

SIDELIGHTS ON THE WAR

GENERAL.

As a result of the recent Zeppelin raids in London (says the *Glasgow Observer*), involving in some instances grave destruction to Catholic edifices, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster has ordered the Rector of each mission to take out a special insurance against damage from air-bombs at an annual premium of ten guineas.

Mr. Ambrose Willis, who has just been gazetted as a subaltern in the London Irish Rifles, is the son of a convert Anglican clergyman, and since 1912 has been actively engaged in the work of the Catholic Reading Guild.

'AN UNQUESTIONABLE MIRACLE.'

Major Wilkison, in the course of a letter to his sister, Miss Wilkison, a resident of Langport, graphically describes some of his experiences of trench life on the French front. He says of Neuve Chapelle:— 'The most awful sight is the church and churchyard, everything most sacred to the poor people being utterly blown to pieces and desecrated. The tomb-stones are smashed, and the long-buried dead exposed. It is heart-rending. (Our Tommies have re-buried a lot of human remains.) Yet in the midst of all this desolation stands a huge crucifix in the churchyard, with two Jack Johnson holes in the front and one behind—not injured in the slightest by the tempest of fire that had swept over it. It is an unquestionable miracle, which has been repeated over and over again in other churchyards.'

A POPULAR CHAPLAIN.

Writing to a Yorkshire priest, Private James Kelly, of the 9th Durham Light Infantry, gives evidence of the camaraderie which exists between the 'Tommies' and their chaplains. Our chaplain (he says) is Father Evans, S.J., who looks after us well. He is a very nice man; besides, he's a big fat man, with a big jolly face—one you could nearly ask for the loan of a "bob" if he hadn't been a priest! He comes and hunts the shy ones of us. There was not a Catholic among us who was not at Communion this morning. We go to Communion pretty frequently—generally twice when we are out of the trenches. So we are now ready to go to anywhere. I am pleased to tell you that a Catholic has never yet drawn out of anything we have had to do, no matter how dangerous. We get every chance to practise our religion, our Adjutant, Captain Harter, being a Catholic.'

A NEW ZEALANDER'S TRIBUTE.

A stirring tribute to the élan and gallantry of the Irish troops in the battle of Suvla Bay is contained in the following letter from Captain Thornhill, of the New Zealand Forces in Gallipoli, to a friend in Dublin:

After describing some of the engagements which he has been through, the officer continues:—

'I have just returned after an exciting time. Your Irish fellows are the talk of the whole army. To me the last few weeks have been one long nightmare.

But I must make you wise in regard to the doings of the Irish. Most of them, I believe, are "freshies." The Empire can do with a heap more "freshies" of the Irish brand. Their landing at Suvla Bay was the greatest thing that you will ever read of in the books by high-brows. Those who witnessed the advance will never forget it.

Bullets and shrapnel rained on 'em, yet they never wavered. Officers got it here, there and everywhere, but the men never wavered. The men were splendid. The way they took the hill (now called Dublin Hill) was the kind of thing that would make you pinch yourself to prove it wasn't a cheap wine aftermath. How they got there heaven only knows.

'This is how a chap named Enright (two fingers and a thigh bone broken) described it to me:

"We reached the top of the hill to find Turks galore on the other side. We made a bayonet charge (I bet they did), and the Turks, after putting up some show, bolted. It was getting dark, so we returned to the top of the hill, and spent all night making trenches. But it was not too hot."

'It was up there on that shell-swept hill that Enright and many more of them got it.

'A game that the Turks have taken to recently is blowing bugles and raising Cain generally, with a view no doubt, to frightening them. They did that when attacking trenches held by one of your lot—I think it was the Inniskillings. They came right close, too. Then the "Skins" (if it was the skins) got right into them with the bayonet. That was all right.'

SAD CONDITION OF POLAND.

Cardinal Bourne has communicated to the press, at the request of the General Committee for the Relief of the Victims of the War in Poland, Vevey, a copy of a letter which the Polish Bishops have addressed to the archbishops and bishops of the Catholic world. The letter is signed by six archbishops and twelve bishops, whose dioceses cover the whole of Poland. The Polish bishops write in part as follows:—

'Poland, that great Catholic country, is, in consequence of the present war, passing through unspeakable sufferings, and is for the greater part completely devastated, sunk in a destitution so terrible that the world perhaps has never seen its like. Not only have millions of soldiers since a year been fighting on her territory against one another; not only have the cruel exigencies of modern warfare brought about the complete ruin of hundreds of towns, thousands of villages, and over 1000 churches; not only are all food-stores utterly exhausted throughout a vast region, but over and above all, the unhappy Poles are forced to fight against themselves in three hostile armies, so that many a time—brother against brother, son against father, kinsman against kinsman, friend against friend—they mercilessly take each other's lives.

'That Poland, which for centuries was the bulwark of Christendom, and which in the hardest moments never ceased to be the most faithful and true daughter of the Church, in spite of the immense calamity which by inscrutable designs of Providence has been visited upon her, has even to-day not wavered in her Faith. She is, however, in extreme need of moral support in order that she may bear with unshaken faith and firm hope the sufferings still in store for her, and of material aid in order that she may save hundreds of thousands of the children from the disease, misery, and starvation now falling upon countless victims.'

TRIBUTE TO IRISH SOLDIERS.

A Dublin staff officer who has returned wounded from the Dardanelles told an interesting story of his experiences in the course of an interview with a representative of the *Freeman*. He spoke of the admiration excited by the fine appearance and well-trained condition of the divisions of the new army, which included the Tenth Irish Division. The war-worn members of the Expeditionary Force looked on the arrival of these new forces, he said, as heralding a striking blow towards the finish. About the 5th or 6th of August these new troops departed for the advanced base in torpedo boat destroyers, lighters, and transports, etc., and in the ensuing twenty-four hours reports came that the landing had been successful, and that they had advanced considerably. The wounded then began to pour in on the advanced base, and about the 12th of August it appeared to everybody that the casualties were very large. All the Irish regiments of which the Tenth Division was composed seemed to have suffered very badly, the Dublins and Munsters particularly.

All the officers available were sent up to the firing line, and the interviewed officer joined one of the Irish regiments which had lost heavily. 'The Turks,' he said, speaking of his own experiences, 'were occupying a ridge of hills two miles inland, from which they bom-