ALLIES' TASK IN GALLIPOLI.

ACHI BABA A VAST FORTRESS NEEDING A SUPREME EFFORT.

TURKS SINK FRENCH SUBMARINE.

(From our special correspondent at the Dardanelles, Mr. H. W. Nevinson.)

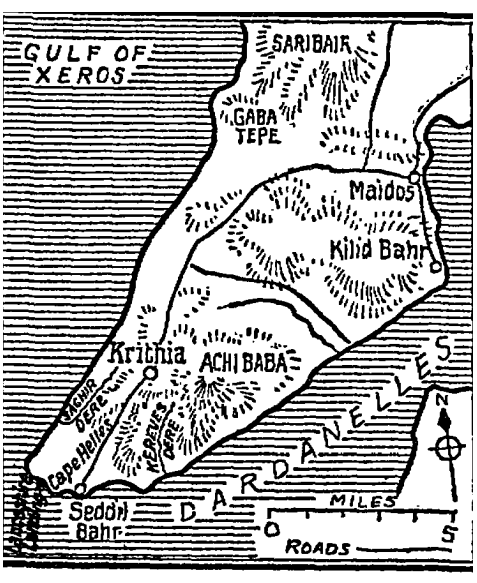
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, DARDANELLES,
JULY 16.

The sandy point at Cape Helles where I landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula for the first time two days ago is popularly called "Lancashire Landing" in memory of the gallant Lancashire regiments which established themselves here when first the expedition put to shore. So terrible was the machine-gun and rifle fire directed upon them that eye-witnesses from the ships tell me they asked each other why the men were lying down to rest. But they were not resting; they were dead. So the place acquired its new and historic name.

Since those days the scene has changed. Dusty roads are made, stores continually arrive, staff offices are dug as caves in the sandy cliffs. But the landing is still a little dangerous, for some big guns drop shells upon it at intervals from across the Straits—from the "Asiatic shore," as people here say,—and as we landed they succeeded in killing one man and wounding others. Some think that those Asiatic guns are trundled about on a railway. But knowing the Turk, I believe that railway to be a myth. The theory that they are at Erenkoi, about half-way between Kum Kale at the entrance of the Straits and Chanak at the Narrows, is far more probable.

The 400 Yards' Gain.

As we landed, a cargo of wounded was lying on the deck of a large lighter waiting to be towed off to the hospital ships which always lie ready off the point. And in the cemetery at the top of the cliffs the dead were being buried. For, as I described in my telegram yesterday, there had been two days' very severe fighting along the left or eastern third of our front, and a considerable advance of about 400 yards had been made along the line from the mouth of the Kereves Dere or ravine northward of the main road between the deserted town of Seddel Bahr (now held by the French) and the deserted village of Krithia (still in Turkish possession). Four hundred yards does not sound much to win at the heavy cost of life, but trench



war is a war of yards. In France it would count, and here the distances are small in comparison.

The low hill of Achi Baba, which is our first objective now, is not much more than 10,000 yards from Lancashire Landing, and at the present moment the centre of our line has advanced rather more than half-way towards it.

A Bird's-Eye View.

It is always of interest to behold with one's own eyes a scene of which one has heard much. No description is ever in the least like reality. How often I have imagined this scene, and now it lies stretched before me full of immemorial history and of history now being daily made. Standing on the low cliff above Cape Helles, swept by almost perpetual dust-storms under the dry north-east wind, one looks westward over about ten miles of sea to the large and mountainous island of Imbros. South, across the two-mile entrance to the Dardanelles, is the Kum Kale point, and somewhere just beyond it lies the windy Plain of Troy, while just a point to the west stands the low dome of Tenedos—"statio male fida carinis."

But looking north or north-north-east one sees the whole scene of our modern struggle stretching before one, almost fully exposed. It is a point of land about six miles long by three broad. The soil is typical of this part of the Near East—white sandy marl, a few weathered rocks, and large patches of loose stones. I suppose maize would grow on it in peace-time, but there are few, if any, vineyards. Ilex, stone-pines, and a few olives are scattered about, but there is nothing to be called a wood. Here and there is a well, and the surface is cut by three main ravines, the chief being the Kereves Dere, of which the French have now taken the mouth, as I mentioned. At this season there is no water in any of them, but in winter they probably run hard, and the dusty white roads and soil are probably converted into sloughs. Rain and snow would make the country difficult, if not impossible, for trench warfare, and the winter rains and snows are heavy from November onward.

From the height above Cape Helles the land slopes very gradually downward for about half the distance, but on the west, or Xeros coast, it maintains its level, making a cliff the whole way along. After half way in the centre it begins gradually to rise again, the slope becoming steeper as the foot of Achi Baba is approached.

More Men and Munitions.

But, unfortunately for us, Achi Baba is no mountain. All the way to the top—which is not much over 700ft. above sea level—the slope is gentle, yielding no dead ground. In fact, like Plevna, it is an ideal defensive position, especially for Turks. One is tired of insisting on the Turkish reputation for defending earthworks on a slope, and yet I have heard critics at home wondering impatiently why a British force could not rush the peninsula at the first shout. It is a vast fortress of most formidable nature which we are attacking, and our methods are by trench and sap, pretty much as they were at Sebastopol or in the Netherlands warfare of two centuries ago. Speaking generally, the whole of our position is subject to fire, and in wandering about among the disused or reserve trenches which spread like a labyrinth over the whole point of land one is always exposed to casual shrapnel. But up in the foremost trenches both guns and rifle fire hardly ever cease.

As I said in my telegram, the Turks appear to have unlimited small arm ammunition. Prisoners report shells coming from Germany in great quantities, but that is of course uncertain. In any case our progress must be slow, though the astonishing devotion both of our own troops and the French has kept our advance steady and continuous. Increased weight of men and heavy ammunition alone could increase the rapidity of our movement.

I may mention one or two outlying subjects. First, the extreme interest with which one sees the large vessel River Clyde still lying at the town of Seddel Bahr, her bows driven hard against the shore and in her side the square doors open through which our landing parties rushed out under the terrific fire of machine guns which swept them into the water. There she lies, a monument of British and Irish courage.

Rupert Brooke's Death.

Again, when I was in a dug-out of the Royal Naval Division I naturally inquired of the officers for news about Rupert Brooke's death, and they told me the common reports were untrue. He died not of sunstroke but of blood poisoning, and was buried not on Lemnos but on Skyros. One of the officers described his funeral as the most impressive scene he had ever witnessed.

The third point is a "grouse." On the whole the health is good, though most of our men do not know how to look after themselves in this sun and heat. They eat too much meat, and the dust and myriads of flies are unwholesome. But supply is regular and the medical service excellent. The chief complaint is against the post. Letters come fairly well, but both officers and men complain that parcels of necessaries or small comforts take weeks on the way and frequently do not arrive at all.

THE PRICE OF VICTORY.

UP AGAINST A "TREMENDOUS PROPOSITION."

One of the Press Association's special correspondents at the General Headquarters of the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, writing on July 17, says:—

"For goodness sake, tell the people at home what a tremendous proposition we are up against out here." So spoke a battalion commander to me as we crouched in the parched earthiness of his dug-out watching the puffs of enemy shell-bursts in the rear through the fly-netting which screened the sloping entrance. The Turks were merely pin-pricking, their favourite method, keeping up an irritating liveliness between our own attacks and their regular response of counter-attack. Their prodigality of ammunition in this direction certainly does not lend much colour to the rumours of shortage.

That we are no longer holding on with the skin of our teeth, but are in solid occupation of a zone about three miles deep south of a line drawn from where the French are resting upon the mouth of the Kereves Dere to a point south of Krithia, is a triumph of sheer dogged determination and Homeric courage. But it is an achievement which still leaves the supreme task ahead. The sandy, fire-ravished soil is furrowed by trenches as though a Titanic ploughing competition had been held across every acre. Fragments of shell which would aggregate iron enough to build a battleship are strewn in pink and blue and rusty segments athwart whatever path one may choose in this now trackless waste. They have left their marks in an interminable warren of blowholes and miniature craters. Barbed wire of enormous gauge (nothing like Turkish barbed wire has ever been seen in warfare) trails through scorched yellow stubble at every dozen steps.

No Faltering.

True, these are commonplace details of this sort of fighting, and I only refer to them at all because they so grimly illustrate in their crowded grouping how our progress has been a series of terribly blood-stained steps, and with the ever-increasing difficulty of natural obstacle there is no depression, no faltering on the part of our men.

Of the political aspects of the campaign it is not the business of a war correspondent to speak. He is only to consider the military aspect. The price of victory—that is to say, the military price—is a supreme effort. We hold an excellent position now for the development of that effort. Twelve miles up the west coast our forces hold a wonderful cliff-perched enclave which compels the enemy to maintain at least two divisions to counter the permanent threat to his communications. The French artillery has established a most effective dominance along the spur of the ridge extending from the shattered and baked village of Seddel-Bahr towards the eastern slope of Achi Baba. The legend that the defences of the peninsula include heavy guns travelling upon rails through tunnels may be dismissed. At the first discharge any heavy weapon so mounted would pitch off the metals.

Turks' Point of View.

Here is the position as it stands to-day. It is known that the Turks are being well and abundantly fed, and, recollecting their terrible privations in the Balkan War, this fact must exercise great influence upon sustaining their war-worthiness. Prisoners admit a weariness on the part of the enemy, but it is clear that a complete misconception as to the causes and objects of the war is general amongst the Turks. They are undoubtedly convinced that England is conspiring to betray them into the hands of their hereditary enemy, Russia, and they still regard the annexation of the two battleships building for their navy as a sheer act of piracy on the part of the British Admiralty. Germany, by "giving" them the Goeben and Breslau and by sending submarines to attack the warships of the Allies, not unnaturally stands in their distorted vision as a genuine benefactor.

FRENCH SUBMARINE SUNK.

CREW CAPTURED BY TURKS.

PARIS, THURSDAY.

The Admiralty issues the following communication:—

The French squadron in the Dardanelles is without direct news of the French submarine Mariotte. The submarine entered the Straits on the morning of July 26 (Monday) in order to operate in the Sea of Marmora.

Turkish telegrams state that the Mariotte has been sunk, and that 31 officers and sailors have been taken prisoners.

The Mariotte was built at Cherbourg in 1911, and was an experimental boat designed by Radiguer. Though not so large as the latest types of French submarines, she was of 530-625 tons displacement and 212 feet long. Her speed was 10 knots submerged and 15 on the surface, and she carried six torpedo tubes.