

General Joffre

The Commander-in-Chief of the French Army

A good, somewhat stout, easy man, who every morning mounts a short-legged weight-carrying horse and goes for his canter; who in the evening plays his game of bridge with genuine pleasure; who delights in society, but not too much of it; who lives in an airy restful home without show of riches or ostentation; who is fond of his wife; who, in short, lives the life of hundreds and thousands of quiet humdrum citizens—that is General Joffre in peace time and at home.

At business, the business of war, he is somewhat different. He is as hard as nails and as unforgiving. Last year after manoeuvres he broke five generals. There was nothing against them except that they did not come up to General Joffre's standard of competency. He cast them. He would have cast another fifty if he thought the French Army would have been better without them. France was a little disconcerted—such methods were new—but also she was intensely overjoyed; she believed she had found what she had been looking for—a strong man. She knew him to be an honest one. As a matter of fact, the Radicals and Socialists at first made a fuss over the sacking of the generals, believing that it was done to please the Clerical party. Wrongly they attacked General Castelnau, General Joffre's staff officer. They never thought of attacking Joffre; he was, as everyone knew, a Caesar's wife in a general's uniform. It was a fine compliment, but it seems a pity that politicians play with the French Army.

An Engineer

Like Kitchener, he is a sapper, tho, as a matter of fact, for a very brief period he served in the artillery. That was during the siege of Paris in 1871, when young gunners were in greater request than young scientists. 1871 seems a long time ago, but General Joffre is by no means an old man; in fact, considering the position he holds, he is very young, for he is only just sixty-two. As a matter of fact, his comparative youth was partly responsible for his being what he is now. In France the fatal age of sixty-five retires a man no matter what his rank may be. When the last man went there was a talk of General Pau succeeding, but he would only have had two years to run. No army could stand a new Chief of the General Staff—for that is Joffre's appointment in peace time—every second year, so General Pau was passed over and Joffre was unanimously chosen. In the piping times of peace the President is head of the army and has under him a War Minister and a Chief of the General Staff, who is selected from the generals of divisions. There is no commander in chief. In war it is different. Joffre is very much the Commander in chief, and as the war minister said a day or two ago, if he came within the zone of operations General Joffre would have every right to turn him out. He seemed rather proud that this should be so.

An Active Career

Now how did promotion come to Joffre? It was not accidental. What has he done? Not a little. After being a year at the Polytechnique, which corresponds to Woolwich, he received his commission, and as a subaltern in the artillery helped to defend Paris during the siege. Doubtless the terrible lessons he then learned deeply influenced his subsequent career. After the war he was amongst those employed in reconstructing the defences of Paris. What he did pleased Marshal McMahon. "Well done, Captain Joffre," he said. The new-made captain was only twenty-two. Then he was in "the building line" round about Verdun and the Argonne, but this work did not satisfy him. The young engineer yearned to see more than the technical side of war. He got sent to Tonquin, where he not only built forts, but did wisely and well in the fighting line and got his majority and the Legion of Honor. Next he went to Formosa; thence on to Madagascar, where his work was notable—amongst other things he designed Diego Suarez. Afterwards he went to the Gold Coast, commanded the Bonnier relief force, and captured Timbuctoo. When he could see service he saw it. The vast majority of French officers had never

seen a shot fired in anger till this war broke out. Joffre had, and has reaped his reward. When he came back to France he worked hard, won confidence, and rose steadily until in 1911 he was a General of Division, the youngest in the French Army, and became Chief of the General Staff. For three years he has labored hard to make the army of his country ready for "the Day."

Joffre is Fat

General Joffre is too bulky, but the fact that his chest has slipped a little does not prevent him getting over a lot of ground and thru a lot of work. He has a fine head for a watch-dog, someone said; and his is a fine head. His snow-white hair is closely cropped, his brow is wide, his eyes are blue and very clear, his eyebrows heavy and tufted; his moustache, long and drooping, partly conceals a strong, resolute mouth. Anyone who sees him is phrenologist enough to tell that he is a determined man, and an aggressive man. His motto is, and always has been—Attack. Yet he has shown us that he knows how to retire.



GENERAL JOFFRE

the better afterwards to go forward. He is no great reader and still less of a talker; indeed, he has a great capacity for silence. That this should be so is strange because he is a southerner. "Truth" indeed tells us that his ancestors came from the Pyrenees and that he owes his name to the following circumstance: About one hundred years ago a silver-tongued Catalan with a name sounding foreign to French ears used to travel with a caravan from town to town in Southern France and hold petty auctions in the market places. He commenced the sale of each lot by the words "Joffre." Soon the people got into the way of calling the old man "le Pere Joffre." The name suited his business, he adopted it. He was an ancestor of the present General Joffre. Well, General Joffre has the goods in front of him now, let us hope that he will soon begin to "knock them down;" there are plenty of bidders. —The Tatler.

Westminster Abbey has been insured for \$750,000 against damage from aircraft attacks.

Lord Kitchener

A Study by T. P. O'CONNOR, M.P.

First, in studying Lord Kitchener, one has to get rid of the legendary Kitchener, and try to reconstruct the real man. The silent Sphinx; the emotionless machine; the harsh and heartless commander; all these picturesque phrases which have been applied to Lord Kitchener, sometimes by graphic friends and sometimes by virulent foes, are absolutely misleading.

Lord Kitchener, doubtless, like all great men of action, can keep his own counsel; but the silent Sphinx, when met at a dinner-party, is eager to talk, and talks admirably with a certain directness and terseness as of a man of action, but not without imagination, and with great insight. When he is in the intimacy of his own room at night, and with only a friend or two, he can talk the whole evening thru, and nobody thinks of interrupting the stream of interesting reminiscence and shrewd comment.

The emotionless machine has, as a matter of fact, plenty of emotion tho well under restraint; and the harsh and heartless commander is considerate to subordinates—scarcely says a harsh word

symmetrical, and unnaturally harmonious.

Charming and Humorous

That cold and penetrating eye of his makes it impossible to imagine anybody taking liberties with Lord Kitchener; yet one of his greatest qualities, at once useful and charming, is his accessibility. Anybody who has anything to say to him can approach him; anybody who has anything to teach him will find a ready and grateful learner. This is one of the secrets of his extraordinary success and universal popularity in Egypt. Lord Cromer was a great Egyptian ruler, and his services are imperishable and gigantic; but Lord Cromer was the stern, solitary, and inaccessible bureaucrat who worked innumerable hours every day at his desk; never learnt the Arabic language, and possibly never quite grasped the Arab nature. Lord Kitchener is the Cadi under the tree. The mayor or the citizens of the little Arab village can come to him, and the old soldier, and even the fellah alone, and they will find Lord Kitchener ready to listen and to talk to them in their own tongue; to enter with gusto into the pettiest details of their daily and squalid lives; and ready also to apply the remedy to such grievances, or to apply such wants as commend themselves to his judgment.

There is yet another popular mistake about Lord Kitchener: that grimness which is undoubtedly there has been supposed to mean absence of all humor. His friends will tell you that the sense of humor is never absent; that instinctively and inevitably he sees the humorous side of everything—even in the most serious situations. It is that sense of humor which has carried him thru; without it he would have found his career and his life impossible. With this sense of humor there is the love of a joke at a friend's easy expense—"But," said an intimate of his on this point, "I never heard him utter a joke that could leave a sting."

What, then, is the real Kitchener; what lies at the root of his nature; what is the explanation of the extraordinary things he has done and is doing?

Ambition and Industry

If I look for the roots of Lord Kitchener's greatness, I trace them to intense ambition to succeed, to make the most of his opportunities; above all, to the incessant desire to work and fill every hour of his days with something done. He is sent as a youngster to Palestine; thru peril to life; thru great privation; thru heart-breaking drudgery, he pursues his work until he has completed a map of all Western Palestine to the amazement and delight of his employers. And he values this experience so largely because he learns Arabic, and, above all, he learns the Arabic character. One of the chroniclers of his career makes the apt observation that, while the baton of the Marshal is in every French soldier's knapsack, Kitchener found his coronet in the Arab grammar. But how many soldiers or men of any class would have devoted the leisure hours of a fiercely active task like Kitchener's in Palestine to the study of one of the most difficult of languages?

Hard work, patience, and the utilization of every second of time, the eagerness always to learn—these are the chief secrets of Lord Kitchener's enormous success in life. But the man who works himself is ineffective in great things unless he has the gift to choose the men who can work for and with him. This choice of subordinates is one of Lord Kitchener's greatest powers. He nearly always has the right man in the right place. And his men return his confidence because he gives them absolute confidence. He never thinks of asking a subordinate whether he has done the job he has given him; he takes that for granted, knowing his man, and he never worries his subordinates.

This is one of the reasons why, tho he works so terrifically, he never is tired, never worried, never worries. He sits down at his desk at the War Office for about ten hours a day; but he sits there calmly, isn't ringing at bells and shouting down pipes; he does it all so quietly that it seems mere pastime, and the effect of this perfect tranquillity produces an extraordinary result on those who work



LORD KITCHENER

—never utters a harsh comment behind anybody's back, and often has distinguished himself from more excited subordinates, not by the rigor, but by the greater humanity of his judgment and action. This man without emotion has, in reality, a keen and abiding sympathy with those Eastern people among whom his life has been mainly spent; he has had to slay many of them, but they were the oppressors, and it was to save the oppressed. He speaks their language, understands their nature, sympathises with their wrongs, and is indulgent to their weakness; works incessantly for their spiritual and material elevation.

This man, who has fought such tremendous and historic battles and confronted great odds, is yet a man who prefers a deal to a struggle; and, tho he can be so stern, has yet a diplomatic tact that gets him and his country out of difficult hours. The nature, doubtless, is complex, and stern determination and tenacity are part of it; but there is also the other side, which is much forgotten—especially by that class of writers which has to describe human character as rigidly