were fine stones if they were genuine; but Mr. Van Torp was neither credulous nor easily surprised. When Barak looked to see what impression he had produced on such a desirable buyer, he was disappointed.

"Nice," said the American carelessly; "nice rubies, but I've seen better. I wonder if they're real, anyway. They've found out how to make them by chemistry now, you know."

But Barak understood nothing, of course, beyond the fact that Mr. Van Torp seemed indifferent, which was a common trick of wily customers; but there was something about this one's manner that was not assumed. Barak took the finest of the stones with the tip of his slender young fingers, laid it in the palm of his other hand, and held it under Mr. Van Torp's eyes, looking at him with an inquiring expression. But the American shook his head.

"No rubies to-day, thank you," he said.

Barak nodded quietly, and at once began to wrap up the stones, each in its own bit of paper, putting the twists back into the bag one by one. Then he drew the things together and tied them in a neat sort of knot which Mr. Van Torp had never seen. The young



The Man at the Wheel Struck Two Bells.

man then rose to go, but the millionaire stopped him.

"Say, don't go just yet. I'll show you a ruby that'll make you sit up."

He rose as he spoke, and Barak understood his smile and question, and waited. Mr. Van Torp went into the next room, and came back almost immediately, bringing a small black morocco case, which he set on the table and unlocked with a little key that hung on his watchchain. He was not fond of wearing jewelry, and the box held all his possessions of that sort, and was not full. There were three or four sets of plain studs and links; there were half a dozen very big gold collar studs; there was a bit of an old gold chain, apparently cut off at each end, and having one cheap little diamond set in each link; and there was a thin old wedding ring that must have been a woman's; besides a few other valueless trinkets, all lying loose and in confusion. Mr. Van Torp shook the box a little, poked the contents about with one large finger, and soon found an uncut red stone about the size of a hazelnut, which he took out and placed on the white cloth before the visitor.

"Now that's what I call a ruby," he said, with a smile of satisfaction. "Got any like that, young man? Because if you have I'll talk to you, maybe. Yes," he continued, watching the oriental's face. "I told you I'd make you sit up. But I didn't mean to scare you

though evidently still deeply disturbed. Mr. Van Torp smiled, too, as if to offer his congratulations on the quick recovery.

"Feel better now?" he inquired in a kindly tone, and nodded. "I wonder what on earth you're up to, young lady?" he soliloquized, watching Barak's movements.

He was much too cautious and wise to like being left alone for many minutes with a girl, and a good-looking one, who went about London dressed in men's clothes and passed herself for a ruby merchant. Mr. Van Torp was well aware that he was not a safe judge of precious stones, that the rubies he had seen might very well be imitation, and that the girl's emotion at the sight of the rough stone might be only a piece of clever acting, the whole scene having been planned by a gang of thieves for the purpose of robbing him of that very ruby, which was worth a large sum, even in his estimation; for it was nearly the counterpart of the one he had given Lady Maud, though still uncut.

Therefore he returned to the table and slipped the gem into his pocket before going to the door to see whether Stemp was within hail.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Beginning at Home.
Latin proverb: Self is the first object of charity.

for sale because the owner had died of heart disease the week after she was quite ready to take him to the Mediterranean. The vessel was at least as big as one of the ocean liners of 50 years ago, and had done 22-1-16 knots on her trial. Mr. Van Torp took her over as she was, with her officers, crew, cook and stores, and rechristened her. She had been launched as the *Alway*; he called her the *Lancashire Lass*—a bit of sentiment on his part, for that was the name of a mare belonging to Lady Maud's father, which he had once ridden bareback when he was in an amazing hurry.

He had one interview with the captain. "See here, captain," he said. "I may not want to take a trip this season. I'm that sort of a man. I may or I may not. But if I do want you, I'll want you quick. See?"

With the last word, he looked up suddenly, and the captain "saw," for he met a pair of eyes that astonished him.

"Yes, I see," he answered mechanically.

"And if you're in one place with your boat, and I wire that I want you in another, I'd like you to get there right away," said Mr. Van Torp.

"Yes, sir."

"They say she'll do 22-1-10," continued the owner, "but when I wire I want you I'd like her to do as much more as she can without bursting a lung. If you don't think you've got the kind of engineer who'll keep her red-hot, tell me right off and we'll get another. And don't you fuss about burning coal, captain. And see that the crew get all they can eat and not a drop of drink but tea and coffee, and if you let 'em go on shore once in a while, see that they come home right side up with care, captain, and make each of 'em say 'truly rural' and 'British Constitution' before he goes to bed, and if he can't, you just unship him, or whatever you call it on a boat. Understand, captain?"

The captain understood and kept his countenance.

"Now, I want to know one thing," continued the new owner. "What's the nearest sea port to Bayreuth, Bavaria?"

"Venice," answered the captain without the least hesitation, and so quickly that Mr. Van Torp was immediately suspicious.

"If that's so, you're pretty smart," he observed.

"You can telephone to Cook's office, sir, and ask them," said the captain quietly.

The instrument was on the table at Mr. Van Torp's elbow. He looked sharply at the captain, as he unhooked the receiver and set it to his ear. In a few seconds communication was given.

"Cook's office? Yes. Yes. This is Mr. Van Torp, Rufus Van Torp of New York. Yes. I want to know what's the nearest sea port to Bayreuth, Bavaria. Yes. Yes. That's just what I want to know. Yes. I'll hold the wire while you look it up."

He was not kept waiting long.

"Venice, you say? You're sure you're right, I suppose? Yes. Yes. I was only asking. No thank you. If I want a ticket I'll look in myself. Much obliged. Good-by."

He hung the receiver in its place again, and turned to his captain with a different expression, in which admiration and satisfaction were quite apparent.

"Well," he said, "you're right. It's Venice. I must say that, for an Englishman, you're quite smart."

The captain smiled quietly, but did not think it worth while to explain that the last owner with whom he had sailed had been Wagner-mad and had gone to Bayreuth regularly. Moreover, he had judged his man already.

"Am I to proceed to Venice at once, sir?" he asked.

"As quick as you can, captain."

The Englishman looked at his watch deliberately, and made a short mental calculation before he said anything. It was 11 in the morning.

"I can get to sea by five o'clock this afternoon, sir. Will that do?"

Mr. Van Torp was careful not to betray the least surprise.

"Yes," he said, as if he were not more than fairly satisfied, "that'll do nicely."

"Very well, sir, then I'll be off. It's about 3,000 miles, and she's supposed to do that at 18 knots with her own coal. Say eight days. But as this is her maiden trip we must make allowance for having to stop the engines once or twice. Good-morning, sir."

"Good-day, captain. Get in some coal and provisions as soon as you arrive in Venice. I may want to go to Timbuctoo, or to Andaman islands or something. I'm that sort of a man. I'm not sure where I'll go. Good-by."

The captain stopped at the first telegraph office on his way to the Waterloo station and telegraphed both to his chief engineer, Mr. M'Cosk, and his chief mate, Mr. Johnson, for he thought it barely possible that one or the other might be ashore.

"Must have steam by 4 p. m. to-day to sail at once long voyage. Coming next train. Owner in hurry. Send ashore for my wash. Brown, Captain."

When the clocks struck five on shore that afternoon, and the man at the wheel struck two bells from the wheelhouse, and the lookout forward repeated them on the ship's bell, all according to the most approved modern fashion on large steamers, the beautiful *Lancashire Lass* was steam-

SYNOPSIS.

Baraka, a Tartar girl, became enamored of a golden bearded stranger who was prospecting and studying herbs in the vicinity of her home in central Asia, and revealed to him the location of a mine of rubies hoping that the stranger would love her in return for her disclosure. They were followed to the cave by the girl's relatives, who blocked up the entrance, and drew off the water supply, leaving the couple to die. Baraka's cousin Assad, her betrothed, attempted to climb down a cliff overlooking the mine; but the traveler shot him. The stranger was revived from a water gourd Assad carried, dug his way out of the tunnel, and departed, desiring the girl and carrying a bag of rubies. Baraka gathered all the gems she could carry, and started in pursuit. Margaret Donne (Margarita da Cordova), a famous prima donna, became engaged in London to Konstantin Logotheti, a wealthy Greek financier. Her intimate friend was Countess Leven, known as Lady Maud, whose husband had been killed by a bomb in St. Petersburg; and Lady Maud's most intimate friend was Rufus Van Torp, an American, who had been a cowboy in early life, but had become one of the richest men in the world. Van Torp was in love with Margaret, and rushed to London as soon as he heard of her betrothal. He offered Lady Maud \$50,000 for her pet charity if she would aid him in winning the singer from Logotheti. Baraka approached Logotheti at Versailles with rubies to sell. He presented a ruby to Margaret.

It had been a strange love-making. They had been engaged during more than two months, they were young, vital, passionate; yet they had never kissed before that evening hour under the elm tree at Versailles. Perhaps it was for this that Konstantin had played, or at least, for the certainty it meant to him, if he had doubted that she was sincere.

Without offending Mr. Van Torp, Lady Maud managed not to see him again for some time, and when he understood, as he soon did, that this was her wish, he made no attempt to force himself upon her. She was probably thinking over what he had said, and in the end she would exert her influence as he had begged her to do. He was thoroughly persuaded that there was nothing unfair in his proposal and that, when she was convinced that he was right, she would help him.

But when he had taken the first step towards accomplishing his purpose, he was very much at a loss as to the next, and he saw that he had

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"I'm not sure. I never ask myself questions about what I do. I hate people who are always measuring their wretched little souls and then tinkering their consciences to make them fit! I don't believe I wish to do anything really wrong, and so I do exactly what I like, always!"

"If you will only go on doing what you like," Logotheti answered, "it will give me the greatest pleasure in the world to help you. I only ask one kindness."

"You have no right to ask me any-



"Don't You Fuss About Burning Coal."

thing to-day. You've been quite the most disagreeable person this afternoon that I ever met in my life."

"I know I have," Logotheti answered with admirable contrition. "I'll wait a day or two before I ask anything; perhaps you will have forgiven me by that time."

"I'm not sure. What was the thing you were going to ask?"

He was silent now that she wished to know his thought.

"Have you forgotten it already?" she inquired with a little laugh that was encouraging rather than contemptuous, for her curiosity was roused.

They looked at each other at last, and all at once she felt the deeply disturbing sense of his near presence which she had missed for three days, though she was secretly a little afraid and ashamed of it; and to-day it had not come while her anger had lasted. But now it was stronger than ever before, perhaps because it came so unexpectedly, and it drew her to him.

Their eyes met and they looked long at one another in the shade of the elm tree on the lawn, as the sun was going down. Only a few minutes had passed since Margaret had been very angry, and had almost believed that she was going to quarrel finally, and break her engagement, and be free; and now she could not even turn

never undertaken anything so difficult since he had reorganized the Nickel Trust, trebled the stock, cleared a profit of thirty millions, and ruined nobody but the small-fry, who, of course, deserved it on the principle that people who cannot keep money ought not to have any. Some unkind newspaper man had then nicknamed him the Brass Trust, and had called him Brassy Van Torp; but it is of no use to throw mud at the Golden calf, for the dirt soon dries to dust and falls off, leaving the animal as beautifully shiny as ever.

Mr. Van Torp did not quite see how he could immediately apply the force of money to further his plans with effect. He knew his adversary's financial position in Europe much too well to think of trying to attack him on that ground; and besides, in his rough code it would not be fair play to do that. It was "all right" to ruin a hostile millionaire in order to get his money. That was "business." But to ruin him for the sake of a woman was "low down." It would be much more "all right" to shoot him, after a civilized country, of course; but as it occurred to him, while he was thinking, that he might find it convenient to go somewhere in a hurry by sea, he bought a perfectly new yacht that was