

TOLD BY FAR-AWAY CAMERAS



A LITTLE SHELL GAME.

THE sensations of this French soldier may be better imagined than described. He is examining the German shell with very tender solicitude. The shell has not yet exploded. It happened to whiz past the poilu and bury itself in the soft earth between two pieces of rock. The impact on the soft earth was not sufficient to explode it. Had it struck either of the rocks there would have been no French soldier left to examine it. This is very similar to the case of a Canadian soldier who was struck on the chest by a hand grenade which bounced off him, killing the corporal opposite.



DRAMATIC photograph of a life-boat from the P. and O. steamer Arabic, which was torpedoed by a German submarine some time ago in the Mediterranean. The life-boat has just landed. Many of the occupants are still wondering what became of their husbands, wives and children.

"Who is it?" demanded the voice.

"MacDougal," replied the preacher.

"What do you want?"

"I want in, Doc."

A jumble of surly words issued from the tube, but the preacher continued to wait.

"I want in, Ned," he said. "Come on. Come on down. Let me in."

The voice from the tube had a whine in it now.

"I—I don't want you in."

"Yes you do," said the preacher. "It's cold here. Hurry. Let me in."

After a long time there were sounds of shuffling foot-steps on an oil-cloth floor. The heavy lock on the door clicked, the door knob rattled and the door creaked open, revealing a thin rat of a man with a candle in one hand, while the other clutched his dressing gown about him.

"What you want now?" he grumbled.

"Medicine," retorted the preacher.

"Y— you lie!" retorted the young man. "It's an excuse—an excuse to interrupt me."

"If you needed interruption then perhaps it's a good excuse," returned the preacher drily.

They had reached by this time the shabby room which was called the doctor's office. Even in the candle light it showed the need of a tidying hand. Books and instruments lay heaped in any sort of order or disorder. The pills and bottles of a country doctor—who has to be his own druggist—rose in tiers on the dirty shelves. In one corner, covered with blankets was the narrow lounge on which the doctor slept. Beside it the speaking tube projected. At the head was a small table and on the table a bottle and a glass.

As the two men entered the doctor reached suddenly forward and, seizing the bottle, tried to hide it under his dressing gown. He faced the visitor, half defiant, half afraid of reproof.

"Trying to forget—again?" sighed the preacher.

"What d' you know about forgetting?" retorted the doctor. "What troubles YOU ever had?"

"Plenty," said the preacher. "We all have."

"D' you mind if I take a drink?" the other interrupted.

"No."

"Y— you have one?"

"Not now."

His drink seemed to transform the doctor. He stood up and stretched himself, yawned happily and then checked himself as he looked down at the preacher.

"Say," he exclaimed, "you look all in, Dick."

"Had a tough day," retorted the preacher. "I'll be right again in the morning."

"Christmas, too," remarked the doctor suddenly.

"I hear the Rich Man's lost his son?"

"Yes. I was there to-night."

"And the Smidges have another son! . . . I was there this morning. . . It takes the poor to breed."

"I was there to-night," murmured the preacher.

"Where trouble is—there's You! Eh?" the doctor might have been laughing or he might not. He was looking at the preacher with new interest in his face.

"That's my work."

"God!" a sudden idea seemed to strike the doctor. "It'd kill me, Dick. It'd kill me. . . How—how in blazes do you do it?"

"It's my job."

"Sure! But what you get out of it?"

"Seven hundred a year!"

"Seven hundred! Phew!" The doctor seemed suddenly interested. "Say, Dick! My father, back in Toronto, drew down three thousand a year and had an assistant to do all the work outside the preaching."

"Yes. But your father was a great preacher."

"Aren't you?"

"You've heard my best sermons."

"Hmph!" the doctor replied. "That's right. You aren't a great preacher. Then what do you stick with the game for? You could make money in business for yourself."

"I'm in my right business, thanks."

"Comfortin' dubs?"

"Doing what I can."

Suddenly the doctor, in the act of pouring another drink, set down the decanter and the glass and with his hands on his hips demanded:

"Dick! Who the Hell comforts you?"

The preacher rose, shook off his weariness and replied.

"Never mind. I'm half asleep with the stuffy air in here. What I came for is medicine."

"Yourself?"

"Wife."

"Cough?"

"Worse."

"Maybe I better—"

"No. You better not come. You're drunk—or you will be in ten minutes. Give me the medicine while you're able." Then after a pause, "I tell you this, Ned, if anything happened—if anything." Then he pulled himself together. "Never mind," he said. "Give me the medicine."

With unsteady hands the doctor compounded the mixture, poured it into a bottle, corked it, labelled it, and read the directions to the preacher.

"You write 'em, Dick," he said, "My hand's not steady enough."

The preacher wrote them.

"I can't pay you now," he said. "Charge it."

"Right," said the doctor, and before he knew it he was alone.

Comforted, the rich man slept; the man who feared death, slept; the Smidge family slept, and all others on whom the preacher had called that night, except the doctor. In the preacher's house the tall, gaunt, boyish figure of the preacher was tiptoeing back and forth between the kitchen and his wife's bedroom, making mustard plasters, and hot drinks. His wife was ill. The children slept fitfully in the next room and dreamed of Christmas.

II.

YOUNG Doctor Ned had been jilted in love back east. He made that memory a perpetual excuse for potations. Drunk or sober he was said to be
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