

truth, in such polemics as Lactantius, Eusebius, and other Christian or pagan writers. His treatment of the legends surrounding Constantine's conversion is rational without being unsympathetic; and in his deeply interesting account of the Arian controversy and the Council of Nice he has recorded the facts as he sees them, and is content to be a guide instead of a judge. He regards Constantine as a sincere and convinced Christian; although 'the Christianity of the Emperor was grossly material, and worldly success remained in his eyes the crowning proof of the Christian verities.' The concluding chapter, 'The Empire and Christianity,' is a scholarly survey of the real subject—epochal rather than individual—of the book. Constantine's greatest political achievement was the founding of the splendid capital to which he gave his name; and in the long and fascinating chapter devoted to this subject, Mr. Firth makes free and grateful use of the sumptuous and standard work on Constantinople by an American scholar, Professor E. A. Grosvenor of Amherst College.

*The first
Christian
emperor.*

In the 'Heroes of the Nations' series (Putnam) the good work goes on apace; and the enterprise

may now fairly regard its conclusion as approximate,—unless, indeed, history shall continue to be made so rapidly as to necessitate several additions to the niches in this Hall of Fame by such great captains as Nogi and Oyama, and even for some yet undiscovered latter-day Russian. However that may be, thirty-nine biographies have been published, and the number announced as still in preparation is eleven; which makes a suspiciously precise total of fifty. The round number, however, may be the result of history's 'evening up' in the long run, rather than of any arbitrary predetermination of the editors' minds. The volume on Constantine the Great, the latest addition to the series, is the work of Mr. John B. Firth, an Oxford scholar already known to readers by his study of Augustus Cæsar and his translation of Pliny's letters. The first Christian emperor is an historic figure whose claim to the somewhat fortuitous title of 'great' was derived rather from his grasping the skirts of happy chance than from breasting the billows of circumstance. Mr. Firth recognizes this; and only insists that 'under his [Constantine's] auspices one of the most momentous changes in the history of the world was accomplished.' Of this period and of its central figure the author has written sensibly and satisfyingly. He has made the best possible use of his original authorities, who, as he says, were practically without exception bitter and malevolent partisans, by a masterly divination of the truth, or the probable