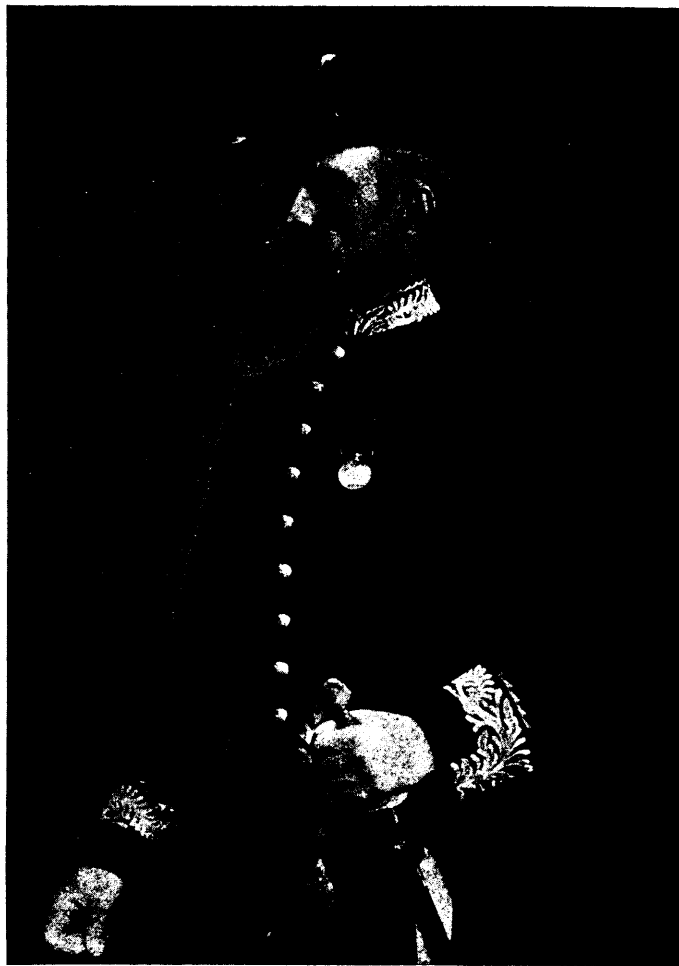


MR. JUSTICE GALT, TORONTO.

EDWARD C. RINGLER-THOMSON, H. B. M. VICE CONSUL AT MESHED, N. E. PERSIA.
AN OLD BYZANTINE.

The two remaining days and nights before Friday seemed longer to us than weeks before a circus to juveniles of the country. We were very anxious for the day to come; and the morning did come at last.

It was nothing unusual for us to go out and play together on Thursday morning, sometimes with other boys; but on that particular morning we kept strangely aloof from them! So it will be seen that everything was quite propitious for our starting, which we did by another path we had often traveled in our rambles. As for the jack-knife, I had that and a heavy cane; the revolver and torches were carried by Peter.

It was a glorious September morning; the sky was azure blue and the sun shone down brightly through the thick foliage which in places was putting on autumnal hues. The hour was not yet nine, and the birds had not yet finished their morning carols. How pleasant they sounded. And their sweet voices, after all, to such brave men as we were, on the mission on which we had set out, were very cheering indeed, and helped nerve our hearts; though I must say we did not lack courage. Perhaps we were too young then to lack that very important element in a person's nature.

"What will our pa's say if we don't get back to dinner?" inquired Peter, looking up at me with his great hazel eyes. "Get back to dinner!" I replied, quite earnestly. "I do not intend to. You see, if we do a pretty big thing in exploring the cavern, our names will be remembered and go down in history as such, and our pa's will not care if we do not get home till supper time. They will not scold us if we do a good thing!"

My remark made Peter laugh outright, and he had a rejoinder with:

"Yes, a big good thing it will be if we get in there and cannot find our way out! What then would you say?"

I frankly confess, as courageous as I was then, that I did not smile at his question, but rather began to meditate on the thought as being quite a serious one.

Our conversation, as would be natural, was on the cavern topic until we arrived there, which we did at about eleven. When within three rods of the great, dark hole, one of us

turned to the other and said: "Which one of us will go ahead?"

This was another part of our expedition to consider.

"Side by side; there is room enough," we said, in chorus.

"We must each carry a torch over our head," said Peter.

"Of course," I said.

We prepared our torches and lighted them; my companion clasped his revolver in his right hand, and I my jack-knife (I must say it was not very sharp) in my right hand, our torches in our left hands. Side by side we started to go in. Certainly it would not look well for me to say that I lacked courage, even if my friend Peter did!

"Go on!" said he.

"Why don't you go in first?" I asked.

"I don't like it!" said Peter.

"What are you going to do about it?" I asked, again.

"You go ahead!" he replied.

"But remember that we agreed to go side by side!" I said.

"I know, but it looks dark in there! and I am afraid!" stammered Peter.

"Pshaw!" I replied. "We knew that before we planned to come here. Let us push on!"

And so we did. We went slowly on, feeling cautiously, knees weak and trembling, eyes almost out of their sockets, and torches flaring and glaring over our heads. We had only gone in probably twenty feet when, to tell the truth, we dared not turn back. And then, thoughts of all the hobgoblins and horrid things we had ever heard as being inmates of this horrid cavern came to our minds, and we imagined we saw all these pictures hanging on the walls of the damp cavern.

Although that was seventeen years ago, I must confess it now, as I did then, that Peter M—— and I could not, for the life of us, advance another step into the cavern, and I presume the reader has come to the conclusion before reaching this point that we could not reach a great way in. But the most important feature of our romance is, just as we fell headlong from fear and faintness, two other schoolboys, a few years older than us, were right there to seize us in their

arms, and in less than a moment we were again conveyed to the light and warmth of the bright sun.

In making our final arrangements the day previous, one of these boys had clandestinely overheard our plans and immediately told the other what we were up to.

Had we been a few years older we should have felt greatly chagrined at the termination of our adventure; but, as it was, we were glad of it.

But one thing was sure; it was that my companion and I were the butt of jokes in the school and neighbourhood for several months, while even now it is pleasant to refer to it as a daring youthful adventure without prolific results so far as we were concerned at the time; but "it is an ill-wind that blows no good," and by our setting the ball "a-rolling" the immense cavern was fully explored that year by two young men of about twenty-five years of age, and nothing but a great cavern was found, with nothing that had the appearance of a human skeleton, ghost or hobgoblin. And from that time a certain superstitious class came to the rightful conclusion that there are no such horrid things after all, which was a very sensible idea; and would that the scattering ones throughout the whole world could believe the same.

In conclusion, I will say that we *did* arrive home in time for early tea the day of our adventure. Yet, had it not happened as it did that the two other boys were there, Heaven only knows how long we might have remained in the cavern in Elephant Mountain.

ALPH. GUERETTE.

OUTWITTED THE DEAN.—The servant who brought the turbot to Dean Swift behaved rudely, and was sharply rebuked, and told by the dean to take his place and he would show him how to deport himself. The man acted the master's part well, and as the Dean came forward to deliver his message he was graciously thanked, and beside was offered half a crown for his trouble. Swift was caught in his own trap, and paid over the half crown, and complimented the Irish servant on his ready wit.