

official 'communiqués' has often been a trial at crucial moments). It is what we know of his acts that makes us trust him as one can trust a single-hearted, determined, conscientious leader. We know that his whole mind is bent on achieving the one object that he has in view, and that he is absolutely impervious to secondary considerations and to personal motives. When, at the outset of the war, the Germans' rapid advance and the consequent retreat of the Allies made his personality one of supreme importance, Joffre, says M. Maurice Barres, proved that he was worthy of his tremendous responsibility. Putting aside all his private sympathies, he quietly set to work to renovate the military hierarchy, and the intense strain and fatigue of the war acting upon generals of a certain age, made him decide to replace them by younger men. These changes, that have gradually modified the aspect of the French army, have been made with a decision and calmness, good sense and disinterestedness that command respect, even from those who suffered from them. The result is that at the present moment there are very few generals over sixty years of age at the front, and many men between forty and fifty are invested with important commands. From another standpoint, General Joffre deserves the sympathy of Catholics. It is no secret that, although he was always a man of high character, whose public and private life was above reproach, he was not, before the war, a practical Catholic. His views in this respect, say those who are best qualified to know, have undergone a change. It is a blessing in the present and a happy omen for the future to possess a leader whose fearless pursuit of the highest duty is backed by the finest qualities of heart and mind, and who is helped by the illumination of religious faith.

General de Castelnau, one of General Joffre's best-known colleagues, is a fervent Catholic: of his five soldier sons, two have been killed since the beginning of the war, and the superhuman courage, born of Christian submission, with which their father received the news, without interrupting for one moment his arduous task, will never be forgotten by his comrades.

THE CAPITAL OF TURKEY.

Constantinople, the capital of the Turkish Empire, which was founded as long ago as 330 A.D. by Constantine the Great—hence its name—consists of two distinct parts: Constantinople proper, and what might be called Christian Constantinople, because it is there that the Christian colonies chiefly congregate.

The two are separated by the Golden Horn, a creek about five miles long and half a mile wide at the entrance, so called probably from its famous fisheries, a veritable land of plenty to the ancient inhabitants.

In the present day it is a safe harbor, capable of accommodating 1200 sail, and so deep that the largest ironclads of the Turkish navy, which may be seen there during a great part of the year, find enough water for their draught quite close to the shore.

Christian Constantinople, on the north side of the Golden Horn, is divided into three distinct sections—Top hane, which is so named from its cannon-foundry, and is chiefly famous for its market, its Circassian slave dealers, its caïque building, and its beautiful marble fountain.

The two other sections are Galata, the merchant quarter, the seat of Customs, and the steam companies'

agencies; and Pera, the aristocratic quarter, where all the embassies, legations, and consulates are situated.

The Bosphorus, which leads to the Black Sea, and the entrance to which Constantinople and Scutari command, is about seventeen miles long, with a breadth of from little more than a third of a mile to two miles.

IMMUNITY OF THE CRUCIFIX.

Time and again we have seen it noted in reports, both official and private, from the front that, amidst the destruction of towns and villages and churches, when all else was reduced to ruins, the Crucifix, and sometimes an Image, alone remained unscathed. 'As you know, all over France there are shrines and crucifixes, and in no case have I seen them damaged by shells or fire. I think this has been noted more than once in English newspapers.' So writes one of the staff of an English Church paper in the firing line. A writer in the *Times*, describing the action at Neuve Chapelle, bears the same witness as follows:—

To see Neuve Chapelle by daylight is to know the power of modern artillery fire. Unless fallen bricks may be called a village there is no village left, with the exception of half a dozen houses which were hit several times. After knocking the buildings to pieces British shells kneaded and pulverised the remains. Yet two objects stood practically unharmed amidst the low skyline of ruin. They were two huge crucifixes of the type familiar to travellers in France. Eight-inch shells had excavated enormous holes on either side of the base of one, and while trees in the town had been cut in two and splintered and gashed, four small evergreen shrubs around the other Christ was undisturbed. Many soldiers remarked the curious phenomenon; and, indeed, talked much of it.

OBITUARY

MISS MARGARET M. HICKEY, NELSON.

The death occurred at St. Mary's Convent, Nelson, on Tuesday morning, May 18, of Miss Margaret Mary Hickey, only daughter of Constable and Mrs. Hickey, after a brief illness from acute pneumonia. The deceased, who was a pupil at St. Mary's Convent for several years, was a clever musician, and gave great promise of becoming very proficient as a pianist, having gained a certificate in four different grades during the past four years. At the Trinity College music examination, held at Nelson last year, she was successful in passing the senior advanced grade. The funeral took place after Mass at 9 o'clock on May 20. The school children were formed into rank and led the procession to the Nelson Cemetery, where the Rev. Father Tymons officiated. The parents of the deceased have the sympathy of a large circle of friends in their sad bereavement.—R.I.P.

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