

# Major G. Ross L. S. O.

W. Robert Foran



**I** MUST confess that of all the picturesque figures it has been my happy lot to meet during the course of my 12 years of world-wandering, none stands so prominently in my recollections as Maj. G. Ross, member of the British army and companion of the Distinguished Service order, and now an assistant game warden in British East Africa.

I first saw the major in South Africa, and I got to know him, as few other men know him, while we were both serving the British East African government. This friendship between us is one, for my own part, which years can not lessen.

What a history the man has back of his forty-odd years! What a name he has won for himself on the field of battle and in police duties. It seems almost impossible to tell all he has seen, accomplished and endured. Perhaps one day some one will venture to record in book form the many deeds of daring this trail-looking Australian has to his credit. It would be a mighty task, but the result should be worthy of the effort, for I know of no man who has more material to draw upon, vivid true-to-life happenings in a varied career of excitement.

Ross was born in Australia way back in the seventies or may be the sixties. Emigrating to America when still a boy, he held first one post and then another, until finally he drifted to Canada and enlisted in the world famous Canadian mounted police.

Sometimes, if you can get him into a talkative mood, he will tell you of riding many miles to capture dangerous criminals single-handed. Ross tells with a smile that he was never known to fail on one of his hazardous undertakings if you look at his face, you can understand why this is so. It is not easy to get him to talk, but fortunately his record is so well known that it is not a difficult matter to gather material on his life.

I remember one day when we went in camp together in East Africa—keeping law and order in a new diamond field rush, which turned out a fizzle—Ross began to talk after dinner of some of his adventures with the gun-men and illicit liquor men in the northwest of Canada.

He told us of one day capturing a band of four bandits, who were notorious for the number of men they had killed. Ross was sent out with a trooper to capture them alive if possible. Ye gods! think of it! Two men to capture the four worst men in Canada! The two men rode across the plains for several days until they finally came upon the camp of the bandits.

"We got 'em," ended Ross. Being pressed for further particulars, he reluctantly told us a few details of the capture.

"Our arrival was a surprise," he continued. "I walked into their camp accompanied by my trooper. Neither of us had drawn a gun. Bandits or no bandits, they all know they can't fool the N. W. M. Police. One darning fool drew a gun, but I'm mighty quick with my peace-shooter and winged him. The others submitted, and we brought 'em back to the chief. It was sure some sort of snap, that. The poor fellow I had shot was buried where he fell by his comrades. They didn't like doing it, but a six-shooter covering you makes a man do what he's ordered. Leastwise, it always has in my experiences."

It is only by looking into his eyes and catching the lines of his mouth, hidden partially by a heavy mustache, that one can read that behind this hardened exterior lurks a heart full of kindness for a comrade in distress. Strange to relate he is a power with women. All women like him, and he himself loves the society of the gentler sex. In the summer of 1910 Ross was happily married in London and has taken his wife back to East Africa with him. Many a fair lady's heart will be jealous of the woman who has become Mrs. Ross.

One day, when riding together across the Athi Plains, Ross told me that he had spent some years in Utah. I asked him if he was a Mormon.

"Sure thing, young feller. I'm a bishop in the church," he laughed, and the merry twinkle in his eye warned me that a little coaxing might bring out a good story. And presently he told me about his stay in Salt Lake City.

"I gotten run out of there. I misremember what for. The Mormon religion is sure some fine thing. All your wives save up all the yellow-legged chickens to try and coax you to favor them. I don't believe in no suffragette; Mormon ladies for mine. Say, I guess you better join that outfit. All you gotta do is to stand up one day in the Tabernacle and announce that you've had a revelation for Sister Jane, and she becomes a number five or whatever number is next vacant in your catalogue. I sure had some mighty fine revelations in Salt Lake City. Say, young feller,

I'll appoint you a deacon in the church."

But somehow I felt I was being "joshed," for the twinkle in Ross's eyes belied his words. But ever after he called me "Deacon." I often wonder whether he told his bride about his Mormon proclivities. I rather fancy he would, for he was not a man to hide a joke, nor to hide the truth.

After leaving the northwest mounted police, Ross came back to the States and enlisted, after naturalizing, for some Indian campaign. He also fought through the Red River war. His career was varied to a marked degree until the South African war broke out.

Ross joined the Canadian mounted rifles and went out to South Africa with them as a trooper. He saw considerable service with them, but eventually got into trouble through an excessive fondness for looting. He was dropped from the force and immediately went to Pretoria and joined another irregular corps as a lieutenant. His wonderful scouting and daring earned for him the notice of Lord Kitchener. As a result of an interview with the great British general, Ross was empowered to raise an irregular corps of cavalry. He called the Canadian Mounted Scouts. So was born a little corps which wrote its name big in the annals of the greatest war of modern times.

Ross gathered together a number of kindred spirits and soon had a regiment of scouts which would be hard to equal, let alone beat. They were all men who had traveled the world in search of adventure, men who faced death daily with unflinching eyes, and who knew no hardship too difficult to endure or overcome. With such material it is to be wondered at that the Canadian Mounted Scouts were soon heard of.

They fought in every part of the Transvaal, Orange River Colony, and Cape Colony. The Boers trembled at the mere mention of the name of Ross. It would take a book to write the history of their deeds of marvelous daring. They used no kid gloves in their warfare, either.

Perhaps the most famous episode in their adventurous exploits was the shooting of 15 Boer prisoners, whom they had captured when wearing the British uniform. This act was against all usages of modern warfare, and in defiance of the acts of The Hague and Geneva; the Boers were liable for their breach of law to be tried by drumhead court-martial, with death as the penalty if found guilty.

Ross is a man of quick action. He had caught the men in the act of crime and wearing the uniforms. That was enough. He dispensed with the drumhead court-martial and sentenced them to death by shooting. He selected those of his most trusted followers to assist him in the execution of the Boers. Then he sent in the remainder of his regiment, warning them to take no notice of any shooting they might hear in the course of the next few minutes. He waited until they were out of sight and then turned to the covering Boers.

I wish that I could reproduce the story of the subsequent events with the vivid detail and quaint phraseology used by Ross when telling me the story. He speaks with a drawl and pronounced American accent.

"Say, you gold-durned dogs," Ross said to them, "I've caught you with the goods on you, and you got to ante up. I'll give you just five minutes to make your peace with your Creator, and then I'll pass you out. I guess the good God won't listen to such vermin as you, but I'm game to let you try your hand at it. Step lively now with them petitions to your good Maker!"

With a revolver in each hand and his three men covering the 15 prisoners with their guns, Ross counted the minutes. The Boers had not yet realized that he was in earnest and stood watching him anxiously.

"One more minute and out you get!" Ross snapped at them as he finished counting off four minutes. He stepped toward the first man and held his revolver at the man's head. The Boer covered back and began to beg for mercy.

"Cut out that woman business!" commanded Ross. "I guess the good God won't listen to you, and, if he won't you can't expect me to. Time up! Here's where you go to see your God, if he'll see you, which I doubt."

Bang! went the revolver, and the man sank dead at the major's feet. One after the other he sent them on their way into the "Great Unknown."

The work completed, Ross and his men mounted their horses and rode at a gallop after their regiment.

The story leaked out, and Ross was sent for by Lord Kitchener at Pretoria. No record of this meeting is obtainable, and Ross will not speak of it. At least his offense did not interfere, later on, with Ross's being appointed a companion of the Distinguished Service order, which ranks next to the Victoria Cross.

Another story told about Major Ross, which I happen to know to be true in every detail, is that when riding into Pretoria one morning from an expedition after a Boer commando,

his little column was mistaken for a party of Boers by a British garrison artillery battery of 47 guns in one of the hills guarding the capital. The shells fell wide and this fact irritated Ross. He left the column in charge of his second in command and rode at a gallop toward the hill from which the battery was firing. Obvious to the shot and shell, Ross was right to the summit of the hill, luckily arriving unscathed.

"Who's the gold-durned fool in command of this outfit?" he shouted to the astonished gunners.

A young artillery lieutenant came forward and saluted the major. The senior eyed the younger man sternly.

"That the best practice you and your fools can make?" he inquired with deep disgust. "I'll report you with deep disgust. I'll report you to the general. Maybe the general will let you hear from him. I guess you had better go back to school, young man, for your education has been sadly neglected."

Ross wheeled his horse and clattered down the hill again to rejoin his command. For many a long day the lieutenant will suffer from the gibes of his brother officers, and the men of the battery will probably never recover their self-respect.

Ross came out of the Boer war with a remarkable record behind him and with the undying admiration and friendship of Lord Kitchener and other generals. His is a name to conjure with. The Boers feared him to a marked degree, so much so that when large parties of them came up to East Africa to settle after the war and learned that Ross was an official, they told the governor that they were afraid to settle in the same country with Ross. But they have learned that the major in war and the major in peace are two entirely different people. The East African Boers have long lost all fear of him and now look upon him as their friend and brother.

I think I am correct in saying that Major Ross is the only naturalized American who is a retired major of the British army, a companion of the coveted Distinguished Service order, and an acting official of the British Colonial government service. This alone proves in what high esteem he is held by the British government.

After the Boer war was over, Ross fought for a time in the Somaliland war of 1902-1904 as an officer with the Boer contingent of mounted infantry. Then he came up to East Africa and went on a trading and elephant-hunting trip into German East Africa. His life there is somewhat shrouded in mystery. All I have been able to ascertain about it is that he shot a large number of elephants, secured by a grant of land, and set up a trading store at one of the German stations, Bakoga, I believe, on the Victoria lake.

However, he managed to fall foul of the German authorities, and he was expelled from the territory and his land confiscated. By all accounts, he was very harshly and undeservedly used. When his royal highness the duke of Connaught was visiting East Africa in 1906, Major Ross came to meet him at Kisumu on the Victoria lake by the duke's special request. They had a long talk, and the duke promised to take up his case against the German colony on his return to London.

Shortly afterward, as a result of this meeting, Major Ross was appointed assistant game warden of the East African Protectorate. No more fitting work could have been found for him, and he has earned a great name for his rigid enforcement of the game protection laws. Woe betide the man who is bold enough to break the game regulations, for he will have to answer to Major Ross and the courts of justice as sure as his name is what it is.

Day after day Ross rides the plains and game reserves in search of law-breakers. He thinks nothing of covering 50 miles a day. He carries his food and blankets on his saddle, and sleeps under a tree, in a native hut, or, if lucky, at a farmhouse. He cares nothing for the danger of attack from prowling beasts of the jungle or turbulent natives, or from the hardships of exposure. He spells duty with a very big capital D.

On one occasion, the story goes that he rode by moonlight from Fort Hall in the Kenia district to Nairobi—a distance of 64 miles! When about half way, he was held up on the plains by three lions. Ross says that he had much difficulty in keeping his pony's head on to the lions, eventually the lions tired of stalking him and turned their attentions to some zebra which Ross could hear near by. It wasn't a very pleasant experience, but Ross laughs at it. He calls the three lions in question, "Gold-darned pesky curious critters."

At his house in Nairobi he kept for a long time a tame lion, much to the terror of itinerant natives. He says that it was the best "watch dog" he ever owned, and claims that when all the other burglars in his vicinity were favored by burglars, his house escaped attention. Which is not at

all surprising under the circumstances.

I think that few men have had more interesting and exciting experiences with big game than Major Ross, yet he will not talk about them, for he is a very modest man, totally unaware of his own sterling qualities. His work carries him continually among the denizens of forest and plain, and few men know the habits and traits of the wild game in "Nature's Zoo" better than Ross.

I feel rather like telling tales out of school by narrating the following little story of Ross. It is so typical of the great, big, boyish heart of the man, that I can not refrain from telling it.

It so happened that Ross foregathered with three other Americans in Nairobi to celebrate Independence day. They had a very lively dinner, and afterward proceeded to loose off steam by firing off a number of crackers and rockets. Tiring of this tame pastime, they started in to turn Nairobi into a "wild West" town by shooting out the street lamps from the veranda of the hotel. This sport soon pallid, and they went for a walk down town with the object of seeking new fields of enjoyment. They happened to pass the bank and saw the window open, and a Parsee clerk working at a ledger under a light.

The temptation was too strong for Ross and his three American companions. They lit some crackers and threw them into the bank building mistaking the open window. The clerk stood on the bank and started out, shouting "Murder!" The negro constable on the beat below blew his whistle for help, and the barracks being close at hand, soon had some 20 dusky policemen respond to the "alarm" call. In the general mix-up, and to avoid arrest for their prank, Ross and his companions roughly handled the policemen and put them to flight.

I happened to be in command of the police at Nairobi, and soon came upon the scene in answer to a telephone call. I arrested the four practical jokers for "disturbing the peace" and "resisting a police officer in the execution of his duty." They were all released on bail, and subsequently stood their trial before the sessions judge and a white jury.

The jury, in the face of the weight of evidence, brought in a verdict of not guilty, and all were acquitted. Ross made an ample apology to the constable, and laughingly told me that he thought it pretty hard that a good American could not enjoy his national holiday without being arrested.

When Colonel Roosevelt visited East Africa he met Major Ross, and the two men found much in common. At the banquet given in Nairobi to the ex-president, Major Ross was selected to present a rhinoceros-foot box to the distinguished visitor as a token of regard from the Americans in the colony. In a short speech at the presentation, Major Ross, to every one's delight and particularly that of Colonel Roosevelt, repeatedly referred to the famous hunter as "Colonel Roosevelt." In his reply the colonel referred to the many years Major Ross had spent in America and particularly in the west, saying that they were both "pretty good Rocky mountain men."

It is somewhat surprising to think how this man of many weird experiences and continuous adventure has settled down to his official life in East Africa. See him in his spotless white duck government uniform with his breast glittering with his four orders and medals, and you will hardly credit that this is the man whose reckless daring and quick-handed meting out of justice in the Boer war set all the British army talking.

See him in his evening dress at a government house function, smoking a short pipe, and you may laugh for a moment because he looks like a duck out of water. But you will not laugh long, for you will quickly recognize that here is a MAN. It is because he is pre-eminently a man that he is a leader among men.

The spirit of the rover of the plains and the seeker after adventure is strong within him, and it is plain to the naked eye. He is no social mimic of civilized customs. He is not polished. His hands are not manicured, his face is not massaged, his clothes are anything but fashionable, but he cares not, and after a few minutes' conversation with him you do not care either.

Again, see him playing with children, as I have seen him, laughing and happy, and you will begin to understand that though a man may be quick to snuff out a life when it is necessary, this does not imply that he is heartless or cruel. No man who can look at Ross when he is playing with his little children's friends, can be cruel or heartless.

But Ross will tell you that it is sometimes imperative to carry a gun, and if you do so it is essential that you can shoot straight and be quicker on the trigger than the other man. As he once naively told me, "Shoot quick and straight. The last man in gets the full service and won't want no other."

One day the restless spirit within his gaunt, tall, weather-beaten frame led him to bid him pack up his traps and go forth again to fresh adventures. But life is too alluring to be left alone for long. When that spirit moves Ross again, things will happen. Things have a way of happening when he is around.

But for the moment he has settled down to a home life with a wife, and maybe with a son to rear up to follow in his footsteps. But I do not think that he will stay content for long in civilization.

"Madam," he said, "I am indeed sorry to see you in such a condition as this. What has happened? Have you been run over by a motor car?"

With infinite difficulty and obvious pain the patient roused herself, and the white lips slowly moved.

"No, doctor," she moaned. "But I fainted in church, and was brought to by some friends who have been studying first aid to the injured."

Then the great physician took out his note book and entered the case in the "very serious" column.

As well as amazement and delight to find that Dublin was Trench, the author of "Trench on Words." Ah! why didn't he sign his name Trench? For I knew that book almost by heart."

Amateur Doctors Again.

There was an ominous silence in the house as the great physician entered and made his way to his patient's room.

Hastily he made his examination, his eyes showing the deep sympathy he felt.

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### A BOY INTERPRETER

A Young Massachusetts Swede in Canada Twenty Years Ago Wants to Return.

Twenty years ago, a blond-haired young Swede, a boy of about 10 years of age, accompanied a party of his fellow-countrymen on the then long trip to Western Canada as an interpreter. The party he accompanied located at Wetaskiwin, Alberta, now one of the most thriving and best settled districts in Western Canada. For three years he remained in the district. Homesickness took him back to his home at Fitchburg, Mass., and he has remained there for 17 years. He has heard frequently from his friends in the West. He has followed their movements and watched their progress. He has heard how the town he helped to establish has risen from a shack to a growing, thriving, brisk business center, with the surrounding country peopled now by thousands who are occupying the territory in which he was one of the first to help plant the colony of twenty or twenty-five years ago.

An ideal remedy for women, and one especially suited to their delicate requirements, is Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, which thousands of women endorse highly. Mrs. Jennie Snedeker, 1041 West Monroe St., Chicago, testifies that she is "cured of grave stomach and bowel troubles by using Syrup Pepsin and without the aid of a doctor or any other medicine." All the family can use Syrup Pepsin, for thousands of mothers give it to babies and children. It is also admirably suited to the requirements of elderly people, in fact to all who by reason of age or infirmity cannot stand harsh salts, cathartics, pills or purgatives. These should always be avoided for at best their effect is only for that day, while

When I was up in Canada, Calgary was a small town and so was Edmonton, but I understand they have grown wonderfully since."

The young man when he went last learned a machine trade, he has patents and inventions but he wants to go to Canada again. And he likely will, but when he does he will find a greater change than he may expect. Calgary and Edmonton are large cities, showing marvellous and wonderful growth. Where but one line of railway made a somewhat tortuous and indefinite way across the plains to its mountain pass, there are three lines of railway dividing the trade of hundreds of thousands of farmers, carrying freight to the hundreds of towns and cities crossing and criss-crossing the prairies in all directions, reaching out into new settlements, and preceding districts to be newly opened for incoming settlers. He will not be able to secure a homestead unless at a considerable distance from the town, the three dollar an acre land is selling at from \$15 to \$35 an acre. He will find now what was but a theory then, that this land that was then \$3 an acre is worth the \$30 or \$35 that may be asked for it, and a good deal more. But he will find that he can secure a homestead just as good as any that were taken in his day, and today worth \$35 an acre, but at some distance from a line of railway, with a certainty of railway in the near future, and he will find too that he can still get land at \$15 to \$18 an acre that will in a year or two be worth \$30 or \$35 an acre. Mr. Mosson is talking to his countrymen about Canada. Advertisement.

Willow Switches Given Away.

The small boy whose father has time to apply the switch should beware with a little more than his usual caution. The United States government is giving away willow switches.

The department of agriculture has an experiment farm at Arlington, Va., and some parts of it were found to be too wet for raising ordinary crops. Therefore the experts set willows out in the wet places, and there has been so smart a growth that the government wants to get rid of the willow switches. It offers to give them away under the guise of willow cuttings to make baskets or bottom chairs, but no smart boy will ever be deceived by that kind of talk. He may be safe only in the assurance of the government that only one hundred of the cuttings will be given to one person.—Worcester Telegram.

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The department of agriculture has an experiment farm at Arlington, Va., and some parts of it were found to be too wet for raising ordinary crops. Therefore the experts set willows out in the wet places, and there has been so smart a growth that the government wants to get rid of the willow switches. It offers to give them away under the guise of willow cuttings to make baskets or bottom chairs, but no smart boy will ever be deceived by that kind of talk. He may be safe only in the assurance of the government that only one hundred of the cuttings will be given to one person.—Worcester Telegram.

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### Woman's Beauty is Based on Health

To Have Health, Bowel Movement is Absolutely Necessary—How Best to Obtain it

If woman's beauty depended upon cosmetics every woman would be a picture of loveliness. But beauty lies deeper than that. It lies in health. In the majority of cases the basis of health and the cause of sickness, can be traced to the action of the bowels. The headaches, the lassitude, the sallow skin and the lusterless eyes are usually due to constipation. So many things that women do habitually conduce to this trouble. They do not eat carefully, they eat indigestible foods because the foods are served daintily and they do not exercise enough. But whatever the particular cause may be it is important that the condition should be corrected.

An ideal remedy for women, and one especially suited to their delicate requirements, is Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, which thousands of women endorse highly. Mrs. Jennie Snedeker, 1041 West Monroe St., Chicago, testifies that she is "cured of grave stomach and bowel troubles by using Syrup Pepsin and without the aid of a doctor or any other medicine." All the family can use Syrup Pepsin, for thousands of mothers give it to babies and children. It is also admirably suited to the requirements of elderly people, in fact to all who by reason of age or infirmity cannot stand harsh salts, cathartics, pills or purgatives. These should always be avoided for at best their effect is only for that day, while

When I was up in Canada, Calgary was a small town and so was Edmonton, but I understand they have grown wonderfully since."

The young man when he went last learned a machine trade, he has patents and inventions but he wants to go to Canada again. And he likely will, but when he does he will find a greater change than he may expect. Calgary and Edmonton are large cities, showing marvellous and wonderful growth. Where but one line of railway made a somewhat tortuous and indefinite way across the plains to its mountain pass, there are three lines of railway dividing the trade of hundreds of thousands of farmers, carrying freight to the hundreds of towns and cities crossing and criss-crossing the prairies in all directions, reaching out into new settlements, and preceding districts to be newly opened for incoming settlers. He will not be able to secure a homestead unless at a considerable distance from the town, the three dollar an acre land is selling at from \$15 to \$35 an acre. He will find now what was but a theory then, that this land that was then \$3 an acre is worth the \$30 or \$35 that may be asked for it, and a good deal more. But he will find that he can secure a homestead just as good as any that were taken in his day, and today worth \$35 an acre, but at some distance from a line of railway, with a certainty of railway in the near future, and he will find too that he can still get land at \$15 to \$18 an acre that will in a year or two be worth \$30 or \$35 an acre. Mr. Mosson is talking to his countrymen about Canada. Advertisement.

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