

# THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE

VOL. XXXVI

TORONTO, APRIL, 1911

No. 6

## EASTER AT JERUSALEM

BY ALBERT R. CARMAN

JERUSALEM is the Easter City, as Bethlehem is the City of Christmas. Most independent travellers who plan to be in Palestine during the spring endeavour to spend Easter in Jerusalem; but you would be astonished to see how few travellers in the Orient are independent. The great majority of them go there as shackled subjects of "tour conductors"; and the thrifty "tour conductor" avoids Jerusalem at Easter time, unless he has made a special point of it in his advertisement and charged two prices for the privilege. For the Holy City is crowded to its utmost capacity during Holy Week; and it commonly costs something to find accommodation there, especially for a large party. But the independent traveller can usually get in somewhere; and to just miss Easter at Jerusalem is one of the most tantalising experiences that vex the tourist who has sold his liberty under the impression that travel in the East is "impossible" for the unattached European or American.

It is difficult. It calls for patience, acceptance of hardship, a willingness to take risks and a plethora of "bakshish." But it is quite possible; and the independence you get is worth immeasurably more than the price.

We were compelled this last spring, in going to Jerusalem at this time, to practically take a leap in the dark.

The storm had kept the Jaffa boats from landing for days, and our letters asking for accommodation were unanswered. Every report said that Jerusalem was crowded; and Jerusalem is not a city where you can find a room in a dwelling-house when the special quarters for foreigners are full. As for the hospices, the Easter pilgrims would overflow them.

As luck would have it, a missionary family from up the Asia Minor coast and ourselves were the only candidates for the one lone room left in the hotel we favoured; and we drew the prize. I never knew what became of the missionaries. However, there was an escape vent this last Easter for a reason you would never guess; and that was that the Greek Easter did not come until a full month after the Latin Easter. This left the Russian hospices comparatively free; and many a homeless Protestant found a roof and excellent board there. I am told, indeed, that the Russian hospice is the best place to stay at in Jerusalem—with the possible exception of the American Colony. Certainly the hotels would not be hard to beat.

We were in Jerusalem for a full week before Easter; and so became fairly familiar with the city and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre before the rush of the Easter services began. This central church, which en-