

THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY

of shells don't think that they were letting up. They were coming over at their usual rate and more than once the concussion of a nearby explosion almost stunned us. Our ear-drums ached. Once I looked up at Joan after such an impact as rattled the little building, stone as it was, and for an instant she seemed almost to totter.

"Don't be alarmed, she won't fall," said Podds with a faint smile. "Where is the iconoclast, deliberate or accidental, who can shatter the symbol of such a nation's faith?"

"Aren't you mixing her with the Virgin, old man?" I asked. "Joan, you know, was but human."

His own faith was great. But I thought he was beginning to wander in delirium. We had made a cushion of coats for his head and he lay near us in a sort of semistupor, broken only occasionally by quiet remarks, mostly irrelevant, and generally half humorous. Fate or the fairies had not left a silver spoon in his mouth at birth, but they had left something of far greater value, the gift of a spicy wit.

"Ungry, sir?" asked the sergeant.

"Me? Not arf!" returned Podds in such delightful imitation of the other's accent he could take no offence. "But I've been thinking if we only had some ham we could have ham-and-eggs, if we had some eggs."

"Well, hit's a merry Christmas Heve we're a-havin'!" remarked the sergeant cheerfully, as he packed up his cards. "Hi s'y you! (to the prisoner) hif you lean

crisp cinder on the Day of Judgment if I do not speak the truth—as I live and breathe and move she had lifted one arm and was pointing to the open door!

"It's a sign—an omen!" cried Podds. "Run for your lives, you fellows! Never mind me."

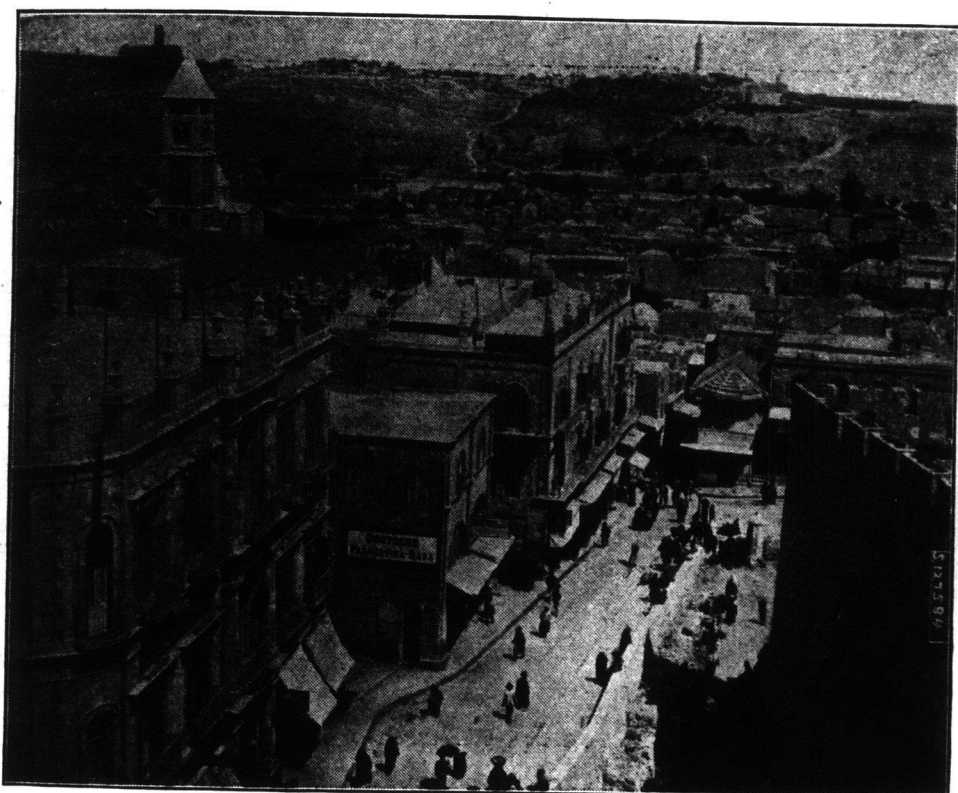
"My Gawd!" gasped the sergeant, and his face was ashen, his eyes bulging.

"Do you see it? Do you see it?" I kept repeating, foolishly. "Or am I in a trance of some kind?"

It was evident, however, that we were all under the spell, if spell it were.

Well, we came to our senses with a jolt and seized the hint that marble woman was giving us. The cockney grasped Podds' feet and I braced his shoulders and we dug out that door like mad. Down the steps with our burden we stumbled and had reached a group of naked ash trees on the opposite side of the road when, with a thunderous sound like a railway train crashing through a steel bridge, a huge shell struck our school-house. As in a dream we watched a heavy, dark, mushroom-shaped mass of stone and wood and what not rise in the air, and then subside. We blinked our eyes and when we tried to make out some definite object across there, we failed. There was nothing but a flat heap of rubbish and a thick cloud of dust above it.

"Funny. The place was of no military value," I remarked. "It's another case of wanton destruction. Curse those brutes anyway!"



The above is a remarkable photograph of the heart of the City of Jerusalem which surrendered to the British forces recently. The photograph was made from the Tower of David, at the Jaffa gate. In the background can be seen the Mount of Olives, crowned by a modern Russian tower. Directly in the centre is the Dome of the Rock, or the "Mosque of Omar," the site of Solomon's Temple. It covers the traditional rock where Abraham made ready his offering and David built his altar. Directly at the back of it is the Garden of Gethsemane. The new pointed tower at the left belongs to the Church of St. John, the headquarters of the Knights of the Crusades and, until the British capture, the property of the German government. Winding up the Mount of Olives are seen the three narrow paths that lead to Bethany. In the immediate foreground is the business centre and the principal street. On the left side of the street is the Deutsche Palaestra Bank, and alongside that the Central Hotel, well known to all tourists.

too 'ard on that bally window-sill you'll fall hout!"

"Christmas Eve!" I echoed. "You don't mean to say it's Christmas Eve?"

"Hit his hindere. My ol' woman she'll 'ave a parcel for me, hi hexpect. 'Ow hi wish hi were in Blighty though, swankin' abaht to-night hand chuckin' hall the pretty girls hunder the chin."

Scarcely had the speaker finished his last remark than another shell, closer than any heretofore, whizzed over the school and exploded in a nearby field.

"This is a bit thick," I observed, my heart in my throat. "I believe they're trying for this building."

We looked around. The prisoner was gone! How or why he had disappeared was not the question. He must be brought back. It was quite dusk now and the task would be difficult. The sergeant had sprung up and was muttering blasphemies. In a moment, before he had reached the door even, a sharp cry from Podds arrested us. Again he had sat up and was pointing at the image of Joan which stood out luminous and clear in the dim light.

As I live—and may I shrivel up to a

"Most hextraordinary," agreed the sergeant.

"Not at all," quoth Podds, who in the haste and excitement seemed to have forgotten his leg. "Not at all. It's as plain as a pikestaff."

"Where do you get that stuff?" I asked.

"How do you account for Joan lifting one marble arm and pointing us to safety?" he countered. "It was heaven sent."

"Well, my prisoner saved 'is own 'ide, hand just hin time, too," said our companion.

"There!" exclaimed Podds. "Aren't you chaps able to put two and two together? Are you solid ivory from the neck up?"

Even so we could not grasp the association of ideas, all at once. It wasn't until we came within sight of L—that we knew. For a little off the road we stumbled upon our Hun friend. He had been killed by a sniper's bullet, a Hun sniper probably, and the sergeant almost wept with disappointment.

"Hi hexpected to get 'im haliye!" he mourned.

"Search him," suggested Podds, whom we had laid gently down.

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