

The Man Who Remembered

Narrative of the Remarkable
Exploits of Barton Cortice,
Reincarnated Hero of Strange
Adventures, as Related by
John Dare, American Journalist

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"The Hair of the Ages," Etc.

THE GREAT BUDDHA RUBY

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Barton Cortice, a young New Englander of Scotch-Irish descent, gifted with an altogether uncommon mentality, possesses the unusual and uncanny power of vividly recalling recollections of his life passed in former incarnations, centuries apart, including many strange adventures by flood and field, some of them connected with long-forgotten treasure-hoards, concerning which, by virtue of his weird gift, he is able to instantly define dates and exact localities. At the time these narratives begin, Cortice happens to be stranded in London, practically penniless, although potentially he commands fortunes. He is reaching out for a man of means and of integrity who will evince sufficient faith in his queer story to advance the necessary capital for a critical and actual test. Such an "angel" turns up in the person of Lord Westbury Wayne, marquis of Scarsdale, a young peer of great wealth, who is eccentrically fond of bizarre undertakings. Retta Cortice, Barton's sister, a surprisingly beautiful girl, dependent upon him, believes implicitly in her brother, having committed to writing certain stories which fall from his lips during his trance-ecstasies. After successfully locating and recovering the great treasure of King John, identifying a prehistoric gold mine in the Peruvian Andes, and rescuing some valuable family jewels hidden during the French revolution, Barton, his sister and those connected, become quite wealthy; the fourth adventure consisted of an attempt to dig up some piratical loot buried on the coast of North Carolina, while the fifth story takes our young dreamer to Scotland, where he is instrumental in recovering some valuable documents hidden in a medieval castle. After that comes re-discovery of a long-forgotten but immensely valuable pearl fishery in the Pacific, two weird expeditions in Italy, which recall the day when Cortice was a Roman legionary; an adventure with an airship while researching an Aztec treasure temple; a startling episode in the Egyptian desert in a quest for Pharaoh's mummy, while the tenth story takes our young dreamer to India.

THIS was the rather startling telegram which Lord Wayne read at the breakfast table one morning at Raynham castle.

BARTON CORTICE.

"Gad! What do you think of that!" exclaimed the marquis, tossing the filmy blue form across the table to his sister.

With true masculine maladroitness this was the abrupt way in which he obeyed Barton's request to "explain" to the lady.

"Isn't it rather sudden?" she inquired in tones that were fairly steady, though an acute feminine eye would have detected an agitated fluttering of the lacy covering at neck and bosom.

"Sudden!" ejaculated her brother. "I should say so! Apparently he's gone off alone—Jack Dare's in New York and Retta's in London. I don't half like it!"

"Surely you do not fear—" quavered the pretty widow, this time with undisguised concern in her query.

"Oh, I'm not exactly afraid of his safety," asserted Scarsdale stoutly. "Barton's able to take care of himself under ordinary conditions."

"Then what makes you anxious?" she persisted.

"Only that his peculiar gift is apt to lead him into some extraordinary situation where he might find himself in danger."

"Then you think this quick trip to India has something to do with those horrid dreams of his?" said Lady Blanche.

"Fraid nothing else would start Barton off that way. But his dreams, as you call them, are woven of pretty substantial stuff—they've made him a rich man, you know."

"I do wish you'd stop encouraging him!" petulantly exclaimed Lady Blanche, rising from her untasted breakfast, and going to the window to hide her emotion. She stood in the wide embrasure nervously coiling and uncoiling her handkerchief between her jeweled fingers.

Her brother looked at her straight and shapely back with a puzzled frown. Something suspiciously like a sob and a sniff reached his ears, and the woman's shoulders quivered.

"By Jove!" he muttered under his breath, rising and going to her side.

"Look here, old girl," he said, with rough, yet brotherly kindness, putting his arm around her, and striving to tilt her chin so that he could see her eyes.

But Lady Blanche persistently averted her face, yet two pearly tears dropped on her clasped hands.

"I didn't know it was like that, dear," he whispered comfortingly and understandingly. "I'll run up to town by the next train. If necessary I'll follow and bring him back safe and sound!"

"What's this about Barton?" he inquired after the first salutations.

"Simply that he left for India yesterday afternoon quite unexpectedly. It was only decided the evening before that he would go."

"Another expedition?" queried Wayne significantly. He was relieved to note that Retta did not seem the least bit anxious or worried.

"Yes—and no," she answered, returning his frank smile. "It's not quite a treasure-hunt this time, although there is a great stake to be played for. Barton has gone to help others and to clear up a very puzzling mystery."

"Well, I'm glad you know all about it," returned Lord Wayne. "Blanche was quite put out when his telegram arrived."

"There's not the slightest cause to fear for his personal safety, if that's what you mean," said Retta. "If all goes well he'll be back in three months to tell you about it."

"Which means," laughed Wayne, "that you are sworn to secrecy?"

"Not exactly that," said the girl. "I am sure Barton would not wish to have any secrets from you. But I really know very little, and I am sure he'd rather be his own historian."

"I see," said the marquis, nodding his head, and greatly relieved. "I shall be able to re-assure Lady Blanche. But there's another thing on my mind, Miss Cortice, in fact, it was for that as much as the other that I came to-day. Do you know what Barton said in his telegram?"

Retta shook her head, not trusting herself to speak. By that intuitive sixth sense which is vouchsafed most women for their defense against the so-called stronger sex, she divined what Scarsdale was about to say. The knowledge neither surprised nor startled her. In fact, if the truth were known, she had rather expected an avowal ere this.

"Three little words: 'Look after Retta.' Of course, I know what he meant thereby. But they determined me to ask you to-day and now, to give me the right to look after you in a nearer and dearer sense, now and forever."

He rose and came to her side, bending over her chair, and taking her unresisting hand in his.

"I think you know what I mean, Retta, dear. I want you for my own, for my wife. I love you, Retta. Will you be mine, sweetheart?"

The girl's answer was as simple and direct as her lover's appeal and as her own disposition. She rose, and stood facing him, her hands imprisoned in his, looking deep into his eyes with her own clear and unsullied maidenhood. Silently he drew her closer until she rested and nestled in his arms, whispering, through happy tears:

"If you want me, I am yours!"

"My darling!" was his fervent response as he strained her to him and covered her face with kisses.

So here was another victory to the credit, albeit indirectly, of "the man who remembered." When Barton Cortice returned to England three months later it was to find his sister in a fair way to become the marchioness of Scarsdale.

While these events were going on behind my back, I was in the States, returning in time, however, to congratulate the young lovers, to welcome Barton from India, and to hear the story of the great Buddha Ruby, which I will let him tell from the beginning in his own words as he told it to our reunited sextet—for Forbes had run down to Raynham for a few days of grouse shooting:

"You know," said Cortice, "I'm very fond of browsing around the British museum—spend a lot of spare time there, in fact, the Indian and Oriental rooms attracting me most. One day I was gazing over a case containing some superb examples of native Indian weapons—jeweled swords, daggers and pistols, marvelous for their richness and almost fabulous value. This was my third or fourth visit, and I had previously noticed another interested observer, who I decided was an East Indian—probably a Brahmin of high caste, although he was dressed in the regulation English morning costume—frock-coat, top-hat, lavender gray trousers, 'spats,' as we call 'em, and all that goes with that particular brand of make-up."

"From a bow and a 'good-morning' on the second and third day we fell into conversation about the treasures in the locked case. As I supposed, he was an Indian gentleman attached to the suite of that prince cricketer chap who was over here, the Maharaja Bhooloop Ringh. Well, on the fourth day we lunched together and afterward took in the cricket-match at Lord's."

You know what these English cricket-matches are—intolerably slow, to my mind—takes two or three days to play a single game. Give me two hours of baseball, full of ginger for the whole nine innings! But I suppose cricket

suits a leisurely class like you English—and the equally slow and deliberate inhabitants of India.

"Oh, I say, now!" broke in Wayne, but his interruption was unheeded save by a smile from Cortice.

"Some such remark I made to my new friend, Mr. Bharat Serang, as we came away. He smiled softly and replied:

"Very true; we of the older races do not count time like you Americans. A thousand—ten thousand—years are nothing in comparison to the sum total of human life lived on this planet."

"I suppose not—when you're a long time dead," I remarked, carelessly.

"But life goes on, in centuries, and cycles, and aeons. We in India take no count of the atoms—we survey the whole round. We think in centuries; you reckon by weeks!"

"Well, this was mighty interesting to me, as you may imagine, but I kept mum, although of course I knew that to these Brahmins and Hindoos a belief in re-incarnation is part of their religion. They accept it as unquestioningly as the western peoples admit that two and two make four."

"We dined at the Langham, Serang and I, that night, and over the coffee and cigars we continued our discussion. To illustrate a certain remark he said:

"Let me tell you a story, Mr. Cortice. In one of the chief temples in the holy city of Benares, there is a

night; next morning it was gone, nor has it ever been seen or heard of since! The golden fillet is yet in place; the faithful still flock to worship; the priests serve the shrine as of old—but the jewel, with I don't know how many bags of rupees, has never been heard of to this day! But there is a prophecy current."

"Here Bharat Serang lowered his voice and leaned across the table:

"The priests have a theory that the thief who stole the ruby secreted it somewhere near by until he could safely make off with it. That he was never able to do so they also believe, because it would have been impossible to dispose of so splendid a stone or to keep the transaction a secret. Sooner or later the jewel must have been traced. In my country all things are known—sooner or later. So here is what the priests and their devotees believe—that some day the soul of that robber will be re-incarnated again here on earth, and that in his new life he will remember the theft and the act of sacrilege, and endeavor either to obtain the stone or restore it to Boodha. It's a very pretty theory—all Brahmin India believes it. How does it impress your occidental mind, Mr. Cortice?"

"Bharat leaned back in his chair after delivering this climax to his strange story, watching me with inscrutable eyes. I confess to feeling mighty uncomfortable; several doubts and ques-

never be suspected and wait until the hue and cry had died away. Then I could probably recover the loot with impunity and dispose of it. This I did—and where do you suppose I secreted the ruby? But—I'll tell you that later."

"Well, as I sat there, facing Bharat Serang, the whole episode came back to me, clearly and vividly, every detail clean and sharp as an intaglio of the memory. What should I do? Make confession and restitution? For I had little doubt but that the blazing ruby, even now was where I had secreted it in my scare—a most cunningly-devised hiding-place, yet a very simple one."

"The story interests you?" suavely inquired Serang.

"Intensely," I admitted, "for reasons with which you are perhaps familiar. Be candid with me—how much do you know, or suspect? For my own satisfaction, you see, I wanted to be able to test the matter."

"Pardon,—I do not comprehend," said he.

"Perhaps you don't," I muttered under my breath, then aloud:

"I'll give you a Roland for your Oliver, Mr. Serang," I said, "if you understand the allusion."

"He smiled pleasantly and bowed. 'You mean you will give me another good story in exchange for mine?'"

"I nodded, watching him very closely, but could discover not the slightest sign indicating foreknowledge on his part of what I was going to say, then:

"Of course, you believe in this re-incarnation theory—that it would be possible for a poor servant's soul to be reborn and remember what he did?"

"It is no theory, Mr. Cortice," he remarked gravely. "We know. Our adepts are living witnesses! Every soul on earth has experienced several existences, but only to a very few—one here and there in thousands of generations—is it given to recall those previous lives."

"Well, Mr. Serang, I happen to be in my own person, here and now, one of those few men!"

"He looked at me with some courteous accretion of interest and a slight flushing of his dusky complexion; otherwise my statement seemed to occasion no surprise. But his only answer was to stretch his hand over the table and shake mine, English fashion."

"I'm ready at any moment!" I exclaimed, for I was pretty keen on seeing the thing through.

"There's a P. & O. steamer leaving Southampton to-morrow," he remarked inquiringly.

"All right—suits me exactly," I replied.

"So, that's how I went off on the jump. Serang insisted on making all arrangements. We had the finest suite on board, and traveled like princes. Going up to Benares every wheel was greased, and Serang throughout proved a mighty pleasant associate. He seemed saturated with a quiet elation over his discovery, and neither by word, sign, or look could I detect on his part a single iota of doubt in the truth of my story."

"Well, when we arrived at the holy city he left me for a few hours to make, as he said, the necessary arrangements. When he returned he was clad in the native costume of a high-class Brahmin, and he brought with him a bundle of clean but rather scanty garments of the kind worn by Hindoos of the lower orders."

"This is the only unpleasant incident, Mr. Cortice," he said, when I asked him if I was expected to wear the things, "but I am sure you will not object. In no other guise could you gain access to the temple—and I understand you insist on being present when you reveal the secret hiding-place!"

"That's imperative," I said, with finality. So he proceeded to dress—or rather, undress—me, first applying a brown stain to the exposed parts of my limbs, face, and body."

"When I looked at myself in the pier-glass I felt like a consummate fool, and when I reflected that I had to walk through the streets in such a rig I almost weakened. But, said Bharat:

"No one will notice you—there are 20,000 in Benares dressed as you are."

"So we marched out of that hotel just before sunset, I, at my guide's heels, for you must remember that I was now 'low caste' compared to him. We reached the temple interior, and no sooner had I set eyes on that beautiful, smiling Boodha, smelt the incense in my nostrils, and saw the shadowy forms of the worshippers prostrated on the paved floor, than the whole transaction came back to me with renewed force and clarity."

"I followed Bharat Serang into a curtained recess—it might have been the very one where I had lurked in fear and trembling on that night a thousand years ago."

"Here, after perhaps five or ten minutes of waiting, we were joined by a girdled and tonsured priest—a young, lithe and active Brahmin, so far as I could judge in the semi-gloom. Then came the deep booming of a musical gong, and immediately thereafter the clang of the temple doors as they were closed for the night. Looking out between the curtains I could see that the whole interior was in solitude, lit by the dim glow of a great dull lamp swinging in chains before the statue of Boodha."

"Serang and the priest exchanged a few sentences in a strange tongue. Then the former turned to me, and whispered in English:

"Will you now tell me where you hid the ruby? None but Boodha's anointed priest may make the search!"

"I nodded."

"Tell him to look in the hollow of Boodha's right ear!"

"That was where I had dropped the precious bauble in my hurry and fright on that eventful night."

"Lithe as a cat, even as I had done myself, the priest mounted the statue. There was a moment's anxious silence, a smothered ejaculation, then silence again."

"In a couple of minutes the priest rejoined us with swift and noiseless gait."

"Look!" he said, sweeping aside the curtain.

"I followed his outstretched arm, and there, blazing in all its glory on the forehead of the Boodha, outshining the lamp itself by the fires from its radiant heart, was the great ruby, restored to its rightful place by me! Then the priest took us by the arms and thrust us out into the night through some secret door."

"But what I can't quite make out," said Cortice in conclusion, "is whether Bharat Serang spotted me all along."

Appeals.

No longer does fame come from skill at fencing or tilting, nor from either physical or mental prowess, as we have been wont to understand these things, nor even, as many believe, from riches. Nowadays a man is known by his appeals. Almost any one, no matter how low a stratum in society he has sunk, can secure at least one trial with little difficulty, but to be able to secure two trials for the same offense marks a man more fit to survive, according to modern standards. To be able to keep right on, making appeal after appeal, and securing trial after trial, aye, even unto the Supreme court itself, distinguishes an individual as little less than superhuman in his power over mundane obstacles. And, if a man has been on the four-side of the Supreme court and by appeal and a new trial gets on the five-side, he is a king indeed. Let him be crowned.

Justifiable Suspicion.

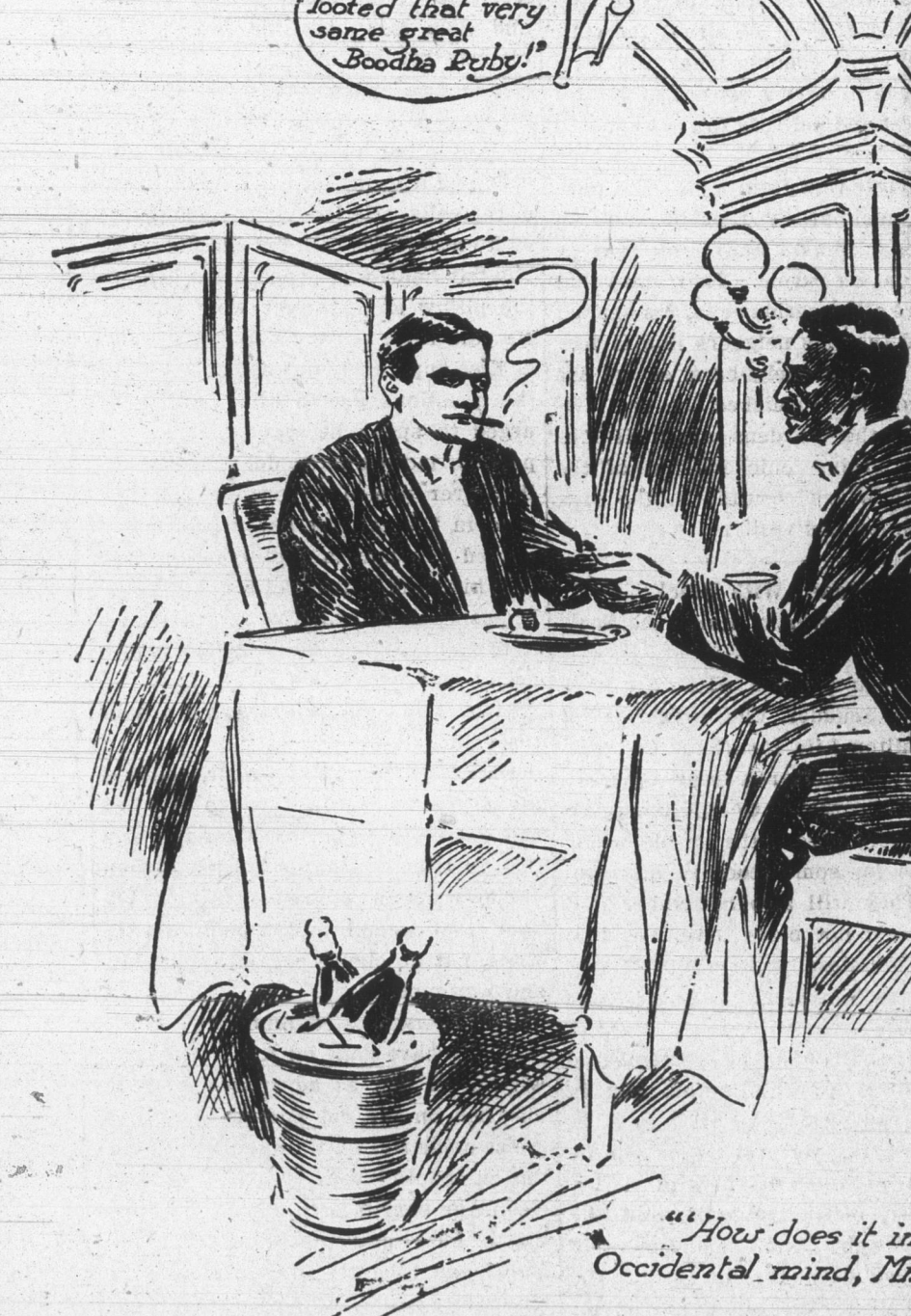
The Husband—How would you like me to get you a beautiful new opera cloak?

The Wife—Oh, Tom! What awful thing have you been doing now?—Cleveland Leader.

That Was Evident.

"There's a man who always weighs things carefully before he puts his hand in."

"Then I can plainly see that he's not a butcher."



beautiful but colossal seated statue of the god Boodha, sculptured by some unknown devotee thousands of years ago out of a flesh-colored stone that is unlike any material known throughout India. On this account superstitious worshippers believe that the image was not made by mortal hands, but was the miraculous gift of the deity himself. This statue is the only one in the temple, and had been a very noted place of pilgrimage for more generations than you and I have numbered years to our united ages. The temple supports a whole retinue of priests, some of them among the most pious in India—which is saying a great deal.

"The earliest records concerning this image of Boodha mention that its forehead was bound with a gold band or fillet, in the center of which there blazed a ruby priceless on account of its great size and purity. In the semi-dusk of the temple its rays blazed like some sentient thing, now dull, now fiery red, now benign and roseate in color, these mutations in hue corresponding with the anger or the pleasure of the deity; some say the varying tints of the great jewel—it was as large as a pigeon's egg—acted as portents of peace or war, famine or pestilence."

"Well, one day, almost a thousand years ago, in the reign of the Emperor Hyder Adar, the great ruby was stolen—either by some recreant priest or by a common robber. The stone was seen flashing on Boodha's brow one

"Let me give you one or two proofs, with chapter and verse," I went on, "then, if you're satisfied, we'll talk about your ruby."

"So in a dozen sentences I told him a few things which, had they been spoken aloud to the assembled diners there in the Langham, would have caused those highly respectable and normal people to regard your humble servant as a gibbering idiot."

"But Bharat Serang smiled seriously at it all, as his inimitable Boodha might have done."

"It is what you call 'caviare to the general,'" he commented quietly, "but almost commonplace to those who know. But you had somewhat special to tell me about this missing ruby? May I have your confidence?"

"That's what I've been leading up to, Mr. Serang," I said. "You've accepted as truth what I've told you already. Perhaps even this will not startle you."

"And then I gave him the yarn, but I kept back all mention of the place where I'd hidden the ruby. That I wanted to use as a dramatic sequel."

"Whatever surprise I may manifest, Mr. Cortice," he remarked quietly, "is not at your story, or because of your facts, but is occasioned by my amazing good fortune in making your acquaintance. May I have the honor of accompanying you to Benares—for I take it you will want to make a little experiment in a certain temple there—and I can facilitate matters for you greatly."