Nelson's History of the War

Volume X

John Buchan
1915

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NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR. By John Buchan.

Volume X. The Russian Stand, and the Allied Offensive in the West.

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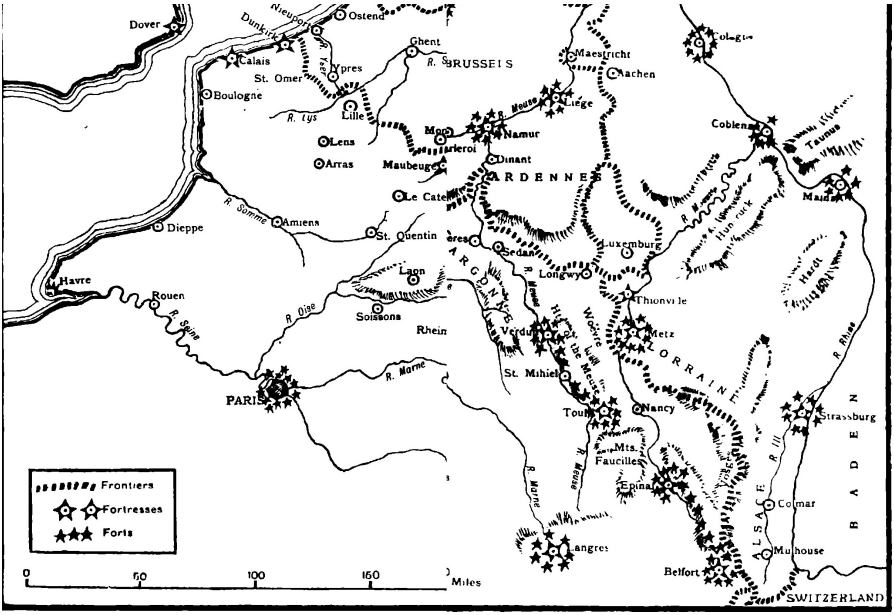

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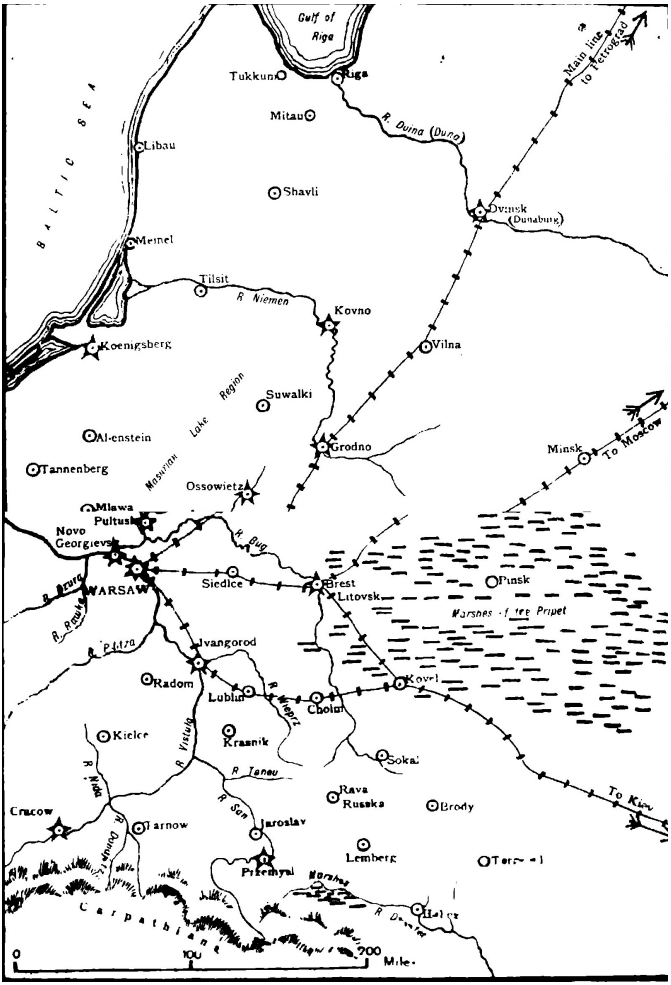

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NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR

VOLUME X

CHAPTER LXXI.

THE WAR IN MESOPOTAMIA.

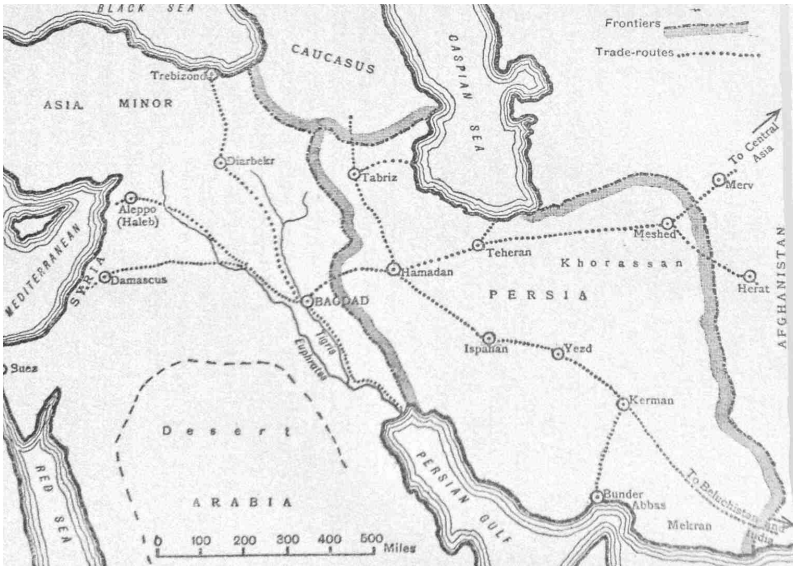
Importance of Mesopotamia Campaign—Germany's Eastern Ambitions—Her Hopes for India—Enver's Blunder—Purpose of Mesopotamia Expedition—Comparison with Sudan Expedition—Difficulties of Climate and Country—The Attack upon Nasiriyeh—British control the Shatt-al-Hai—Advance to Kut-el-Amara—Battle of Kut-el-Amara—Strength of Turkish Position—Turks retreat towards Bagdad—The Attack on Bushire—Importance of Mesopotamia in View of New Balkan Situation.

The campaign between the Euphrates and Tigris was, of all the movements of the war, the least known to Western observers. Its *terrain* was far away, and to most people no more than a geographical term. Our opponents there were not Germans, but an outlying force of Turks. It had no striking objective, such as the possession of a great capital like Constantinople or the conquest of a province like South-West Africa. It was an enterprise of the Indian Government, and in India alone were published the details. But this modest campaign had a strategical importance of the first order. Its purpose was no less than the defence of India, and therefore of the Empire.

Germany's ambition, cut off from the sea, burned the more intensely on land. Like Napoleon, she thought India and the East to be the Achilles-heel of the British power, for she realized that Britain's main interest was her empire, and she believed that a blow struck at some of the far-flung links of the Imperial chain would do much to paralyze our efforts in Europe. For years before the war she had striven to drive a wedge of German influence towards the north-west frontier of India. The Bagdad railway, trading schemes on the littoral of the Persian Gulf, much secret diplomacy in Persia, coquetting with disaffected sheikhs and brigand tribes, gun-running for the benefit of Indian borderers, and stately overtures to the Amir of Afghanistan were part of the machinery employed. Mesopotamia for its own sake was her first object, for she coveted that ruin of one of the great granaries, of the world. But she had always an eye on India. The methods which at one time we were inclined to ascribe to wandering Russian agents from beyond the

Pamirs were diligently practised by Berlin. Its agents were in every little town of Southern Persia and in every caravanserai of Bagdad.

The outbreak of the war between the Allies and Turkey seemed to give the long-sought opportunity. The millions of Indian Moslems, Germany argued, must view with suspicion an attack upon the political capital of their faith. In this she miscalculated, for east of the Euphrates the Sultan of Roum was no name to conjure with universally. His title to the caliphate was too recent and too precarious, and the endless divisions of Islam tended to particularism in tradition and devotion. The Young Turks, always singularly inept in their calculations on matters of religion, built much on an Indian revolution, assisted by border raids from the north. The splendid loyalty of India left them aghast, and Enver lost his temper. He sent to the Amir of Afghanistan a present of women's bangles—the greatest insult which an Oriental can contrive. The result was to infuriate that ruler, and confirm him, if confirmation were needed, in his loyalty to the British alliance. In a world war, of course, the echoes carry far, and they roused some of the more turbulent hill tribes to descend from their fastnesses. During the first half of 1915 we had various troubles on the north-west frontier of India, troubles of the kind with which we were familiar, but directly inspired in this case by the unrest which had moved like a dry wind across the world. For this we were prepared. A Mohammedan raid was a trifle to weigh in the balance against the steady faithfulness of the Indian people and the disciplined valour of the native soldiers on the Western front.[1]



Bagdad as the Trade-route Centre of South-Western Asia.

None the less that open back-door of India, to which Germany had access, remained an eternal possibility of trouble. The East is incalculable. Waves of emotion rise like dust-devils in the desert without apparent cause. Germany's patient subterranean diplomacy might yet effect something which would cripple our efforts in the West. A small detachment of Border tribesmen deserted to the German lines in Flanders during the winter—the one case of the kind in the war. The deserters were sent across Europe and Asia Minor, and their course was traced into Persia on their way by Seistan to the Indian frontier to further the cause of their new friends. It was a trivial incident, but it showed the way the wind might blow. With Turkey on Germany's side, and with Persia in confusion, there was too clear a road to that old battlefield of races, the gates of the Hindu Kush. The Government of India could not afford to be supine in its wardenship of the northern marches.

The Mesopotamia Expedition was undertaken primarily to keep the enemy from the shores of the Gulf, in case he should establish himself on the flank of our highway to India. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Basra, the port of Bagdad, fell to us on November 23, 1914, and Kurna on 9th December. Thereafter we entrenched ourselves astride the Tigris, apparently with the object of holding the road to the sea and doing nothing more. But the Turkish counter-offensive compelled us to revise our plan. The defeat of the enemy's assaults during April at Kurna, Ahwaz, and most

notably at Shaiba, and the pursuit which our success involved, drew us farther and farther into the hinterland. The whole history bears a curious resemblance to the tale of the reconquest of the Sudan. There was the same advance simultaneously by land and water, the same strip of green between deserts on either side, the same desire to put a limit to the advance, the same eternal shifting of the limit a little farther on. The Sudan wars did not stop till Khartum fell, and it looked as if the Mesopotamia campaign must lead sooner or later to an assault on Bagdad. For through that city ran the channel of German communication with the Indian frontier. Its possession, too, by the Turks meant that the ancient capital and one of the most sacred cities of Islam was under Germany's influence. More than Constantinople it cast its spell over the Moslem world. The golden minarets of the great Shiah tombs, which catch from far off on the plain the traveller's eye, had a compelling sanctity greater than St. Sophia. Moreover, of all the Turkish possessions it was knit least closely to the centre on the Bosphorus. Till the coming of Midhat Pasha the Bagdad vilayet had been almost independent. The inhabitants looked on the speech and faith and learning of Stamboul as bastard, and preserved a vigorous provincialism. For the orthodox Turk, whether soldier or civilian, to be sent to Bagdad was to be sent into exile. Of all Turkey's provinces it seemed that Mesopotamia was the most easily detachable.

Germany, having foreseen this, had sent her officers to stiffen the 13th Bagdad Corps and instruct them in her latest military methods. More especially she trained them in trench-making and in the various branches of modern defensive warfare. It does not appear that she sent with them any special artillery or any stock of munitions. The Bagdad Corps was, indeed, in some difficulties about its supply of material, beyond the stocks which had been accumulated in the depôts. There was no sea route, and no easy land route, Damascus being separated from it by great deserts, and the Anatolian centres of Erzhingian and Erzerum having their hands full with munitioning the army in the Caucasus. The corps, too, was depleted in men, one Arab division having been lent to Transcaucasia.

The campaign in Mesopotamia was of the old-fashioned type which we had almost ceased to look for in Europe. There was no fixed line of trenches buttressed by impregnable flanks. The Turks were skilful at taking up positions and digging themselves in, but once their front was broken there was a rout and a chance for the effective use of cavalry. But the land was not without its strategic difficulties. The floods, which began in February, created huge lagoons on both sides of the river, and as these shrank there remained isolated meres and large areas of swamp. Old irrigation canals,

often deep and wide, ran out from the river, and complicated the problem of transport. The power of the sun in the summer months was not the least of our trials. At dawn it might be 110° F., and in the afternoon well over 120°, and the baked sands retained the heat so that night brought little coolness. Shade there was none. A blinding glare was reflected from yellow earth and blue water, and many a British soldier yearned for the trenches in the deep meadowlands of Flanders. Happily we used for the operations men who had served an apprenticeship to the Indian heats. With less seasoned troops the summer's campaign must have come to a standstill.

Sir Mark Sykes, than whom there could be no better authority, has described the conditions of the campaign:—

"A winding river which is restless in its bed, capricious in its fall, uncertain in its rise, and sown with shifting shoals and sands is the sole means of communication between Bagdad and the sea; it is the inevitable line of supply, advance, or retreat for Turks and British. On either hand stretches limitless plain, showing a horizon as level as the sea save for here and there a mound of ancient ruin, a rare ridge or faint undulation. This unending plain, however, must not be imagined to be of completely easy passage, for its faint depressions are swamps of unknown shape with bays and inlets, while at right angles to the river banks run dried canals and cuttings with hard ridges on either hand.

"As for the population, it is base, semi-nomadic Arab, cruel, treacherous, and rascally as the town influence can make it, yet predatory with primitive Bedawi instinct. To these people, Turkish corruption, smugglers, and a year's war have brought a wealth of arms and munitions; without any cohesion or policy they are neither for British nor Turk; on the day of battle they haunt the outskirts of the fight, plunder the wounded and stragglers impartially, harass the retreat of the defeated side, hoist white flags over their tents, and make professions of unswerving fidelity to whosoever seems to be in the ascendant.

"Thus, in the present stage, there are three natural factors—the river, the land, and the people. The river may block your advance by a new and unexpected mud bank; the land may thwart your plans by an unmapped swamp; the people will not delay or impede you, but will accentuate every mishap that may befall, plunder your convoys, threaten your hospitals, cut your telegraph wires, and supply you and your opponents with unreliable information."

On the last day of May it will be remembered that, hearing of a Turkish concentration north of Kurna, we resolved to disperse it, and, taking the enemy by surprise, drove him to precipitate retreat. On the first day of June we had advanced north of Ezra's Tomb, and on the 3rd we took Amara, seventy-five miles from Kurna, made large captures, and scattered the rest of the garrison into the adjacent marshes. Amara was an important point, for from it runs a desert road, a hundred miles long, to Ahwaz, on the Karun River. By the possession of it we prevented trouble in the Ahwaz district, through which passed the pipe line of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. The remains of the Turkish forces under Nur-ed-Din Pasha withdrew 150 miles up the Tigris to Kut-el-Amara.

May 31.

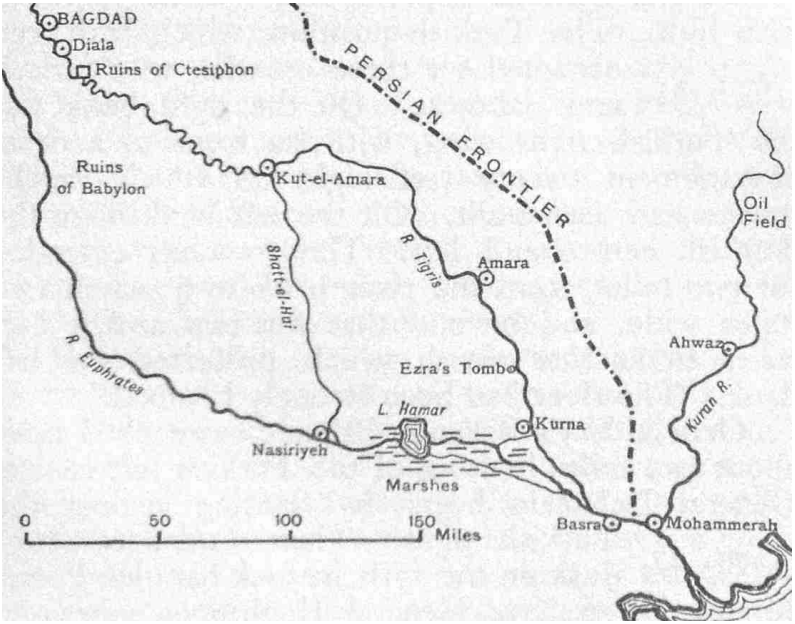
This place must be noted, for it was the strategic key of the next movement. From the Tigris at that point runs one of those mysterious river channels of Mesopotamia, the Shatt-al-Hai, which joins the Euphrates at Nasiriyeh, about a hundred miles north-west of Basra. From Kut-el-Amara the Turks could use this channel as a route by which to make an assault upon the British left rear. Until Nasiriyeh was held and the line of the Euphrates between it and Basra, an advance from Amara was attended with grave danger. Even if Kut was reached and taken, it might only be to find that the enemy had got round our flank.

Early in July an expedition under Major-General G. F. Gorringe started from Kurna against Nasiriyeh. All the country between the two rivers was flood and marsh, through which ran many old channels. The expedition, consisting of infantry and a naval contingent, forced its way to the Euphrates by way of the Hamar Lake. That amphibious journey, now wading, now embarked in boats, now making portages—through a maze of creeks and lagoons and thick date groves under a pitiless sky and amid swarms of flies—must rank as one of the most uncomfortable ever undertaken by British troops. We found the entrance to the main stream of the Euphrates mined and barricaded, but we succeeded in dislodging the enemy from the river bank and forcing him back upon Nasiriyeh. On 24th July we drove in the main Turkish position in front of that town. The Turks were astride the river, and had prepared strong entrenchments defended with barbed wire. By eleven o'clock they were broken, and our gunboats pushed on and shelled Nasiriyeh, while the main enemy force retreated twenty-five miles in the direction of Kut-el-Amara. Next morning we occupied the town, which as the old capital of the Mustafik tribe of Arabs had a political importance in addition to its strategical situation. The victory was very complete, for the Turkish casualties were 2,500, including over 700

July 24.

July 25.

prisoners; we captured practically all their guns and huge stores of ammunition; and our losses were under 600. The vital junction of the Shatt-al-Hai and the Euphrates was in our hands.



The Mesopotamian Campaign.

Kut-el-Amara remained, from which a flanking movement might start. With it under our control, quite apart from greater objectives, we believed that Basra would be safe. Accordingly, early in August Sir John Nixon gave orders for an advance by General Townshend's Division up the Tigris. Along that river of endless twists and turnings the progress of troops must be slow. Riverine marshes had to be crossed or circumvented, and canals had to be bridged. The enemy offered no serious opposition. He was content to wait for us some seven miles downstream from Kut-el-Amara, on a front extending on both sides of the Tigris for a distance of about six miles. His troops were nearly 10,000 men, regulars of the Bagdad Corps, and he had the usual motley following of mounted Arab tribesmen, whose future conduct depended upon which way the battle went.

Sept. 25.

On the 25th of September we came in touch with him. The Turkish position, which had been occupied for three months, was curious and elaborate. On the right bank was the Turkish right wing, with its front to a canal embankment twenty feet high, on which watchtowers had been built. On the left bank were the

Turkish centre and left. The trenches extended for two miles, from the river bank to a marsh two miles wide, and beyond that for two and a half miles to another marsh which protected the left flank. The river had been strongly boomed.

Sept. 27.

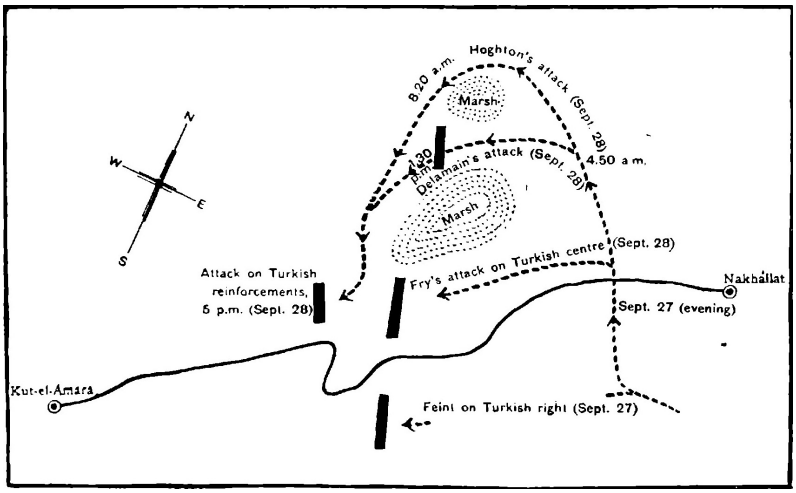
General Fry's Belgaum Brigade entrenched itself about two miles in front of the Turkish left centre. General Delamain began by feinting against the Turkish right. Then, under cover of dusk on the 27th, he took his own Poona Brigade, as well as General Hoghton's, across to the left bank of the Tigris by a pontoon bridge which we had constructed. Our heavy guns were behind Fry's Brigade. There had been a good deal of shelling during the day, and a reconnaissance by the 7th Lancers in which thirty-six prisoners were taken. The Turkish position was strongly entrenched, and was clearly beyond our power to carry by a frontal assault. General Delamain's plan was to get round the enemy's flank. He was to attack between the two marshes, while General Hoghton circumvented the marsh on the extreme Turkish left.

Sept. 28.

The action began at dawn on the 28th. Delamain succeeded in driving in the Turkish flank by ten o'clock in the morning, while Fry's Brigade, 450 yards in front of the enemy, pinned to its position the left centre. In this action the 2nd Dorsets and 117th Mahrattas distinguished themselves. Meantime General Hoghton had performed his part, and was well to the west of the extreme marsh. By two in the afternoon the whole of the enemy's left was rolled up, in spite of a gallant resistance which necessitated the clearing of trench after trench. We took several hundred prisoners, some field guns, and great quantities of rifles and ammunition.

Delamain then swung southwards towards the river, partly for the sake of water—for his troops were suffering severely from thirst, and the marsh water was undrinkable—and partly to assist Fry's attack on the Turkish centre. He now came under heavy artillery fire from the right bank of the river, and resolved to change his course and attack the Turkish centre in rear. Suddenly he discovered strong Turkish reinforcements—seven regiments with guns—marching parallel to him. He promptly fell upon them about half-past five, and after a sharp attack put them to flight, capturing four of their guns. It was a severe test for troops which had been fighting and marching for thirty hours, much of it in blinding heat and under a scorching desert wind. Meanwhile all the day of the battle the British right had been guarded by our armed motor cars and our cavalry, which prevented any succour being sent to the hard-pressed Turkish left. H.M.S. *Comet* and the

armed launches had been busy during the action, and the senior naval officer, Lieutenant-Commander Cookson, lost his life in a gallant effort to break down one of the river booms.



The Battle of Kut-el-Amara (Sept. 28).

Sept. 29.

At dawn on the 29th the sun rising through the haze of the riverside revealed an empty battlefield. The enemy had retired by road and river towards Bagdad. Our cavalry was loosed, and entered Kut-el-Amara, a native town of some 6,000 inhabitants, with a large trade in grain and liquorice. They pushed on up the solid plain, for between Kut and Bagdad the marshes cease, while our gunboats led the pursuit upstream, followed by General Townshend with an infantry brigade in steamers. One of our aeroplanes succeeded in dropping bombs on the rearguard of the Turkish flotilla. The result of the day was very large captures of prisoners, two thousand and more, representing nearly a quarter of the Turkish command.

An inspection of the battlefield showed the strength of the enemy's position. The German teachers had found apt pupils. Communication trenches extended for miles, and the firing trenches, as at Gallipoli, were eight or ten feet deep, with loopholes and head-cover. Ranges were marked by flags. Good arrangements had been made for covering the retirement of troops and their embarkation. There was an elaborate system of observation posts and of contact mines, most of which were exploded by our engineers without accident. The field of fire was everywhere absolutely open and flat. To have carried so strong a place, with casualties which were under five hundred, and many of them slight, after weeks of arduous marching under a

torrid sun through difficult country, was no slight achievement. General Delamain, who had been fighting in Mesopotamia from the start of the campaign, had proved himself an admirable leader of troops, and General Townshend had shown both judgment and boldness in his final tactics. By the end of September his force was distant some two hundred miles by river and one hundred by land from Bagdad, with an easy open country before them, and no place of importance short of the capital to serve as a rallying point for the enemy. The winter, too, was approaching, and with it a pleasant climate for campaigning. The war of the arduous summer months had been amply successful. "I do not think," said the British Prime Minister on 2nd November, "that in the whole course of the war there has been a series of operations more carefully contrived, more brilliantly conducted, and with a better prospect of final success."

Sept. 30.

One other incident must be recorded. In Persia itself the tribesmen, always inclined to turbulence, were stirred by German intrigue and the general unrest of the world to various sinister activities. On 12th July a commando appeared in neighbourhood of Bushire, the chief Persian port, 180 miles from the Euphrates' mouth. Two British officers, Major Oliphant and Captain Ranking, went out to reconnoitre with a mixed patrol, and lost their lives in an ambush. Following this outrage, we occupied Bushire, and on 8th and 9th September had to fight an action to defend the place. The enemy were prevented from crossing the gap which separates the island from the mainland, and were beaten off with heavy losses. The great prominence given to this fight in the Berlin reports suggested that the whole affair had been sedulously stage-managed by Germany.[2]

July 12.

Sept. 8-9.

By the end of September the Mesopotamia campaign, which for months had been almost forgotten in Europe, assumed a very real importance in the eyes of the Allied statesmen. Our sporadic efforts there and in the Dardanelles were suddenly linked up by the German menace to the Balkans, and the revelation of a strategy which threatened India and the whole Near and Middle East. The Gallipoli adventure, so lightheartedly undertaken, was no nearer its goal. In the early days of August we had flung into the struggle there the new forces which Sir Ian Hamilton had demanded, and, daring greatly, had greatly failed.

[1] It should be noted that the loyalty of many of the Border peoples was beyond praise. The Frontier militias volunteered their services, the Khyber tribes asked permission to furnish an armed contingent, and the Wazirs of Bannu subscribed their allowance for one month to the Indian Relief Fund.

[2] The British occupation of Bushire terminated on 29th October, the trouble being over. There were other outrages or attempted outrages during these months at Ispahan, Shiraz, and Kermanshah.

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE NEW LANDING AT GALLIPOLI.

The New Plan in Gallipoli—Topography of Koja Chemen and Anafarta—Merits of the Plan—The Feint at Cape Helles—The Capture of Lone Pine—The Movement of the Anzac Left Wing—The Attack from Walker's Ridge and Quinn's Post—Capture of Rhododendron Spur—The 13th Division of the New Army—New Zealanders take Chunuk Bair—The Gurkhas take Hill Q—The Turkish Counter-Attack—The Suvla Bay Force—The Landing—Deployment into Suvla Plain—The First Attack—Capture of Chocolate Hill—The Attack fails—The Second Attempt on 21st August—Attack of 29th Division—Hills 70 and 100—The Charge of the Mounted Division—Losses—Reasons for Failure.

By the end of July preparations had been made for a final effort against the Gallipoli defences. Three divisions of the New Army and two Territorial Divisions had arrived in the Eastern Mediterranean, and a Mounted Division had been for some months in Egypt. The submarine menace had sent the monsters of the British Fleet back to home waters or to the shelter of protected harbours, and during the summer only the destroyers, a few light cruisers, and an occasional battleship were seen off the shores of the peninsula. But in July new craft arrived, specially constructed to meet the case. A strange type of monitor, with a freeboard almost flush with the water, and looking, as one observer reported, more like a Chinese pagoda than a ship, suddenly appeared in the Northern Ægean. They were of different sizes, the smaller being little more than floating gun-platforms; but they were admirably suited for their purpose. Even the little ones, with a crew of seventy, could fling 100 lbs. of high explosive twelve miles, and they feared submarines no more than a gull fears a swordfish. The preliminaries of the new assault on the naval side were prepared.

The plan which the High Command had evolved was bold and ingenious. To understand it we must note the features of the peninsula north of the Anzac position. The Australians held, as we have seen, the edge of the plateau at the top of the long ravines which run to the coast. Eastwards the land rises in the uplands of Sari Bair, till about a mile and a half north-east

of the position the culminating point of the system is reached in the peak marked 971,[1] and called by the Turks Koja Chemen. On all sides the ground slopes away from the crest, which is distant some four miles as the crow flies from the waters of the Straits. North and west a jumble of ridges falls towards the Gulf of Saros—ridges wildly broken and confused, sometimes bare scree and clay, sometimes matted with scrub and separated by dry and tortuous nullahs. From a point on the shore of the Gulf of Saros south of the Fisherman's Hut a fairly well-marked ridge, called Walker's Ridge in the lower part, runs up to the Koja Chemen summit. On this there are various points which were to become only too famous, notably Chunuk Bair, nearly 900 feet high, and Q, or Nameless Peak, between it and Hill 971. North of this spur is a water-course called the Sazli Beit Dere, and a little farther north the Chailak Dere. Separating the two is a long spur which leaves the parent *massif* just west of Chunuk Bair. Its upper part was called by our men Rhododendron[2] Ridge, and the under-features nearer the coast were known as Big and Little Table Tops. North of Chailak Dere is another ridge, with the feature known as Bauchop's Hill. Still farther north is a wide water-course, the Aghyl Dere, which near its head splits into two forks, both descending from Hill 971. From the Fisherman's Hut the flat ground between the hills and the sea widens northwards, as the coast sweeps towards the cape called Niebruniessi. Beyond is the half-moon of Suvla or Anafarta Bay, two miles wide, enclosed between Niebruniessi and the cape of Suvla Burnu, the north-western extremity of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The hinterland of Suvla Bay is curious. It consists of a rectangle of hills lying north of the Azmak Dere water-course, and connected towards the east with the outflankers of the Koja Chemen system. The north side, lining the coast, is the ridge of Karakol Dagh, over 400 feet high. The south side, lining the Azmak Dere, and breaking down into flats, two miles from the coast, is a blunt range, rising as high as 500 feet, of which the westerly part is called Yilghin Burnu, and was to become noted later as Chocolate Hill. The eastern side of the rectangle is a rocky crest, rising in one part to nearly 900 feet, and falling shorewards in two well-marked terraces. Between the three sides of hill, from the eastern terraces to the sea, the ground is nearly flat. Along the edge of Suvla Bay runs a narrow causeway of sand, and immediately behind it lies a large salt lake, in summer partly dried up, but always liable to be converted by rain into an impassable swamp. Eastwards of it the hills and flats are patched with farms and scrub, mostly dwarf oaks, and on the edge of the terraces the scrub grows into something like woodland. Everywhere the plain is cracked with futile water-courses. Two villages are points in the hinterland—Kuchuk (or Little) Anafarta on the

slopes at the south-eastern angle of the enclosing hills, and Biyuk (or Big) Anafarta two miles south across the water-course of the Azmak Dere, and just under the northern spurs of Koja Chemen. The road connecting the two runs southwards to Boghali Kalessi on the Straits.

In the beginning of August the Fast of Ramadan was drawing to its close, and for a little there had been something like stagnation in the opposing lines. We were aware that the Turks were massing forces for a new attack, and were resolved to anticipate them. The plan we adopted involved four separate actions. In the first place, a feint was to be made at the head of the Gulf of Saros, as if to take in flank and rear the Bulair lines. Next a strong offensive would be assumed by the troops in the Cape Helles region against their old objective, Achi Baba. These two movements would be read by the Turks as the main British offensive and its covering feint, and it was hoped would lead them to send their reserves to Krithia. But in the meantime the Anzac Corps were to advance with its left, and attempt to gain the heights of Koja Chemen and the seaward ridges. Simultaneously, a great new landing would be made at Suvla Bay, where it was believed the Turks would be wholly unprepared. Suvla Bay had the advantage that it was well sheltered from the prevailing winds, and afforded a submarine-proof base. If the Anafarta hills could be taken, and the right of the new landing force linked up with the left of the Australasians, the British would hold the central crest of the spine of upland which runs through the western end of the peninsula. Such gains would enable them to cut the communications of the Turks in the butt-end, Achi Baba must fall, and in time the frowning tableland of the Pasha Dagh. The one land route to Maidos would be commanded, and the way would be prepared for an action in open country, where the grim Turkish fortifications would be taken in flank and in reverse. If the undertaking attained the most reasonable success, the western end of the peninsula would be ours, and the European defences of the Narrows would be won.

The plan was bold, but entirely legitimate, and its details were worked out with great care by Sir Ian Hamilton's Headquarters' Staff. The element of surprise could be rightly counted upon. Some of the operations would be difficult, but no one was beyond the capacity of seasoned troops. We had the necessary force to make the attempt, and ample reserves behind our first attack. The danger lay in the fact that all the movements were so closely interdependent. Exact timing was imperative, and for this we needed not only a good Headquarters' plan, but the most assiduous Staff supervision from hour to hour. Moreover, the troops employed must be of uniform capacity, for the failure of any unit would jeopardize the success of the

whole. A defect in divisional leading or in the stamina of one brigade would nullify the most splendid victories of other parts of the line. Some risk of this sort is inevitable in any elaborate movement, but in this case it was accentuated by the fact that a considerable portion of the attacking force was wholly untried. The three new divisions destined for the attempt had never before been in action.

Let us consider first the preliminaries to the main assault. On the afternoon of Friday, 6th August, the Allied forces at Cape Helles made a general attack upon the Turkish position at Achi Baba. The brunt of the fighting fell to the 29th Division, holding the left of the line, and the East Lancashire Territorials of the 42nd Division on their right. In the early afternoon the 88th Brigade, after an artillery preparation, attacked across open ground against a section of the enemy's front which had defied all our previous assaults. The attack was boldly delivered, but failed to win its objective, and there were many losses among the 2nd Hampshires and the 4th Worcesters, who were the leading battalions. The 1st Essex managed to carry the trenches opposite them, but were forced out by bombs and flanking rifle fire. The Lancashire Territorials were also heavily engaged east of the Krithia road, and advanced the line at one point 200 yards. The Turkish line had been reinforced by two fresh divisions, and we had only anticipated their offensive by an hour or two. Consequently next morning we had to face a counter-attack, which we repelled, and which was followed by an advance of the 125th and 129th Brigades. For the next two days the struggle raged, principally in the centre round the Vineyard west of the Krithia road. Here it was that Lieutenant W. T. Forshaw, of the 1/9 Manchesters, won the Victoria Cross for an act of conspicuous gallantry and endurance. On the second night of the fighting, while holding the Vineyard with a half-company, he was attacked by the enemy advancing from three converging trenches. "He held his own," ran the official account, "not only directing his men and encouraging them by exposing himself with the utmost disregard of danger, but personally throwing bombs continuously for forty-one hours. When his detachment was relieved, after twenty-four hours, he volunteered to continue the direction of operations. Three times during the night of August 8-9 he was again heavily attacked, and once the Turks got over the barricade; but, after shooting three with his revolver, he led his men forward and recaptured it. When he rejoined his battalion he was choked and sickened by bomb fumes, badly bruised by a fragment of shrapnel, and could barely lift his arm from continuous bomb throwing."

Aug. 6.

Aug. 7-8.

This engagement was intended as a holding battle, and as such it must be regarded as successful. It distracted the attention of the Turks for the moment from the main theatre farther north, and induced them to send the bulk of their new reserves to Achi Baba.

We pass to the desperate struggle in the area of the Anzac Corps, the most desperate in many ways and the most brilliant which Gallipoli had yet seen. The operation was arranged in two parts. An attack was first to be made by troops of the Australian Division on the right against the Lone Pine Plateau, a position which commanded one of the main sources of the Turkish water supply. It was in essence a feint to cover the movements of General Godley's New Zealand and Australian division on the left, which was to move up the coast and deliver a converging assault with two columns against the heights of Koja Chemen. The Australians began the attack at five in the afternoon of the 6th, when the action at Cape Helles had well started, and the troops employed were the 1st Infantry Brigade, the men of New South Wales, under Brigadier-General Smyth.[3] The Turkish trenches at the Lone Pine were enormously strong, and had been roofed in with great logs as a cover against shrapnel. After half an hour's bombardment by the artillery and the ships' guns, the Australians—every man with a white band on his sleeve—raced across the open, and in a few minutes were upon the enemy's position. Then began a deadly struggle for the roofed trenches, while the Turkish artillery and machine guns played upon the exposed attack. No cover was to be had, for the shell of the position had to be broken before the men could get into the entrenchments. An observer has described that strange contest. "Some fired down into the loopholes; some, who happened to find small gaps in the line of head-cover in front of them, jumped down there and began to work into the dark shelters under the head-cover where the Turks were; others went on over the first trench, and even over the second trench, and into communication trenches which had no head-cover over them, and through which the Turks were fleeing. Others noticed that in the solid roof in front of them, near the edge where the loopholes were, there were manholes left at intervals, apparently to allow the listening patrols to creep through at night. They were just large enough to allow a man to wriggle through, and that was enough for the 1st Brigade. They wriggled down into them, feet foremost, as a burglar might into a skylight." In a quarter of an hour the first Turkish line had been carried, and before the summer night fell the Lone Pine position had been won. The victors had to maintain their ground for the next few days, until 12th August, against violent counter-attacks, and this they achieved with a stubbornness as conspicuous as the fury of their assault. The

Aug. 6.

Turkish losses in this action alone were estimated at 5,000. The action was highly fruitful, for it drew all the local Turkish reserves to meet it. As a feat of arms it cannot be overpraised. In Sir Ian Hamilton's words, "One weak Australian brigade, numbering at the outset but 2,000 rifles, and supported only by two weak battalions, carried the work under the eyes of a whole enemy division, and maintained their grip upon it like a vice during six days' successive counter-attacks." The conspicuous gallantry of the performance may be realized from the fact that of the nine Victoria Crosses awarded for the August battles at Gallipoli, seven went to the conquerors of Lone Pine.[4]

Meantime the Anzac left wing had begun to move in the first darkness of that night of the 6th. General Godley's force consisted of the New Zealand and Australian Division, less the 1st and 3rd Light Horse Brigades, the 13th Division of the New Army, less five battalions, and General Cox's 29th Indian Infantry Brigade. The 29th Brigade of the new 10th Division and the 38th Brigade of the 13th Division were held in reserve. The plan was to divide the force into right and left covering columns and right and left columns of assault. The right covering column, under Brigadier-General Russell, was to seize the Table Tops, and the position between the Sazli Beit Dere and the Chailak Dere ravines. The left covering column, under Brigadier-General Travers, was directed to occupy the hill called Damakjelik Bair, north of the Aghyl Dere nullah. The right column of assault, under Brigadier-General Johnston, was to move up the ravines against the Chunuk Bair ridge, and the left column, under Brigadier-General Cox, to work up the Aghyl Dere against the summit peak, Hill 971.

At 9.30 p.m. General Russell's column, including the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade, the Otago Mounted Rifles, and the Maori contingent, moved along the coast as pioneers to clear the foothills. A destroyer bombarded as usual the Turkish trenches, and the occupants took cover; but to their amazement, when the firing ceased, they found the New Zealand bayonets upon them. The Auckland and Wellington Mounted Rifles on the right cleared the Little and Big Table Tops, which are the lowest points on the ridge between the Sazli Beit Dere and the Chailak Dere, while the Otago and Canterbury Regiments swung farther north to occupy the ridge named Bauchop's Hill, after the Otago colonel. The work was done in silence, and as in all night attacks there was some confusion. Men lost their way in the darkness, for the foothills were a maze of broken ridges and indeterminate gullies. Soon the Turks were alive to the movement, and their fire sputtered over the whole hillside. By dawn much had been won,

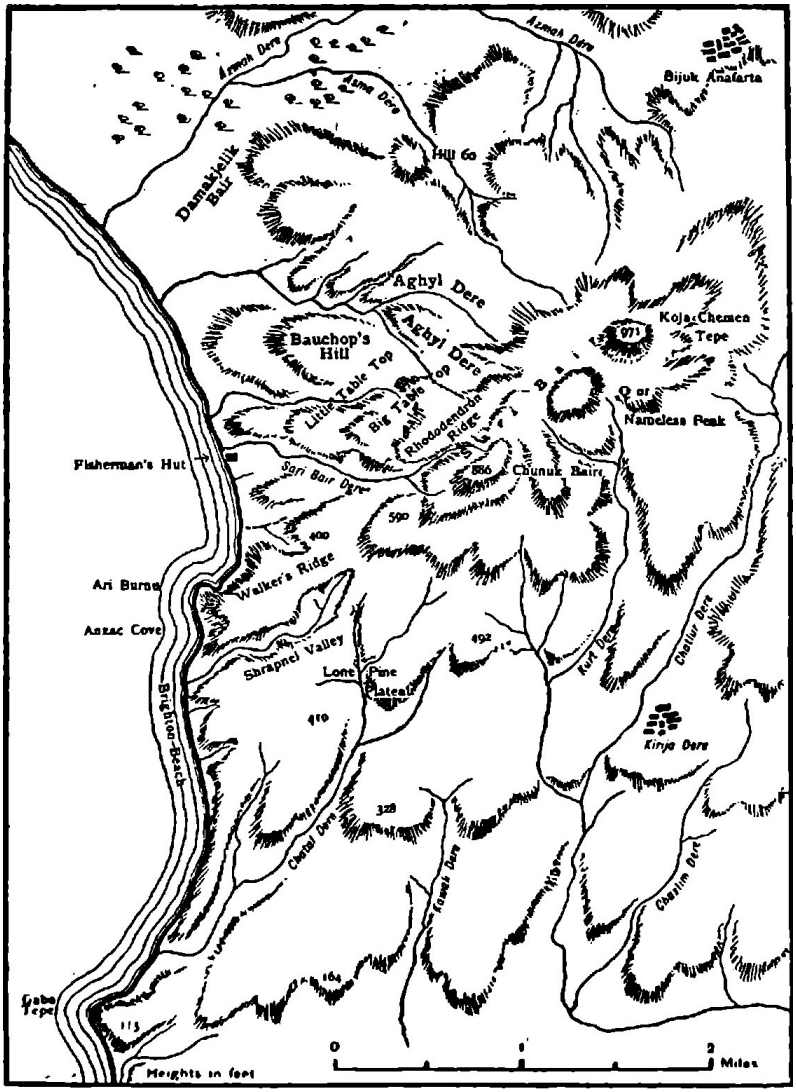
including the two Table Tops and part of Bauchop's Hill, where the officer who gave the place his name had fallen.

Meanwhile General Travers's column, which included part of the 40th Brigade of the 13th Division, the 4th South Wales Borderers, and the 5th Wiltshires, pushed up the coast and attacked Damakjelik Bair. By 1.30 in the morning the whole place was carried, a fine piece of work for the New Army, which was largely due to the brilliant leading of Lieutenant-Colonel Gillespie of the South Wales Borderers. The way was now prepared for the columns of assault.

Aug. 7.

On Saturday, the 7th, at dawn, the main operation began. Before we consider the attack of the left wing on Koja Chemen, we must glance at the supporting movement in the centre, designed to engage part of the enemy's strength. Very early in the morning part of the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade advanced from their trenches on Walker's Ridge, while part of the 1st Light Horse Brigade attacked on the right from Quinn's Post at the head of Shrapnel Valley, where they were supported by a detachment of the Welsh Fusiliers. The attack of those magnificent troopers, unequalled both in physique and in courage, had never a chance of succeeding. Line after line left the parapets, to be met with a storm of fire in which no mortal could live. For a moment, but only for a moment, the flag of the Light Horse fluttered from a corner of the Turkish position, where a few desperate adventurers had carried it, but presently it had gone. The affair was over in a quarter of an hour, and must stand as one of the most heroic and forlorn of the episodes of the campaign. Of the 450 men who attacked from Walker's Ridge less than 100 came back, and of the 300 at Quinn's Post no more than 13. Yet the sacrifice was not in vain. It pinned down to their trenches the Turkish centre for many hours, for the enemy believed that such amazing valour must be the prelude to a great concerted attack.

We must now follow the fortunes of General Godley's two columns of assault. General Johnston's column, on the right, consisting of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, was ordered to advance up the gullies on each side of the Table Tops ridge against the summit of Chunuk Bair. On the left, General Cox's column, made up of the 4th Australian Brigade and the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, was to make a circuit to the north, and move up the Aghyl Dere against the northern flanks of Koja Chemen.



The "Anzac" Front.
The water-courses shown on the map are mostly dry in summer.

It was a day of blistering heat, one of the hottest yet experienced in that torrid summer. All night the troops had been on the road, and the force on the left of the attack had to fetch a long and weary circuit. The New Zealanders on the right at first made good progress. Advancing up the Chailak Dere and the Sazli Beit Dere, they carried the hogs-back called Rhododendron Ridge, which joins the main *massif* just west of Chunuk Bair. That was at ten o'clock in the morning, when the Australians and Indians on

the left should have been well up the Aghyl Dere ready to take the defences of Chunuk Bair in flank. But there was at first no sign of the left wing. It had been held up by the difficult country in the lower reaches of the Aghyl Dere, and where the ravine forks had split into two, the Australians going up the left-hand gully and the Indians the right. The 10th Gurkhas on the extreme right managed to get into touch with General Johnston's forces, but by this time the men of both columns were exhausted, and were forced to call a halt. Later in the day the New Zealanders reconnoitred the main ridge, and prepared for the great offensive on the morrow.

Before 6th August reinforcements had arrived in the Anzac zone. These were the 13th Division[5] of the New Army, under Major-General Shaw, troops which had previously been given a short spell of service at Cape Helles, and were now destined to be flung into one of the severest actions of the campaign. On the night of 7th August two of its battalions—the 7th Gloucesters and the 8th Welsh (Pioneers)—reinforced the New Zealanders on Rhododendron Ridge. At dawn on the 8th the New Zealanders, to whom the Maori contingent and the Auckland Mounted Rifles had now been added, attacked, and after a hard struggle carried the crest of Chunuk Bair, from which, through a gap in the hills, a glimpse could be got of the waters of the Dardanelles. The losses were heavy, as may be judged from the case of the Wellington battalion, which had been 700 strong on the 6th and was now reduced to 53. The 7th Gloucesters also suffered terribly, losing their gallant commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Malone. In Sir Ian Hamilton's words: "Every single officer, company sergeant-major, or company quartermaster-sergeant, was either killed or wounded, and the battalion by midday consisted of small groups of men commanded by junior non-commissioned officers or privates. Chapter and verse may be quoted for the view that the rank and file of an army cannot long endure the strain of close hand-to-hand fighting unless they are given confidence by the example of good officers. Yet here is at least one instance where a battalion of the New Army fought right on, from midday till sunset, without *any* officers."

Aug. 8.

That day the left wing again made little progress. It was now formed in two columns. On the right the 39th Brigade of the 13th Division and the 29th Indian Brigade moved against the farm on the slopes of Chunuk Bair, and on the left the 4th Australian Brigade attempted a northern spur of Koja Chemen. The Australians lost over 1,000, and were compelled to fall back to their original position, where they stood at bay.

In the great heat, and through a country so arduous, no movement could be long sustained. It must resolve itself into a series of dashes, with intervals for rest and reorganization. There was no water in those parched nullahs, and every drop had to be brought up the ridges from the beaches. The fighting died away on the afternoon of the 8th. The great effort was fixed for the following morning, when the Australians and the Indians on the left should attack Koja Chemen from the head of the Aghyl Dere, and the New Zealanders push in the same direction from their position on Chunuk Bair. Five battalions—two each from the 29th and 38th Brigades, and one from the 40th—were put under the command of General Baldwin, and sent up to form a third column on the right centre of the movement.

Aug. 9.

The 9th of August dawned with the same airless and pitiless heat. From the first dawn the artillery and the guns of the warships had been in action against the upper slopes of Koja Chemen. Then they ceased, and the British attack advanced in three columns. On the left the Indians moved straight up hill against the summit called Q, or Nameless Peak, the chief feature of the ridge between Chunuk Bair and Hill 971. The New Zealanders on the right held their position on Chunuk Bair, and between the two, General Baldwin's force moved in the confusion of broken downs and gullies north of Rhododendron Ridge. The last force was tired from the night march, and since no proper reconnaissance had been possible, they lost their way. Baldwin, finding that he could not reach the summit ridge in time to take part in the main attack, deployed at the farm to the left of the New Zealand trenches on Rhododendron Spur. The New Zealanders, being the pivot of the movement, were not required to advance, and were able to maintain themselves safely. The Indians made the farthest progress, for, led by the 6th Gurkhas, and assisted by some of the 6th South Lancashires, they scaled the summit of Hill Q, and for half an hour looked down on the great white road to the east which threaded the peninsula, and which now was crowded with Turkish convoys, and beyond it to the blue waters of the Straits. It was a sight that no British soldier had seen since that day in April, the first of the landing, when the Australian vanguard had gazed on the Dardanelles. But the ground could not be maintained. A shower of high explosive shell descended on the trenches on the summit. It was followed by a rush of Turkish supports, and before our line could be consolidated we had been driven back from the crest. Our position that evening was a line from the northern slopes of Hill Q to the New Zealand position on Chunuk Bair, where about 200 yards were occupied by some 800 men. Our total casualties were nearly 8,500.

Had the Suvla Expedition succeeded, and the Anafarta hills been by this time won, the left flank of the Anzacs would have been safe, and we should have been astride the central ridge of the peninsula. During the violent fighting of the past two days the New Zealanders on the ridge had seen clearly the details of the landing. They saw the shell and shrapnel of the Turks sweep the beaches, and the covering fire of our naval guns. But their left, hard pressed on the Aghyl Dere, saw nothing of the right of the Suvla advance, which by this time should have made contact with them. Nor did the Turkish strength on Koja Chemen seem in any way to diminish, as would have been the case if they had been in difficulties with General Stopford's men at Anafarta. Rather it seemed to grow, and an ugly suspicion filled the troops on the ridge that the new effort, which had been planned as the culminating blow, had failed. Next day the doubt became a certainty.

Aug. 10.

For on Tuesday morning came a desperate Turkish counter-attack on Chunuk Bair. The New Zealanders, who had been engaged since Friday night, had been relieved by two battalions—the 6th Loyal North Lancashires and the 5th Wiltshires—of the 13th Division. At 4.30 a.m. the Yemen Division, supported by an extra regiment of three battalions, was launched against the British front. They came on in close formation, line after line, with the wild valour of fanatics. Our battalions were driven back from Chunuk Bair, and the Turks poured down the slopes to where Rhododendron Ridge juts from the parent *massif*. Their object was to gain the Sazli Beit Dere, and so cut off the British left from the rest of the Anzac forces. General Baldwin fell at this stage of the action. The Indians on the slopes of Hill Q were also driven back, and for a moment it looked as if the attack would succeed. But the enemy, pouring solidly down the slopes, offered a superb target for our gunners. A stream of high explosives and shrapnel burst from our land batteries and the ships' guns. In the Indian section ten machine guns caught them in flank at short range. The attack could not retire, for fresh men kept sweeping over the crest and driving the wedge forward to its destruction. Soon it slackened, then broke, and with fierce hand-to-hand fighting among the scrub we began to win back the lost ground. By midday the danger was over. It had been grave indeed, for the last two battalions of the Anzac general reserve had been sent up in support. Of one party of 5,000 Turks who had swarmed over the crest but 500 returned. That afternoon the fighting ceased from the sheer exhaustion of both sides. We had leisure to reconstruct our line, which now ran from the top of Rhododendron Ridge north-east to a position among the spurs of the Aghyl Dere.[6]

Two days later, on 12th August, General Godley at last obtained touch with the right wing of the Suvla Bay force at a place called Susuk Kuyu, on the Azmak Dere, a little west of its junction with the Asma Dere. It had been a most glorious but a most costly enterprise. By the evening of 10th August the casualties had reached 12,000, including a very large proportion of officers. Let General Godley speak for the quality of the men. "I cannot close my report without placing on record my unbounded admiration of the work performed, and the gallantry displayed, by the troops and their leaders during the severe fighting involved in these operations. Though the Australian, New Zealand, and Indian units had been confined to trench duty in a cramped space for some four months, and though the troops of the New Armies had only just landed from a sea voyage, and many of them had not been previously under fire, I do not believe that any troops in the world could have accomplished more." We must turn now to the fortunes of the Suvla landing.

The force destined for Suvla Bay under Lieutenant-General Sir F. W. Stopford was for the most part the new Ninth Corps. It consisted of two divisions of the New Army—the 10th (Irish), under Major-General Sir Bryan Mahon, less one brigade; the 11th (Northern), under Major-General Hammersley; and two Territorial Divisions, the 53rd and 54th. All day of the 6th the 11th Division was busy embarking at Kephalos Bay, in Imbros, each man being given rations and water for two days. When the transports set sail after dusk it was to a destination unknown to all save the Staff. About 9.30 p.m. the ships, showing no light, entered the little Bay of Suvla, four miles north of the main Anzac position. The night was dark, for the moon did not rise till two o'clock.

Aug. 6.

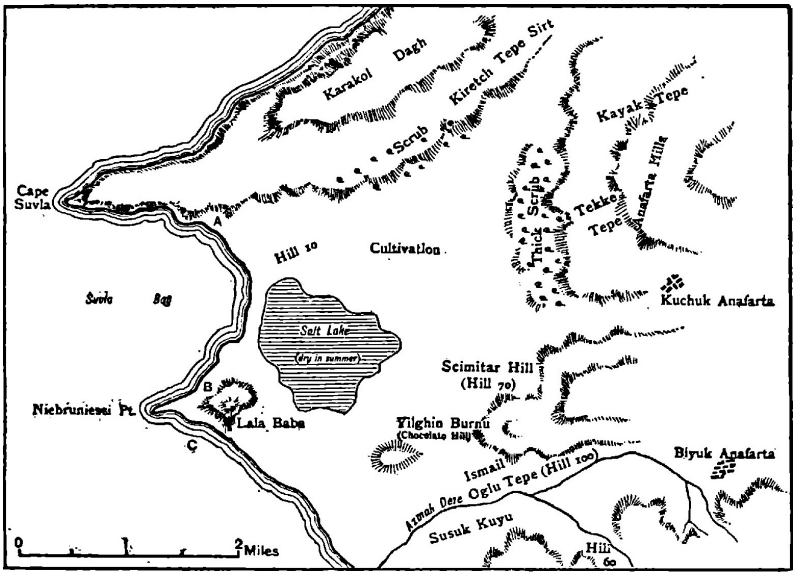
The enemy had no inkling of our plan. That day we had made a pretence of landing at Karachali, at the head of the Gulf of Saros, on the coast road from Enos to Bulair. That day, too, the attack at Cape Helles and Lone Pine had begun, and the enemy's attention was diverted to the extreme ends of his front. We are justified therefore in claiming the Suvla Expedition as a successful surprise. As the transports crept northwards the New Zealanders, on the dark shore to starboard, were already moving along their saps, and before the landing was well begun, the firing had started where the Mounted Brigades were clearing the foothills. But at Suvla there was no sign of life, till searchlights from the Anafarta slopes, in their periodic sweeping of the

horizon, discovered the strange flotilla, and an intermittent rifle fire broke out upon the beach.

Three landing-places had been selected—A, north of the Salt Lake, and B and C, south-west of it. All night long the work of disembarkation went on. The 32nd and 33rd Brigades landed at B and C, and the 34th at A. Opposite B and C was a little hill called Lala Baba, held by the enemy. It was readily carried with the bayonet by the 9th West Yorks and 6th Yorkshires, and for the rest of the night our only trouble was from scattered snipers in the scrub. The 34th Brigade had some difficulties at A with a Turkish outpost on Hill 10, but with the assistance of the 32nd Brigade they pushed northward and carried the ridge of the Karakol Dagh. At dawn on the 7th the 11th Division was ashore, and held both sides of the bay and the neck of land between them. At daybreak six battalions of the 10th Division arrived in the bay from Mitylene. It was General Stopford's intention to use the 10th Division on his left, but for some reason not yet clear the troops could not be landed at A beach, but were landed at C, and marched slowly northwards along the coast. Presently the remaining three battalions of the Division arrived from Mudros along with General Sir Bryan Mahon.

Aug. 7.

It was now necessary to deploy into the plain and take up a broad front east of the Salt Lake. The earliest light brought the Turkish artillery into action. At first we heard only the guns of the New Zealanders, now far up on the slopes of Chunuk Bair. Then suddenly a storm of shrapnel broke on the beaches, which burst too high to do much damage, while the ordinary shells buried themselves in the sand. The 10th Division, in perfect order, moved along the causeway to the north end of the lake, while a field battery which we had established on Lala Baba provided a useful support. At the same time the cruisers, monitors, and destroyers in the bay made good practice against the Turkish batteries on the heights. By two o'clock, with few casualties, the two divisions—the 10th on the left—held a line east of the lake running from the Karakol Dagh to near the butt-end of the ridge called Yilghin Burnu. So far the operation had been conducted with perfect precision and success.



The Suvla Bay Landing.

It was imperative to push on if we were to get the benefit of surprise. But as the afternoon advanced, we seemed to come to a standstill. It was very hot, and the troops were very weary and tormented with an unbearable thirst, most of the men having emptied their water-bottles by eight o'clock that morning. At 4 p.m. there came a thunderstorm and a heavy shower of rain, which cleared the air, and at five we managed to advance our front a little, under a violent shelling from the guns on Anafarta Ridge. Late that night our right won a real success, for two battalions of the 11th Division succeeded in carrying the position of Yilghin Burnu—which we called Chocolate Hill after its scrub had caught fire and been reduced to a barren desolation. This, and the parallel position of Karakol Dagh in the north, where Sir Bryan Mahon made a spirited attack, safeguarded our flanks; and, in the event of our advance on the morrow succeeding, would allow us to link up with the left of the Anzac Corps on the Azmak Dere.

Aug. 8.

Next day, Sunday, the 8th, the day on which the New Zealanders won Chunuk Bair, was the critical stage at Suvla. We had a strength of some 25,000 men. The Turks on the Anafarta heights were weak in numbers—our intelligence reports put them at no more than 4,000—and an attack resolutely pushed forward must have carried the position. East of Salt Lake there is a wide stretch of flat, sandy plain. Beyond this is a strip 2,000 yards deep of tillage, scrub, and woodland, and little farms stretching to the edge of the slopes. To the south-

east there is a gap in the hills, where stands the village of Kuchuk Anafarta in a dark clump of cypresses. The plan of the Turkish commander was to hold his trenches on the heights very thinly, while he pushed forward a screen of riflemen into the cover of the patches of scrub. This screen was brilliantly handled, and from its mobility and invisibility seems to have given our men the impression that they were facing a huge enemy force. Meanwhile the Turkish guns in the rear bombarded our lines and supports, and searched every road leading from the beaches.

All through that unlucky day we made sporadic attempts to advance, losing heavily in the process and gaining little ground. A whole British corps were held up by a screen of sharpshooters, well backed by artillery. The full story of the failure will probably never be known, and criticism is idle. The troops were new, and lacked that self-reliance and individual initiative which is necessary in open-order fighting in a difficult country, while there was undoubtedly a lack of purpose and resolution in their leadership. General Stopford was not satisfied with his artillery support, and the water arrangements were imperfect. But he did not sufficiently recognize the vital importance of an infantry advance at all costs when it is a question of making good a landing in hostile territory. In Sir Ian Hamilton's words, "The very existence of the force, its water supply, its facilities for munitions and supplies, its power to reinforce, must absolutely depend on the infantry being able instantly to make good sufficient ground without the aid of the artillery other than can be supplied for the purpose by *floating* batteries. . . . Driving power was required, and even a certain ruthlessness, to brush aside pleas for a respite for tired troops. The one fatal error was inertia. And inertia prevailed." A fair summary of the situation may be quoted from the letter of an officer engaged in the movement: "Our sufferings were by no means caused entirely by the action of the foe. Hundreds and hundreds of men, fighting under a tropical heat, dropped out of the ranks after atrocious suffering caused by the lack of water. Apart from any question of the command, two causes contributed mainly to the lack of success which attended the expedition. The scene of combat presented extraordinary difficulties to the attacking force. On the other hand, a body of perfectly green troops, who had never been in action before, was called upon to undertake a task under the most nerve-trying conditions, which only could have been successfully achieved by men inured to the conditions existing in connection with the most recent and bloodiest or wars."

Aug. 9.

On Monday, the 9th, our chance had almost vanished. The heart had gone out of the attack, and we were settling down to a war of positions. Sir Ian Hamilton had arrived the

night before from Imbros, and had striven to inspire the corps and divisional commanders with the spirit of the offensive. In his report, the fullest, most candid, and most luminous account which we possess of any of the operations of the war, he has described the situation. The general commanding the 11th Division declared himself unable to make a night attack. Another commander-in-chief might have insisted; Sir Ian was content to try to persuade, and failed. Early on the morning of the 9th an attack was indeed attempted by the 32nd Brigade. It was a gallant endeavour to carry the main Anafarta ridge, and one company of the 6th East Yorks (Pioneers) actually won the crest. But the effort had been made too late, for the Turkish defence was already thickening. Our difficulties were increased by an event which happened at midday. A strong wind was blowing from the north, and either by shell-fire or by Turkish design the scrub on Hill 70 was set ablaze. From that place, henceforth christened Burnt Hill, the tongues of flame leaping with the wind swept across our front, and drove us back. An observer has described the scene: "It was a weird sight, for in all directions you saw Turkish snipers and British infantry crawling out from amongst the scrub and trees and hedges, where they had been lying invisible, and, turning their backs on one another, crawling or running to get out of the track of the flames and dense black clouds of suffocating smoke."

Aug. 10.

The incident suspended all serious operations for the day. Next day, the 10th, the opportunity had gone for good. The Turks had received reinforcements—part of the Yemen Division which was on that day charging our position on Chunuk Bair. The 33rd Brigade attacked at dawn on Hill 100, which the Turks called Ismail Oglu Tepe. Some of the men reached the summit, but could not hold it. The 53rd Territorial Division, under General Lindley, had now arrived, and the 54th followed next day. On the 10th the 53rd attacked the main Anafarta ridge, but failed to reach it.

For the next few days we laboured to consolidate our front, which now ran from the Azmak Dere across Chocolate Hill to the 10th Division on the left. In the latter area we pushed forward a little on the Karakol Dagh, and presently had a continuous trench line across the plain. On the 12th the 163rd Brigade on our left centre won some ground, and there the 1/5 Norfolks, under Colonel Sir H. Beauchamp, charged so vigorously that their colonel with 16 officers and 250 men disappeared for good in the forest. On that day, as we have seen, our right obtained touch with the men of Anzac on the Azmak Dere. On the 15th General Stopford relinquished the command of the 9th Corps.[7]

For the next ten days the Suvla operations languished. Meantime we were preparing for a second effort, and for that purpose brought fresh troops to the scene of action. The new striking force was no less than the famous 29th Division, temporarily commanded by General Marshall, which was brought up from Cape Helles in trawlers and landed before the Turks were aware of its presence. To it was added the 2nd Mounted Division of Yeomanry, under Major-General Paton, and the whole force was put under the direction of General De Lisle. The objective was the encircling hills behind the Suvla plain, extending from Hill 70, now in the possession of the Turks, to Hill 100.[8] By this time all the advantage of surprise had gone, and the Turkish position was held in equal or superior force. The only tactics left to us were those of a frontal assault.

The attack of the 29th Division was entrusted to the 86th and 87th Brigades; the 88th Brigade, which had been seriously depleted by the Cape Helles fighting of 6th August, being held in reserve. At three o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st a great bombardment was opened on the ridges. The enemy's guns replied, and soon the remainder of the scrub on Chocolate Hill was blazing, and our right was enveloped in a fog of smoke. Unfortunately there was also a natural mist which discomfited our gunners. We had reckoned on the Turks being blinded by the setting sun, which should at the same time show up their positions; whereas the opposite was the case. At 3.30 the 87th Brigade advanced against Hill 70 or Scimitar Hill, and the 86th against Hill 100; while on their right the 11th Division moved against the trenches in front of it, with orders, if successful, to swing northwards and assault Hill 100 from the south. The 87th Brigade at first made good progress. The 1st Inniskilling Fusiliers attacked the west face, and the 1st Border Regiment moved against the south slope. Both battalions almost won the crest, but the shell fire from behind Hill 100 was too strong, and the Turkish machine guns held them back in the last hundred yards. The 2nd South Wales Borderers, the reserve battalion, attacked late in the afternoon on the south side; but they, too, failed, and were compelled to dig themselves in below the crest. Meanwhile the 86th Brigade made repeated and most gallant attacks on Hill 100, but their efforts were fruitless. The New Army division on the right was held fast in the flats, and could do nothing in the way of a flanking attack.

Aug. 21.

About five o'clock the Mounted Division was ordered into action. They had been held in reserve below the knoll of Lala Baba, and now advanced across the open in perfect order under a devastating rain of Turkish shrapnel. For two miles they moved forward, as if on parade, and, formed up below the 87th Brigade between Hill 70 and Hill 100. Sir Ian Hamilton has

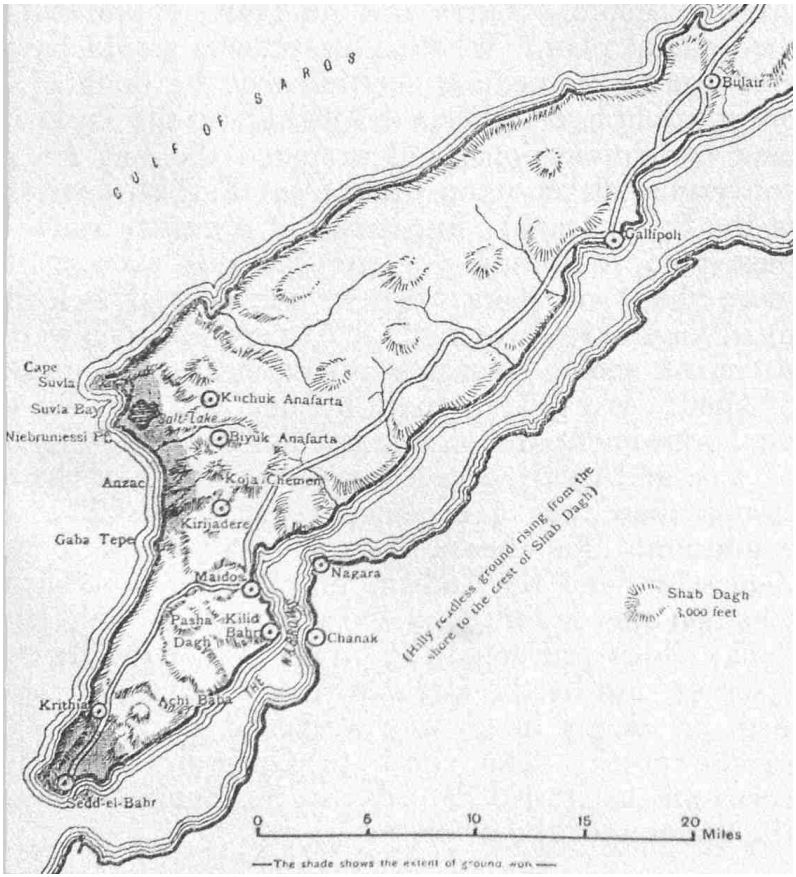
described the scene. “Such superb martial spectacles are rare in modern war. . . . Here, for a mile and a half, there was nothing to conceal a mouse, much less some of the most stalwart soldiers England has ever sent from her shores. Despite the critical events in other parts of the field, I could hardly take my glasses from the Yeomen. . . . Here and there a shell would take toll of a cluster; there they lay; there was no straggling; the others moved steadily on; not a man was there who hung back or hurried.” As the darkness was falling, the Yeomanry rose from their cover and charged the hill. Lord Longford’s 2nd (South Midland) Brigade, consisting of the Bucks, Berks, and Dorset regiments, led the assault; and the watchers in the plains saw the troopers near the crest, reach it, and then disappear as the first ranks leaped into the Turkish trenches. It was a splendid feat of arms, and a great shout went up that Hill 100 was won. In the gathering dark, made thicker by the smoke from the burning scrub, it was difficult to tell the result; but the perpetual patter of rifles and machine-gun fire showed that the conquest would be hard to maintain. As it happened, the Yeomen had only won an underfeature; the Turks still held the crest, whence their machine guns enfiladed the troops below. During the night it became clear that we could not hold the position, and by daylight we had fallen back upon our old lines. The final effort against Anafarta had failed.[9]

Aug. 22.

The one gleam of success that day was on the Azmak Dere, where the left of the Anzac Corps effected a lodgment on Hill 60, and enabled our front to be fully consolidated. On the 27th, after a brilliant attack by the 5th Connaught Rangers and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, Hill 60 was finally won.

Aug. 27.

It is not easy to see how the second Suvla attack could have succeeded. It was another of those desperate frontal assaults of which, in the Cape Helles region, we had already learned the futility. The Turk entrenched on his hills was not to be driven out by the finest infantry in the world. But no failure can detract from the merits of the performance of the 29th and the Mounted Divisions. The Yeomanry suffered terribly. Two brigadiers fell—General Lord Longford, and, a little later, General Kenna, V.C.; so did the gallant commander of the Sherwood Rangers, Sir John Milbanke, V.C., and some regiments, like the Bucks, were almost destroyed. Once again, as on 13th May at Ypres, the English yeoman had shown “the mettle of the pasture.” Had the troops used on the 21st been used on 7th August, the Anafarta heights might have been won.



The Gallipoli Peninsula—sketch showing the extent of ground occupied at the close of the attack in August.

The August fighting was the most costly part of the Dardanelles campaign. For the first three weeks of the month our casualties were close on 40,000, of which at least 30,000 were incurred between 6th August and 10th August. It was an intensity of loss greater than the First and Second Battles of Ypres, and, considering the numbers engaged, greater than the advance at Loos in the following month. It was, moreover, a fruitless sacrifice, for nothing material was gained. We had extended the length of our battle-front by six miles, and we had advanced it on the left of the Anzac Corps by winning a mile or so of the Koja Chemen ridges. But we were no nearer to a decision. Our new line commanded no part of the enemy's communications, and it was in no way easier to hold. We had secured a little more room to move in in the Anzac zone, and that may be taken as the sum of our achievement.

The enterprise was an example of a bold and practicable scheme which miscarried owing to mistakes in detail. There was no fault to find with the general plan. Whether its success would have given us an immediate decision may be doubted,[10] but it would have struck a deadly blow at the Turkish and communications, and prepared the way for a converging attack upon the central Turkish fortress of the Pasha Dagh. But it was of necessity a complex plan, demanding a simultaneous success at more than one point. There was no real lack of men, for the reserves both at Anzac and Suvla were sufficient, and there seems to have been no shortage of shell. We failed, partly because we used for a vital movement troops not yet inured to this kind of war, and partly because in the handling of these troops there was a conspicuous lack of skill and resolution. The heroic performance of the New Zealanders and the Indians on the ridges of Koja Chemen was nullified by the bareness of their left flank, which prevented the proper use of the Anzac reserves, and by the fact that they were face to face with an enemy in no way weakened by the attack to the north. The check to General Stopford's corps on that torrid Saturday in the Suvla flats was the undoing of the whole enterprise.

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[1] This is the hill referred to in Sir Ian Hamilton's dispatch as Hill 305.

[2] The scrub covering it was not rhododendron but daphne.

[3] The attack was initiated by the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th battalions, with the 1st in reserve.

[4] They were given to Captain Alfred John Short, Private John Hamilton, and Private Leonard Keyser of the 1st Battalion; and Lieutenant W. J. Symons, Lieutenant F. H. Tubb, Corporal A. S. Burton, and Corporal William Dunstan of the 7th Battalion.

[5] The Division was comprised chiefly of men from the west and north-west of England, and was made up of the 38th Brigade (Brigadier-General Baldwin), the 39th Brigade (Brigadier-General Cayley), and the 40th Brigade (Brigadier-General Travers).

[6] One Victoria Cross was awarded for the Chunuk Bair fighting—to Corporal Cyril Bassett, of the New Zealand Divisional Signal Corps.

[7] He was succeeded by Lieutenant-General the Hon. Julian Byng, who had commanded the Cavalry Corps in France.

[8] This feature is given in some maps as Hill 112.

[9] Captain P. H. Hansen of the 6th Lincolns and Private Potts of the Berkshire Yeomanry received the Victoria Cross for the Suvla Bay actions.

[10] The enemy on Pasha Dagh and Achi Baba could still have drawn supports across the Narrows from the Asiatic side, till such time as we took Maidos.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE TSAR TAKES COMMAND OF THE RUSSIAN ARMIES.

Position of German Front on 21st August—Germany's Alternative Plan—A Winter Position—The Lateral Railway—The Russian Problem—Position after Fall of Kovno—Fall of Ossowietz—Fall of Brest Litovski—Position of Ewarts's Armies—Fall of Bialystok—Evacuation of Olita—Attack on Dvina Line—Advance of German Right—The Defence of Vilna—Ivanov counter-attacks—Fall of Grodno—The Fight for the Dvina—High Tide in the Campaign—The Tsar takes Command of the Russian Armies—The Grand Duke Nicholas goes to the Caucasus—The Imperial Rescript to the Grand Duke—Alexeiev becomes Chief of the General Staff—Ruzsky takes over Northern Army Group.

Aug. 21.

In the three weeks which ended on the 21st of August the German centre in the East had advanced a hundred miles. The forts of Warsaw, Ivangorod, Novo Georgievsk, and Kovno had fallen. Von Eichhorn's command was menacing Grodno; von Gallwitz had isolated Brest on the north; Prince Leopold was close on the western walls of that fortress; and von Mackensen was east of the Bug, and threatening to take the place in the rear. It was no small achievement for twenty days, but it was not the success for which Germany had hoped. The Russian armies had extricated themselves from impossible salients, along intricate corridors, with few losses. The crushing field victory was further off than on the day when Leopold of Bavaria first rode into Warsaw.

Germany did not yet despair of this issue, but she had an alternative objective. She hoped to find an impregnable line on which she could go into winter quarters. Already, with her invincible optimism, she was turning her eyes elsewhere for a victory which would shake the confidence of her enemies. The Balkan road to Constantinople was now in the thoughts of her High Command, for by it she hoped to strike British prestige in its most vulnerable point, and to end the Dardanelles campaign with a cataclysmic disaster. It is important to keep the German objective in mind, for otherwise the narrative of the war in Russia becomes a mere string of inconsequent

details. To understand the nature of the winter position which she coveted we must look at the topography of the immediate *terrain*.

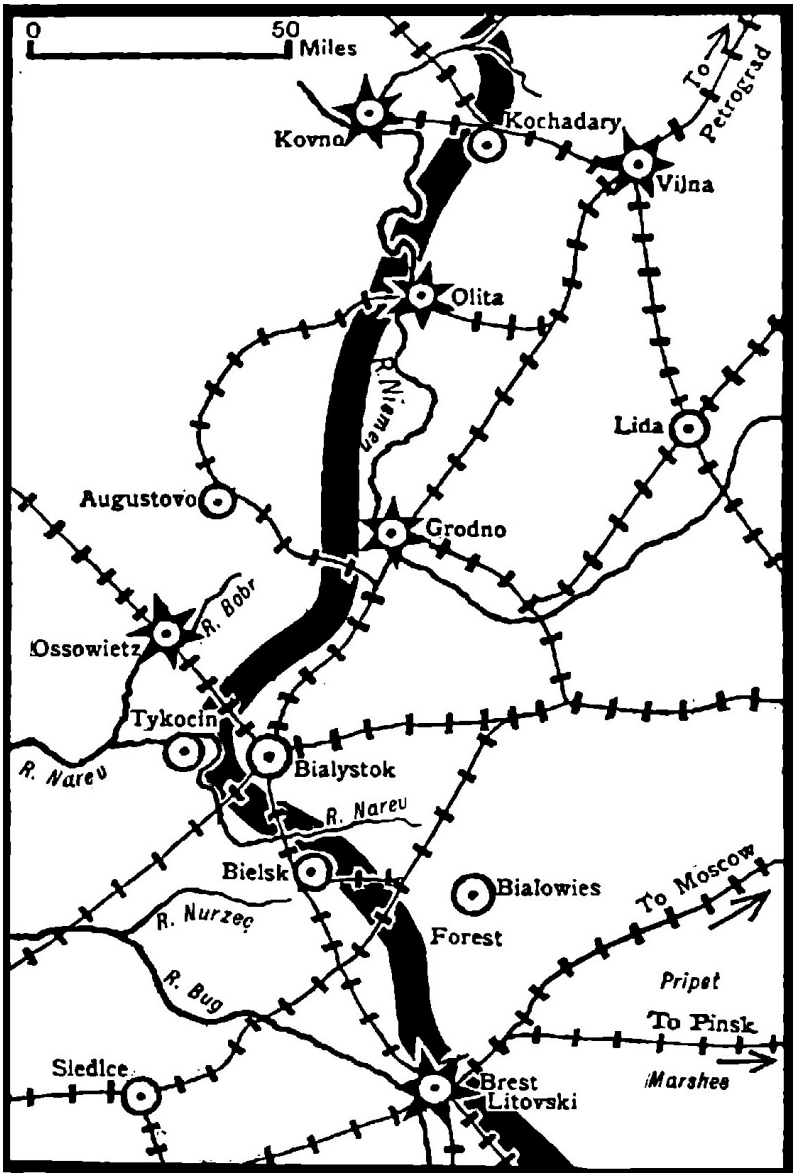
From the Masurenland district of East Prussia a zone of lakes stretches eastwards, crossing the Niemen valley between Grodno and Kovno, and bending northwards between Kovno and Vilna. North of Vilna it extends on both sides of the Petrograd railway, and at Dvinsk becomes a great tangle of lagoons. Then it thins out somewhat, but there are huge lakes north of Pskov, and the zone runs beyond Petrograd, where are Ladoga and Onega, the largest lakes in Europe, till it reaches the meres of Finland and Lapland and the shores of the White Sea. Since this zone traverses flat country, it means also great marshes, and, in rainy weather or a mild winter, an infinite extension of the lake boundaries. Such a district provided defensive positions as strong as East Prussia, since in winter it would not be possible to bring up artillery against them except at certain well-marked points. If Germany desired to secure her left flank, Dvinsk and the Dvina valley offered an admirable bulwark. South of Grodno came a belt of harder ground, but farther south the Pripet marshes would be an obstacle to serious attack. Last of all, in the south it was necessary to win and hold the triangle of small fortresses—Lutsk, Dubno, and Rovno—not for the sake of the places themselves, but because they controlled the Volhynian railways. With that system in her hands, Germany believed, with some reason, that she could defend her right flank against any movement from Kiev.

But for the comfort of the winter front a lateral railway was needed, and this was ready to her hand in the line which runs from Riga by Dvinsk, Vilna, and Rovno. The possession of this would enable her to move troops and guns rapidly from point to point in her front to meet any local threat. Indeed, it was more than a convenience; it was a necessity. Germany found the numbers of her men growing too small for her many adventures. In the East she would soon be compelled, as in the West, to hold her front with fewer troops than her opponents, and for this it was essential that these troops should have every chance of mobility.

The immediate German objectives on the 21st day of August may be set down as follows: Riga, the Dvina valley, Dvinsk, Vilna, the Volhynian fortresses, and all the country west of, up to, and a little beyond, the Riga-Rovno line. Ideas of Petrograd and Moscow, if she had ever entertained them, were postponed to more convenient seasons. For her achievements up to date were barren in the eyes of all but the inflammable civilians at home. She was holding immense lines, she had not beaten the enemy, and her soldiers were growing very weary. If she did not speedily win her object, the

initiative might slip from her hands. Besides, winter was coming. She embarked on what she hoped would be the final stage of the campaign two months later than Napoleon had crossed the Niemen.

The Russian position, though full of difficulties, was better than a month before. Their line was nearly straight, save for a salient at Ossowietz, and the great sag on their right, where von Hindenburg approached the Dvina. Their problem was to prevent von Mackensen from getting to the rear of Brest Litovski before Ewarts's centre was clear, to hold firm on their right, and to make a permanent stand west of the Dvinsk—Vilna—Rovno railway. Ossowietz and Bialystok clearly must go, and Grodno must hold out just long enough to enable the forces there to fall back on Vilna by the main Petrograd line. If one danger exceeded another, when all were so great, it was the menace to the crossings of the Dvina. If Dvinsk were taken in flank, the retreat of Alexeiev's left and Ewarts's right would be gravely compromised.



Retreat of the Russian Centre.—The German front on August 25.

After the fall of Kovno[1] the Russian armies fell back by the railway towards Vilna, and on Sunday, the 22nd, made a stand at Koshedary to enable the Vilna stores to be removed. On that day Bialystok was still in their hands, and all the Petrograd railway beyond it, so that the forces at Ossowietz had still their path of retreat clear. But von Gallwitz held Bielsk to the south, and there was no easy

Aug. 22.

communication between the Army of the Niemen and the Army of Brest. The latter fortress was now invested on three sides, and its evacuation was the immediate problem of Ewarts's centre. Von Beseler, the siege expert, having reduced Novo Georgievsk, was now bringing his guns against the western works of Brest. As we shall see, he and his siege train were moved from point to point in the German front wherever their services were most needed.

Aug. 23.

Next day, the 23rd, Ossowietz fell. The fort had held out since the previous autumn against repeated German attacks. It owed its strength to the fact that, except at the road and railway crossing, swamps stretched on both sides of the Bobr, and it was difficult to find positions for heavy artillery.[2] In the end it did not fall to assault, but was abandoned by its garrison. With Bialystok and Grodno threatened, it had become an indefensible salient. The same day Tykocin, on the Bug, was stormed, and a thousand prisoners taken; von Eichhorn's right wing south of Kovno was approaching Olita, which but for Grodno was the only Niemen fortress left; and the Russian troops west of the Niemen in the eastern section of the Augustovo woods were beginning to find their position untenable. Meanwhile the German front was closing in to the north of Brest, and the whole of Prince Leopold's left wing was across the Bialystok-Brest railway. Von Mackensen, farther south, had driven in the Russian rearguards on the Bug at Vlodava, and was pursuing them through the marsh country to the east. That country was the beginning of the great Pripet marshes, the source of the Pripet River being in the swamps south-east of Vlodava, only a few miles from the right bank of the Bug.

Aug. 25.

On 25th August Brest Litovski fell. It had held out long enough to enable Ewarts to get away with guns and supplies, and only a little corn remained for the corps of General von Arz, which was the first to enter the place. A mine prepared by the Russians destroyed a thousand of the enemy's troops two days later. With Brest went the last fort of the Polish Triangle. Ewarts's armies were now well into the tangle of the Pripet marshes, with von Mackensen following on the south, and on the north Prince Leopold's group fighting their way through the great Forest of Bieloviezsk, the last sanctuary left to the ancient European bison. Ewarts had escaped without envelopment or being forced into a battle. He had the main Moscow railway to assist his retreat, and for his right wing the line and highroad from Brest to Minsk. His pursuers were held up by rearguard actions in the wooded fringes of the marshes, while the main body moved leisurely eastwards.

On the 26th the situation grew more threatening in the north. The Augustovo troops began their retreat, and not an hour too soon, for the Germans were close on Olita. That day Bialystok fell at last to von Scholtz, and von Hindenburg's centre was in action on the Sventa River in the direction of Dvinsk. The movement warned the Russians that a bid was being made for the Petrograd railway north of Vilna. Next day, the 27th, Olita was evacuated, for it was hopelessly outflanked. Lying half-way between Kovno and Grodno, it marked an important ford of the Niemen, and, though barely reckoned a fortress in the days before the war, it had been entrenched ever since von Hindenburg's threat against the river line in the preceding autumn. With Bialystok and Olita gone, Grodno was rapidly becoming the point of a salient, and all the Petrograd line south-east of Vilna was in hourly peril. All Government papers, stores, and factory equipment were being hastily moved out of Dvinsk and Vilna.

Aug. 26.

Aug. 27.

On 28th August von Below began his great attack on the line of the Dvina. In all the valley of that river, from Riga upwards, there is no crossing till the little town of Friedrichstadt is reached, some fifty miles from the coast. Below it great stretches of marshy forest line the left bank of the stream, and no road follows its course on that side. On the other side, where the ground is harder, there is the main Riga—Vilna railway. At Friedrichstadt, which lies on the left bank, a road reaches the riverside, and five miles south of it is a single-line railway. So long as the Russians held Friedrichstadt they controlled the only practicable crossing of the Dvina between Riga and Jacobstadt, and they protected the communications of the port with Dvinsk and Vilna. When von Below moved on Friedrichstadt he aimed, not at isolating Riga, for there was still the northern line to Petrograd, but at cutting it off from the Russian armies to the south.

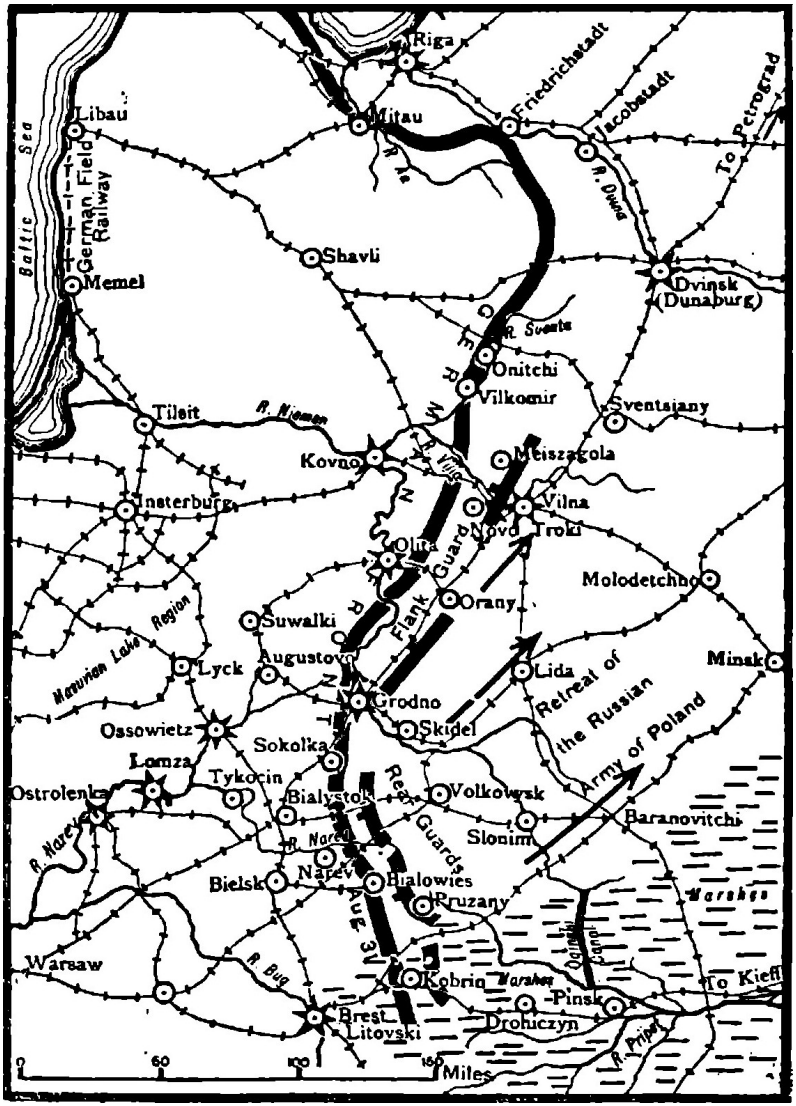
Aug. 28.

That same day there was a kindred movement on the extreme German right. We left von Pflanzer on the Dniester, at Koropiec; von Bothmer near Brzezany; Boehm-Ermolli from Zloczow northwards towards Brody, and a large cavalry force under Puhallo on his left. All four armies had behind them excellent communications in the Lemberg railways. For the past fortnight Ivanov's southern command had been little harassed, and, since their campaign in the north was going well, the Germans resolved to advance in the south, and begin the attack on the Volhynian forts. Puhallo flung his cavalry across the river Styr and moved towards Lutsk, while von Bothmer and von Pflanzer pushed the Russians from their position on the

Zlota Lipa. The movement, if successful, would force Ivanov back into difficult country, and cut him off effectually from Ewarts in the north.

That day, too, Ewarts himself was being harried east of Brest. Von Mackensen was well into the marsh country between the rivers Pripet and Mukhovatz, and his cavalry were at Samary, on the road from Kovel to Kobrin. The summer had been comparatively dry, and these western marshes were not impracticable. Prince Leopold was meantime pushing through the Forest of Bieloviezsk, slowly and with constant fighting, for it was vital that he should not reach the Brest-Minsk railway till Ewarts had retreated far enough to get lateral communication by the line which runs east of Pinsk between Vilna and Rovno. By that day the Germans had nearly passed the forest belt, and fought an action just inside its eastern borders. Meanwhile Lipsk had fallen, and von Scholtz was closing in on Grodno; while von Eichhorn on a broad front was moving on Vilna, and von Below hammering at Friedrichstadt and the Dvina line.

It was clear that Grodno must be relinquished, or the Russian right centre would be surrounded. The Augustovo troops had been withdrawn east of the Niemen, and during those days there was an immense eastward movement between the main Petrograd railway and the Pripet marshes. Troops, baggage trains, and civilian fugitives filled all the roads and choked the two lines still available. These were the railway through Lida and Polotsk, a single line, and the double Brest-Minsk railway. The main Petrograd line by Vilna could scarcely be used, for Vilna itself was in danger.



Situation at the end of August on the front from the Pripet Marshes northwards to Riga.

Aug. 30.

On 30th August von Pflanzer had reached the Strypa, and Puhallo was close on Lutsk. But Ivanov had the matter in hand. He strengthened his wings, and counter-attacked strongly with his left, checking the advance of the German right. Stubborn fighting continued at Friedrichstadt, on the Dvina; von Eichhorn was close on the west front of Grodno; Prince Leopold was nearing Pruzany, on the road from Brest to Slonim; and von Mackensen was at Kobrin, on the

railway thirty miles east of Brest. But the real menace was against Vilna, where von Hindenburg was making his chief effort. If this great nodal point of roads and railways could be taken swiftly there might be a general *débâcle* of all the Russian right centre in the Grodno salient. The German plan was for an advance along the north bank of the Vilia River, while von Eichhorn, as soon as Grodno fell, was directed to move in support on the southern bank. The Russians met the thrust with a great concentration. Every man who could be brought out of reserve, or spared from other parts of the line, was hurried to Vilna, and an entrenched position was taken up through Meiszagola, fifteen miles north-west of the town, on the road to Vilkomir. Here developed on the second day of September one of the few pitched battles of the retreat.

Aug. 31.

Sept. 1.

The last day of August saw Ivanov vigorously counter-attacking on the Russian left. Around Zloczow he took 3,000 prisoners, half of them Germans, and thirty field guns. But next day Lutsk fell to Boehm-Ermolli's left wing, the 59th Austrian Regiment of infantry; and von Bothmer had a success on the Upper Strypa, near Zborov. That same day von Eichhorn was close on Orany, a junction on the Grodno-Vilna railway, and the last hour of Grodno had struck. The Vilna battles and the fighting which followed—the main German thrust—must be reserved for another chapter. For the present let us note the events on the other sections of the Russian front.

Sept. 2.

Sept. 3.

Sept. 4.

On 1st September the western works of Grodno, on the left bank of the Niemen, were carried by a Baden division, and the Russians evacuated that section. Von Beseler's siege artillery was present, but the place was not stormed but gradually evacuated. It was von Eichhorn's threat to Orany which made the Grodno salient untenable. The 2nd of September was the official date of the fall of the town, but fighting continued in its eastern environs for a day later during the Russian withdrawal, and on that day there was a bold counter-attack, Russian troops re-entering the place and taking eight machine guns and 150 prisoners. By the morning of the 4th the Germans—von Gallwitz's army—held Grodno, but their booty was small. They claimed only six fortress guns, which showed the completeness with which the Russians had cleared it, and some 2,000 prisoners—the rearguard which in such a retirement is inevitably doomed to capture. Meantime, on the southern wing there were severe attacks and counter-attacks. The Austrians had crossed the Styr on a broad front, Brody had fallen, von Bothmer was

pushing his opponents towards the Sereth, and von Pflanzer was across the Lower Strypa. This was on 2nd September. Next day Ivanov struck back on the Styr, but his extreme left yielded further ground.

On the Dvina there had been a desperate struggle for the Friedrichstadt crossing. Von Below had issued a special order to his troops: "After the brilliant campaign on the Russian front, and the occupation of many cities and fortresses in Poland and Lithuania, you must make one more effort to force the Dvina and seize Riga. There you will rest during the autumn and winter, in order to march on Petrograd in the spring." On the night of 2nd September the Russians, who held the left bank of the river below Friedrichstadt at Linden, made a gallant assault on von Below's flank. But on the morning of the 3rd the Germans attacked the position at the bridgehead with incendiary shells, and forced the Russians back to the east side from Linden to Friedrichstadt. Von Below had cleared the left bank for a space of ten miles, but he had not won the bridgehead for his attack on the Riga-Dvinsk railway.

Sept. 2.

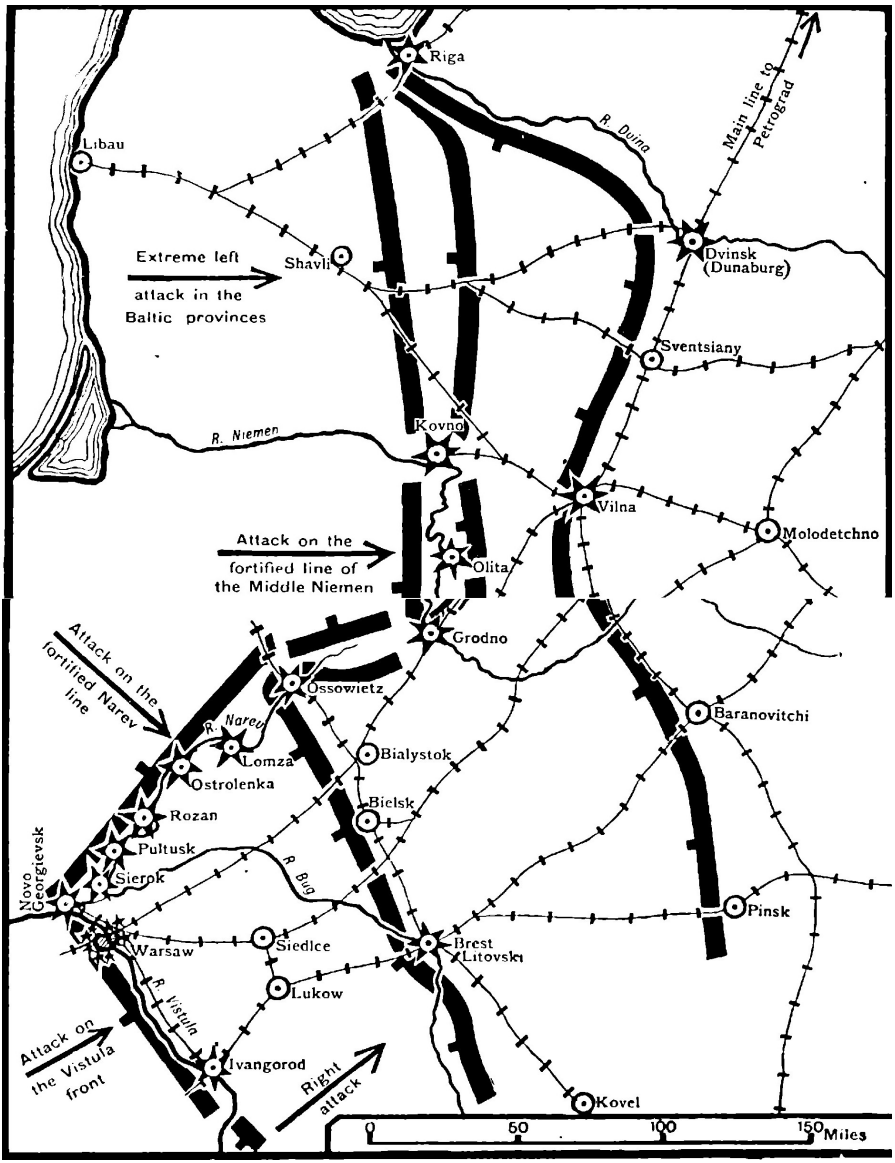
There come moments in a campaign when the high tide of an advance appears to be reached and the ebb begins. At the time it is imperceptible to the combatants of both sides. To the defence it seems that

"The enemy faints not nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain."

But for all that the turn has come, the summit has been passed. On 4th September the Russian Generalissimo, looking to the condition of his front, after four of the most tempestuous months that ever mortal armies endured, might have detected a slight clearing of the skies. The desperate salients had gone. The line was nearly straight. The wings were hard pressed, but could still resist. The centre was too deep in the Pripet marshes for easy capture. In front of Vilna a fierce battle was in progress, but it was a battle of choice rather than compulsion. The Russian armies now were not struggling for dear life, but for a strategical purpose. Retreat was everywhere open to them if they chose that course. When they halted and gave battle it was because they decided to halt, to defeat some cherished German plan. The retirement which at one moment had seemed endless now showed itself as a thing with clear limits. The great armies of Russia were in substance safe. If they could hold the Riga-Rovno line and the Dvinsk railway against the enemy, they might yet wrest from him the initiative and make him rue the day when he crossed the Vistula. One of those mysterious waves of confidence, which men feel but will not express lest they offend the gods, surged through the anxious souls

Sept. 4.

of the Russian High Command. Men who had braced themselves for the last endurance now dared to hope.



The Russian Retreat.—Map showing fronts held by the Russians at successive stages of the retreat and general direction of the enemy's attacks.

At that moment the Emperor of Russia put himself at the head of his soldiers. On the morning of Sunday, 5th

Sept. 5.

September, the Tsar signed an Army Order announcing that he had taken supreme command.

> "To-day I have taken supreme command of all the forces of the sea and land armies operating in the theatre of war. With firm faith in the clemency of God, with unshakable assurance in final victory, we shall fulfil our sacred duty to defend our country to the last. We will not dishonour the Russian land."

The Grand Duke Nicholas had for more than a year borne perhaps the heaviest burden carried by any single man in the campaign. He had been called on to make vital decisions involving immense sacrifices. He had purged his armies of unworthy elements, and had inspired them with a complete confidence in their leader. He had made mistakes, such as the Carpathian campaign, and what exactly were his talents for war it is not yet possible to judge. A Commander-in-Chief of forces so huge leans much on his Staff, and individual Group and Army Commanders have a wide discretion. But however much we value the work of Ivanov and Ruzsky, Alexeiev and Ewarts, it is certain that the talents of the Generalissimo were great, and the sobriety of his judgment and the tenacity of his will were more valuable, perhaps, in that first year of war than strategical ingenuity and wide military knowledge.

But no man can command continuously for a year without growing very weary. The health of the Grand Duke had never been good, and it had suffered from the harassments of the summer. Ruzsky's health had broken early in the spring, and the strain on him had not been greater than on his superior. Again, whatever the merits of his Chief of Staff, General Yanuschkevitch, it is clear that he was not a soldier quite on a level with any of the great Group Commanders, more especially Alexeiev. Moreover, there comes a time in every campaign when some relief to the higher command may be of real military value. A new mind applied to the same problem may work more shrewdly and expeditiously. But the determining cause of the change was the resolve of the Tsar to take the command himself. Clearly there could not be two royal princes at the head of the armies of Russia. The Tsar as Generalissimo must have as his Chief of Staff the ablest master of the profession of arms that could be found, and it is no disparagement of the Grand Duke Nicholas to say that as a professional soldier, and especially as a Staff officer, he did not rank with one or two of the Group Commanders.

Accordingly, with complete accord and goodwill on all sides, the chiefs of the Army were changed. The Grand Duke succeeded General Woronzov-

Dashkov as Viceroy of the Caucasus, a post which would give him a much-needed rest, and which, as the campaigns progressed, would afford a great field for military activity. He took with him to Tiflis General Yanuschkevitch. In a parting order he bade farewell to his old command. "I appreciate deeply your heroism," he wrote, "during the period of over a year. I express to you my cordial and sincere gratitude. I firmly believe that with the Tsar, to whom you have sworn allegiance, as your leader, you will perform fresh exploits. I am convinced that God will grant to His elect His Almighty help in securing victory."

To the Grand Duke the new Commander-in-Chief addressed the following rescript:—

> "At the beginning of the war I was unavoidably prevented from following the inclination of my soul to put myself at the head of the Army. That was why I entrusted you with the Commandership-in-Chief of all the land and sea forces. Under the eyes of the whole of Russia, your Imperial Highness has given proof during the war of steadfast bravery which caused a feeling of profound confidence and called forth the sincere good wishes of all who followed your operations through the inevitable vicissitudes of the fortune of war.
>
> "My duty to my country, which has been entrusted to me by God, impels me to-day, when the enemy has penetrated into the interior of the Empire, to take the supreme command of the active forces and to share with my Army the fatigues of war and to safeguard with it Russian soil from the attempts of the enemy. The ways of Providence are inscrutable, but my duty and my desire determine me in my resolution for the good of the State.
>
> "The invasion of the enemy on the Western front, which necessitates the greatest possible concentration of the civil and military authorities, as well as the unification of the command in the field, has turned our attention from the Southern front. At this moment I recognize the necessity of your assistance and counsels on our Southern front, and I appoint you Viceroy of the Caucasus and Commander-in-Chief of the valiant Caucasian Army.
>
> "I express to your Imperial Highness my profound gratitude and that of the country for your labours during the war."

As Chief of the General Staff the Emperor chose General Alexeiev, the Commander of the Northern Army Group. Alexeiev, whether as Chief of Staff to the Kiev Command before the war, Chief of Staff to Ivanov's Southern Army Group, Commander of the Army of the Bukovina, or Ruzsky's successor with the Northern Group, had revealed himself as a master of the traditional Russian strategy. To him must be attributed the chief successes of the great retreat. Shy and taciturn in manner, a scholar in his profession, a man of quick judgment and high powers of administration, as a Staff officer he had few rivals in the world at the moment. To the Northern Army Group, now struggling at Vilna and on the Dvina, General Ruzsky returned from the Army of Petrograd. They were his old troops, and contained the corps which, under him, had stood fast at Przasnysz among the winter snows.

That the Tsar should follow the example of Peter and Alexander, and take command of his armies, was to the whole Russian people a sign that the war would be waged to a triumphant end. It was their answer to the German efforts for a separate peace. At the moment when, by all the calculations of Berlin, Russia should have been embittered against her Allies, broken in spirit, and ready to approach her conqueror with suppliant knee, her monarch himself took up arms and summoned the nation to rally behind the majesty of his office. The peace intrigues had been formidable, but this dramatic *coup* shattered them to fragments. The Holy Synod had decreed a solemn fast, and in an atmosphere of national expectation, resolution, and awakening hope, the new Generalissimo entered upon his office.

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[1] The commandant of Kovno, General Grigoriev, was tried by court-martial, and sentenced to fifteen years' hard labour "for his insufficient measures of defence, and for his absence from the fortress during the siege."

[2] The position was chosen by Skobelev. The first forts were built in 1888, and reconstructed in 1910, with the experience gained in Port Arthur as a guide. The forts occupied a series of low, thickly-wooded hills.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

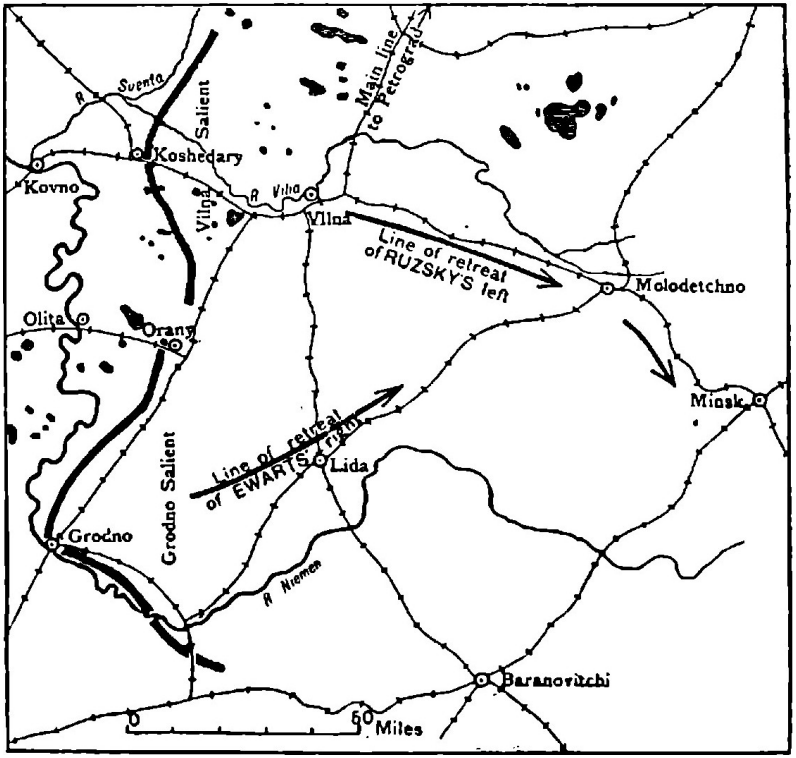
THE BATTLES OF THE VILNA SALIENT.

The German Strategic Plan—The Creation and Destruction of Salients—Danger of Vilna Salient—Why the German Plan was not more Successful—Slowness of the Great Machine—The Retreat from the Grodno Salient—Fall of Skidel—The Battle of Meiszagola—Russians retreat over the Vilia—Great Sweep by German Cavalry—The Narrowing of the Gap—Fall of Vilna—Holding Battle in the Salient—The Salient successfully evacuated—The Tide turns—Russians retake Smorgon and Vileika—Reasons for German Failure—Inferiority of Cavalry—Ewarts's Retreat—Von Mackensen occupies Pinsk—Prince Leopold checked at Baranovitchi—Ivanov's Counter-offensive—Defeat of von Pflanzer and von Bothmer—Austrians driven back to the Strypa—Dubno and Lutsk recaptured—Sufferings of the Russian Peasantry—Their Fortitude—Political Troubles—The Parties in the Duma—The Duma prorogued—Popular Unrest, and the Tsar's Efforts at Settlement—Beginning of the Allied Offensive in the West.

To understand the complex and critical campaign of September it is necessary to keep in mind the nature of the German plan, which in turn was determined by the character of her great artillery machine. Apart from many subsidiary objectives, both strategic and political, von Falkenhayn's main purpose was to cut off and destroy as large a part as possible of the Russian field strength. By an artillery concentration he could drive in on a wide front a section of the Russian line. If the operation was carried on simultaneously against two sections fairly wide apart, the Russian front between the two became a salient. As soon as this happened, the German force on each side turned inward and struck at the re-entrant angles of the salient in the hope of cutting it off. Then began Russia's problem—to hold the sides of the salient till the troops in the apex could fall back to a point at which the front would be approximately straight.

We have seen that this operation was constantly repeated during the summer's war. It did not appear in the first movement from the Donajetz, but the case of Lemberg was a perfect instance. There von Mackensen struck

from the north-west and Boehm-Ermolli from the south-west, and only by a miracle of steadfastness was the salient saved. When Lemberg had fallen, the strategy was repeated on a larger scale, its object being the great salient of Poland, of which the sides were the Warsaw-Petrograd line in the north and the Warsaw-Kiev line in the south. It succeeded in the last days of July, when the Narev line was forced, and the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand and von Mackensen crossed the Lublin-Cholm railway. The Russian front then broke up into a number of lesser salients, of which the most dangerous was that with Warsaw as its apex and the line of the Middle Bug as its base. By the third week of August this had been safely evacuated—the greatest tactical performance of the whole retreat. There remained still four salients or possibilities of salients at Riga, Kovno, Grodno, and Brest Litovski. The first was saved by the failure of Germany to make a landing at Pernau, or, more accurately, by her failure to account for the Russian Baltic Fleet. Riga was not threatened on the north, and von Below's operations resolved themselves into an enveloping movement on the south. The Kovno salient was shallow, and was readily evacuated. But Grodno and Brest remained points of danger, more especially the former, since its fall enabled the enemy to concentrate his efforts in creating and destroying the inevitable salient which must presently be formed with Vilna as its apex. The map will show the perils of such an attack. The troops from Vilna must retire by the railway to Minsk, and this line was also the way of retreat for the troops farther south, just north of the Pripet swamps. If the salient were prematurely cut, the whole of Ruzsky's left wing and Ewarts's right would be menaced, and not improbably driven down in confusion to the slender communications of the marsh country.



Sketch Map.—The Grodno and Vilna Salients, and the Lines of Retreat from them.

Why the German plans did not succeed with the earlier salients is still a mystery. One explanation may be found in the cumbrousness of the great artillery machine. It travelled slow at best, and the farther it advanced eastwards the more difficult became the roads. It could hammer in a segment of the Russian front, but it was tardy in following up the advantage gained. The greater elasticity of the ill-equipped Russian armies saved them again and again from situations in which by all the laws of war they should have perished.

In considering the fighting of September we are concerned chiefly with the battles around Vilna. But before we reach that point we must deal with the retreat from Grodno, the subsidiary salient which offered the immediate point of danger. The German strategy attacked Grodno and Vilna together, but it was necessary for the Russians to extricate themselves from the first danger before they could offer any concentrated resistance to the second. If the situation was less grave than in the Warsaw salient in the first days of August, it was strategically far more complex, since it involved a

withdrawal from two adjacent salients, the four sides of which had to be simultaneously guarded.

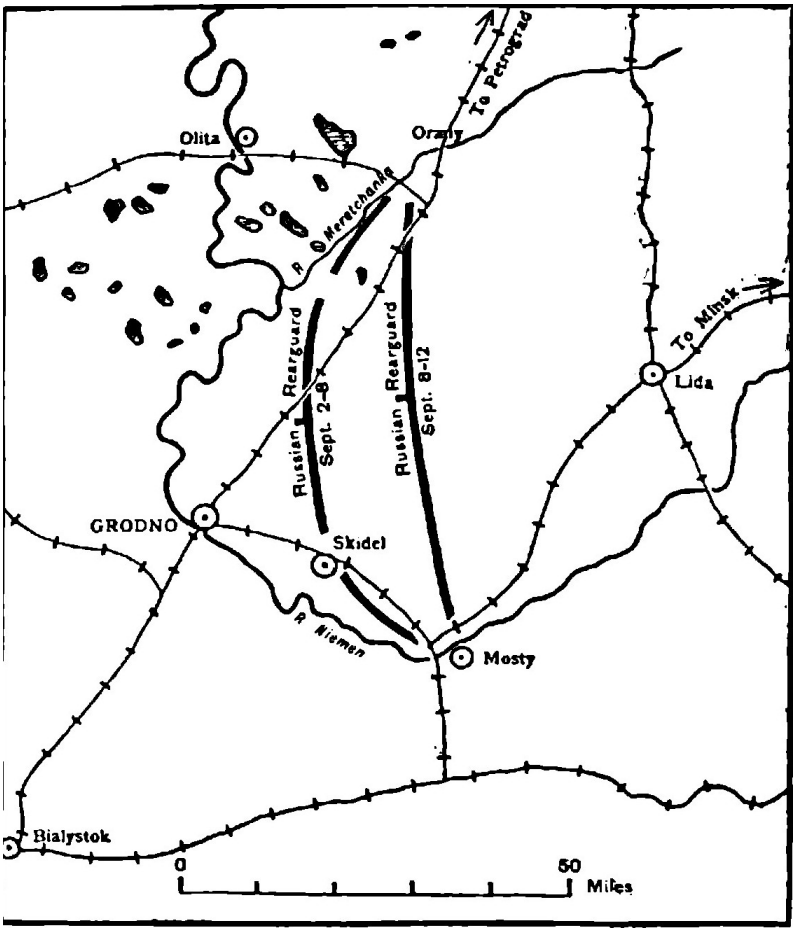
Grodno was completely in German hands by the 3rd day of September. The new salient was roughly defined by the Upper Niemen and its tributary, the Meretchanka, on which stands the town of Orany. This district is a maze of lakes and forests, which offered many opportunities for rearguard fighting. Inside the salient, following its sides, were two railways—the main line from Grodno north-eastwards to Petrograd by Orany and Vilna, and a southern line by the junction of Mosty, which connected at Lida with the great lateral system Riga-Vilna-Rovno, and was continued to join the railway from Vilna to Minsk. The retreat of the Russians was covered by rearguards towards Grodno, and by a screen of troops delaying the German advance across the main Grodno-Petrograd railway. Clearly, this latter line had to be held as long as possible, for a German advance across it would cut in on the flank of the retirement.

Sept. 3.

The first ten days of September were wet and cold, and the rivers overflowed and turned the swamps into meres. The weather gave some slight advantage to the Russians in the Grodno salient, since there were no railways moving from the sides into the interior by which the enemy could advance. Von Gallwitz attacked Mosty from the south-west, and von Scholtz, moving by the line from Olita, attacked Orany, as the first stage in an advance on Lida. By 8th September Mosty had not fallen, and in the north the line of the Meretchanka had not been cleared, while the Russian rearguards were still resisting on the line Ozery-Skidel in the centre of the salient. The stand on the flanks had served its purpose, for, when Skidel fell on the 12th, the whole Russian front had fallen back to a line from Mosty north to Orany, covering the vital junction of Lida. The salient had been cleared, and if we concede the Germans their claim of 4,000 prisoners it was not too high a price to pay for its evacuation. The situation at Grodno on 3rd September had been only less anxious than Przemysl on 20th May or the Warsaw salient on 8th August. In ten days the danger had passed, and the line had been straightened.

Sept. 8.

Sept. 12.



The Retreat from the Grodno Salient.

We must turn to Vilna, where von Hindenburg's main strategical plan was now maturing. On 2nd September von Eichhorn began the ten days' struggle in front of Vilna, to which the Germans have given the name of the Battle of Meiszagola, from the hamlet fifteen miles north-west of the city, on the road to Vilkomir. On that day the Russian front lay astride the Kovno-Vilna railway behind Koshedary, across the river Vilia, and along the Sventa River towards Vilkomir, while southwards they touched Orany, and held the Petrograd line towards Grodno. Simultaneously with the fall of Grodno von Eichhorn made a frontal attack upon the Russian position west of Vilna, and in particular upon a sag in it between the Vilia and the Sventa Rivers, on the low downs three miles north-west of Meiszagola. This point, marked Hill 154 on the map, was the position of danger not only for Vilna but for the whole Vilia

Sept 2.

line and the railways to Petrograd and Minsk, and accordingly the Russians strengthened it by bringing up two divisions of the Imperial Guard.

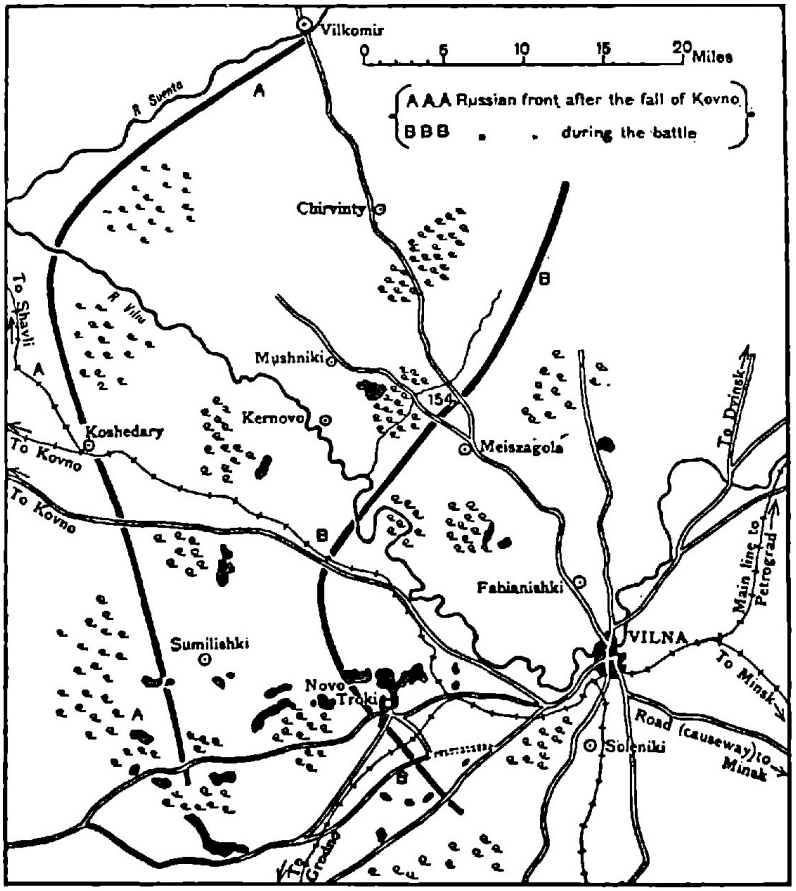
Von Eichhorn, while driving in the centre just west of Vilna by a great artillery bombardment, made his chief effort on his flanks. From the 2nd onward his left wing was fiercely engaged at Hill 154. The Russian trenches were carried by the weight of German artillery, and for days the Germans, under von Litzmann, held them against counter-attacks. On the 12th they advanced, and after cutting their way through the Russian Guard, stormed the village of Meiszagola, and drove the Russians back towards the Vilia. Meanwhile von Eichhorn's right centre had under cover of a gas attack carried an important pass between the lakes west of Vilna, at a place called Novo Troki. It was the main defence of the left flank of the Russian entrenched centre covering the city, and with its loss the position became grave. This was on 8th September. On 10th September and the following day great masses of German cavalry swept round by Vilkomir and Kurkl, and, threading the marshes by way of the railway from Shavli to Sventsiany, threatened the lines of retreat of the Vilna troops. Meanwhile von Scholtz, on the southern side of the salient, was pressing beyond Mosty and Skidel, and moving on Lida, which place was being bombarded by German Zeppelins. The result of the Battle of Meiszagola on the 12th compelled the Russians to fall back across the Vilia, and presently the German cavalry had cut the Petrograd line at the station of Pobrodzie, some twenty-two miles from Vilna. On Monday, 13th September, it was clear that Vilna must fall. Most of the stores had been evacuated long before, and it remained to release the troops by a corridor which daily grew narrower.

Sept. 12.

Sept. 8.

Sept. 10.

Sept. 13.



Battle of Meiszagola (Sept. 2-12, 1915).

Sept. 15.

The Grodno salient was clear, and Ruzsky was able to concentrate all his attention on the Vilna problem. Suddenly, on Wednesday, the 15th, he was faced with a new and startling development. At that moment von Eichhorn's troops were enveloping the city in the form of a horse shoe, running from west of Lida through Orany, Novo Troki, Meiszagola, to Pobrodzie. But on the 15th von Lauenstein's cavalry were brought south from Courland, and, not less than 40,000 strong, accompanied by 140 guns, swept up the Vilia River towards the town of Vileika, which lies on the branch line running north from Molodetchna junction. Vidzy fell to them next day, and on Friday, the 17th, they occupied Vileika. As we have seen, the Russian front had long ceased to be continuous, and there was a gap between the armies operating in front of Dvinsk and those now falling back from the Vilna salient. Through this gap von Eichhorn thrust the

Sept. 16-17.

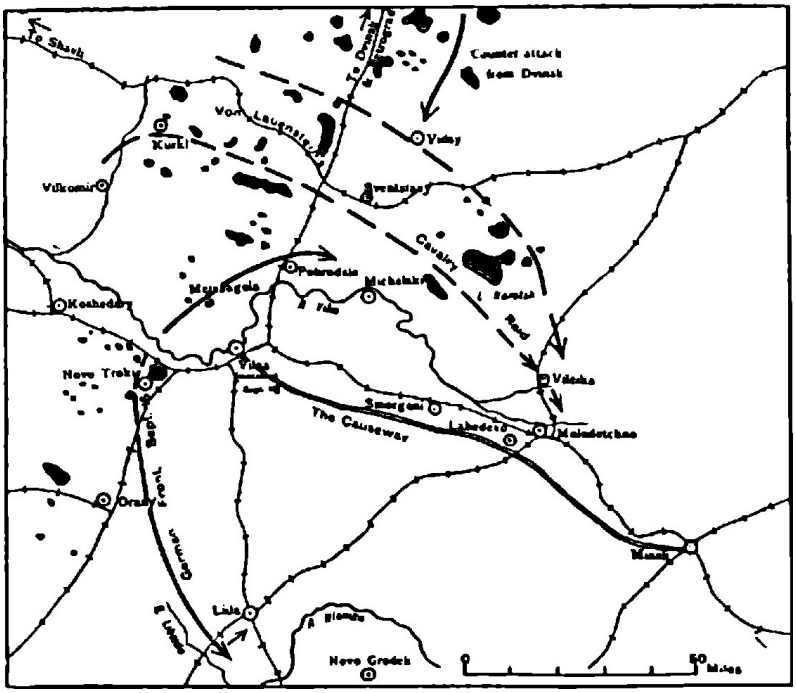
horn of his cavalry. At the same time the right of the horse shoe closed in, and on that day was half way between Orany and the Lida-Vilna line. Vilna was being enclosed in a buckle, of which the ends were oriented not north and south but east and west. The clasp was the line from the river Lebeida, south-west of Lida, to just north of Molodetchna junction—a distance of some eighty miles.

A glance at the map will show the gravity of the position. The forces in the Vilna salient had only one good line of retirement—the railway to Minsk passing through Molodetchna—besides the great causeway some distance to the south. The southern railway by Lida was still open, but a retirement by it would be in the wrong direction, and would lead to a congestion with the troops falling eastwards before von Gallwitz and von Scholtz. The Germans were all but in possession of the Minsk railway, and were drawing very near to the Lida line. Vilna was no longer tenable, and on Saturday, 18th September, the old Lithuanian capital fell. The Germans found it empty of stores and guns. All had gone eastwards towards Minsk, and the troops were falling back by the Minsk line and the great causeway. The evacuation was not an hour too soon, for on Monday von Gallwitz's cavalry cut the Lida railway.

Sept. 18.

Sept. 20.

To protect their retreat it was necessary to fight a series of holding battles on the right flank. The salvation of the Russians lay in the fact that the van of the enemy were cavalry, without infantry or heavy artillery supports. All along a line north of the Minsk railway, between Vilna and Molodetchna, the invaders met with a stubborn resistance. The Russian rearguards fought desperately in front of Michelski, Smorgon, and Molodetchna, and by a heroic effort Vidzy, which the enemy had held for four days, was retaken on Monday, the 20th. Yet on that day the situation was something more than critical. The gap available for retreat had shrunk to little more than fifty miles. The Lida railway had gone, and the Minsk railway was in constant danger. Only the great causeway was clear, but a single road is no avenue for an army. Besides, if Molodetchna were taken, the Uhlans would in an hour or two be astride the causeway.



The Retreat from Vilna.

Then suddenly the situation was eased. It may be that the German thrust was weakening from pure exhaustion. It may be that their great armies were getting in each other's way. The shortening of their front and the concentration against a salient meant overcrowding in a country where roads were few, and to this we may attribute the slowness of the advance by von Gallwitz and von Scholtz. It is certain, too, that the munitionment of the Russian armies had vastly improved. There were plenty of men and good recruits; there was no longer any serious scarcity of shell; and the supply of small arms, though still inadequate, was largely increased. On the evening of 20th September the retreating troops were thirty miles from Vilna, and the Minsk railway still held. The right wing of the retirement fought the enemy at the crossings of the Upper Vilia, and on the 21st drove him out of Lebedevo, west of Molodetchna, and retook Smorgon with the bayonet, making large captures of machine guns. The northern horn of the horse shoe suddenly began to break. For some days there was heavy fighting around Vileika, and a German counter-offensive to the east. But by the end of the month Vileika had been cleared, and the Russian line had straightened itself so as to run through Smorgon, due south to Novo Grodek. A salient had been evacuated only less critical and not less difficult than the salient of

Warsaw in the first days of the German advance east of the Vistula. It was a performance requiring brilliant staff work and the most steady courage and resolution on the part of the troops. How great was that steadfastness may be realized from one incident in the struggle. In the victory at Meiszagola, where the Russian troops were blown out of the trenches by artillery, the German captures were 5,000 prisoners—but only one gun.

It may well be asked why von Hindenburg's plan so conspicuously miscarried. It began with all the advantages in its favour. The Germans had greater mobility in all that concerns routes of transport and transport appliances, and so could obtain at any point local superiority. Their munitionment was many times better than that of the Russians. They had the mechanical devices—limitless motor transport, skilled gangs of road-makers—to remedy the pathlessness of the country. The campaign was no longer one of hammering at entrenched lines. The only entrenchments now on both sides were very rough shelter-trenches. The Russian front was not continuous, but a group of armies, and these armies had been shaken loose from all fortified bases. It seemed a sovereign chance for Germany to put into effect her outflanking and enveloping strategy, and to turn her strategic pursuit into a series of decisive actions. Napoleon's success after Jena might well be repeated.

Why, then, did all the battles of the salients fail of being a German victory? Why, save for two days in the retreat from Vilna, were her armies never within sight of success? It was a favourite saying of Scharnhorst's: "In war it is not so much what one does that matters, but that whatever action is agreed upon shall be carried out with unity and energy." There was nothing wrong in the German plan; it showed no special inspiration, but it was adequate to the circumstances; and there was certainly no lack of energy in carrying it out. Yet armies, superior in numbers, and vastly superior in guns and every scientific aid to war, failed signally to destroy and cut off any considerable part of a force which for nearly five months had been involved in the intricacies and discouragements of a retreat.

Much must be set down to the extraordinary tenacity and skill of the Russian resistance. For that no praise can be too high, and a closer study of the details increases our admiration for the achievement. But there were contributory faults on the German side. As her armies rolled eastwards they began to lose their initial advantage. Large numbers were absorbed, like the French in the Peninsula, in garrison duties and in guarding lines of communication. The country was hostile, and security must be fought for. The remainder lost in elasticity, the greatest misfortune of all. Partly they

were very tired, for many units had been advancing since May, and, though they had occupied great tracts of land, they had never received that inspiration which comes from inflicting indubitable defeats on the enemy in the field. Again, the Germans were clogged by their very strength. Under the best of circumstances their great guns and their large supply trains must travel slowly. Hence, while any section of the Russian front could be driven in, the fruits of the resulting salients could not be reaped. Before their bases could be cut, the Russians had slipped out of the noose and straightened their line.

True elasticity could be found only in the cavalry, and the mounted arm by itself was not enough. It may be doubted if German cavalry reached the same level as the other branches of her service. In the wars of Frederick the Great they had been the best in Europe, and at Rossbach had performed one of the classic cavalry exploits of history. They had failed in the Napoleonic wars; they had one or two fine feats to their credit in the war of 1870[1]; but in the present war they had shown themselves feeble in shock tactics, and of no value at all as mounted infantry. Had the 40,000 horsemen of von Lauenstein who swung round the Russian right at Vileika on 15th September been supported by infantry, the long-sought decision might have been reached. Even had they been trained to mounted infantry work and trench fighting, like our British cavalry,[2] they might have compromised the Russian retreat. As it was, they were checked, held, and finally routed. Speed was necessary if Germany wished to win a second Ulm, but her great machine could not be hurried. It could strike a hammer-blow, but not at the spot and at the moment that the blow was most deadly. It could create many salients, but it could not compel a rout. Her method of war seemed to have been designed for elderly group commanders,[3] conscious of a superb equipment, but without the fires of genius or youth.

We must turn to the second salient—that formed by the retreat of Ewarts's armies from Brest Litovski. We left von Mackensen marching north-east to cut off their retirement, and Prince Leopold just leaving the Forest of Bieloviezsk in his advance against the Brest-Minsk railway. On 5th September the latter had forced a defile of the marshes north of Pruzany, through which runs the road from Brest to Slonim, while his cavalry had reached the Brest-Minsk line at Kartuzskaia Bereza. Ewarts's right accordingly fell back towards the Zelianka River, a tributary of the Niemen, where it was in touch with the left of the retreating Grodno army. Meanwhile, by the 7th, von Mackensen had reached Drohiczin, on the Pinsk railway, about thirty-four miles from Pinsk

Sept. 5.

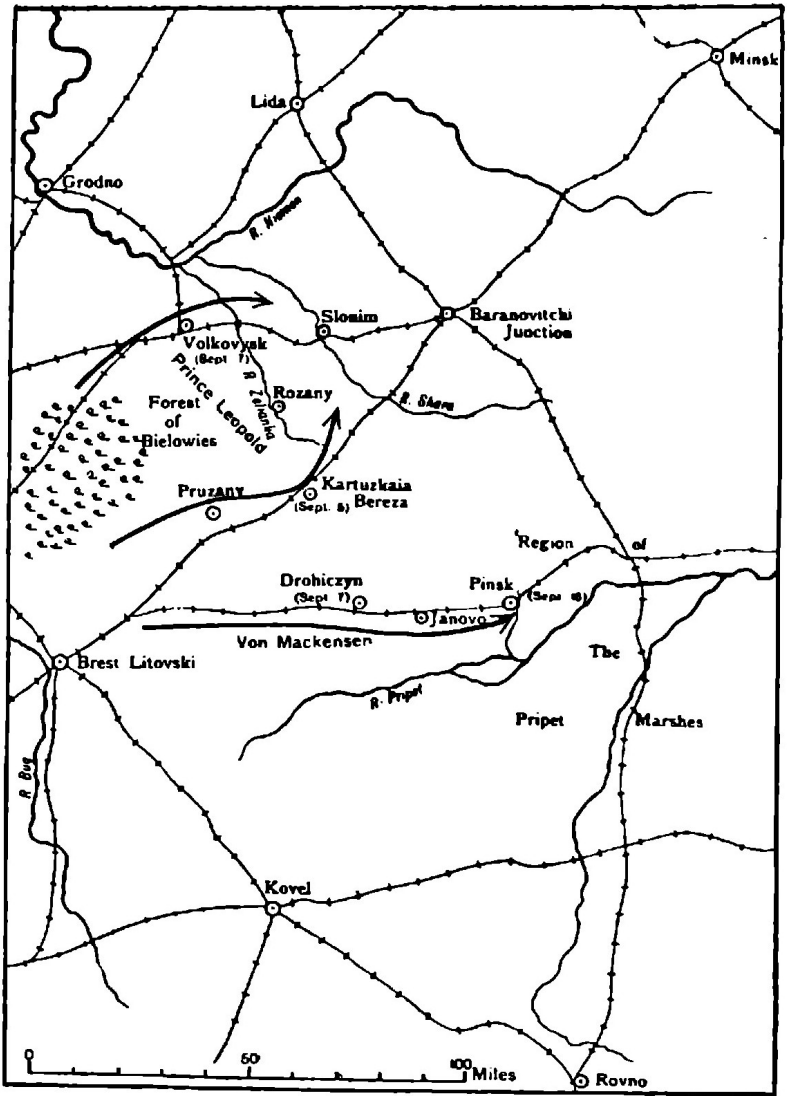
and seventy from Brest. His progress in the early days of September must have reached an average of four or five miles a day. That western fringe of the Pripet marshes in a dry season was not too difficult even for a modern army, as this rate of advance showed.

Sept. 7.

But in the pursuit of Ewarts the risk came not from von Mackensen but from Prince Leopold, who, moving in better country, with several roads and two railways to assist him, endeavoured to outflank the Russians on the north. Between Volkovysk and Slonim, in the mid valley of the Zelianka, was the ground chosen for the blow. He took Volkovysk on the 7th, and swung his right southwards against Rozany. Von Mackensen was now entering more difficult country, and though his centre moved steadily along the Pinsk railway, his wings were in trouble in the marshy upper valleys of the Pripet. On 16th, after an action with the Russian rearguards east of Janovo, he occupied the town of Pinsk.

Sept. 16.

The Army of Brest had never been in serious danger, and Prince Leopold's efforts were now directed rather to the southerly envelopment of the Niemen armies retreating from Grodno. He swung his right flank beyond Slonim, and endeavoured to turn the Russians on the Shara, and take the junction of Baranovitchi, which would cut the immediate communications with Minsk for that section, isolate the Army of the Niemen from the Army of Brest, and give him a point on the coveted lateral Riga-Lemberg line. In this enterprise he failed conspicuously. After some hard fighting he was flung back from Baranovitchi, and by the end of the month was firmly held by the Russian right centre on a line running through Novo Grodek, and cutting the Brest-Moscow railway a little east of Pinsk.



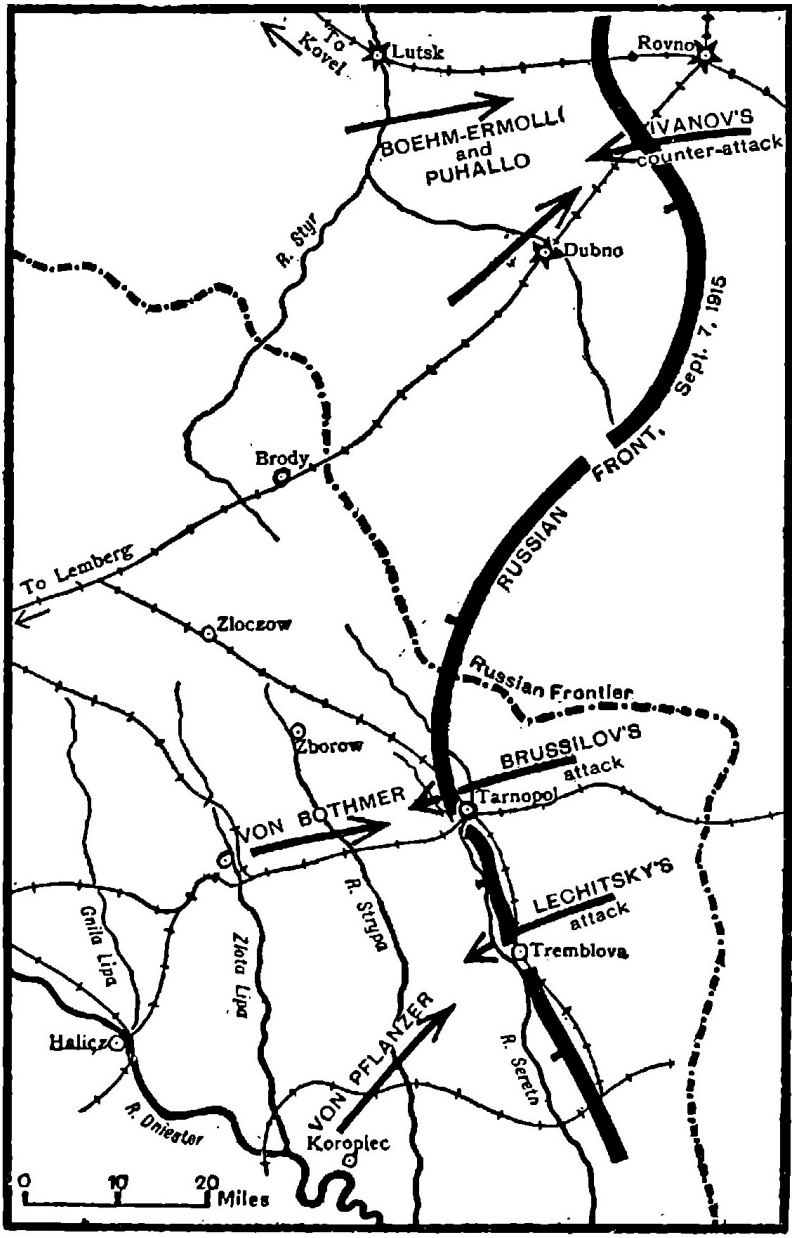
The Russian retreat from the Brest Litovski salient, and the pursuit south of the Niemen and in the Pripet marsh region.

The Russian front had once more been straightened, except for the curve westwards to Riga. It should be noted, however, that this curve was no longer a sag, since the bend of the line in front of Dvinsk was broad and shallow. The exact configuration was not unlike a hockey stick, with the head to the north. Von Below's operations against the Dvina line had progressed little during the month, and south of him there had been a useful counter-offensive from Dvinsk against the northern flank of the great

cavalry sweep which had for a moment put the Vilna army in peril. In the south of the front Ivanov had done more than hold his ground. He had struck so vigorously against the German right that he was in a fair way to free the Volhynian Triangle.

Sept. 7.

His main counter-offensive began on 7th September. As the German centre advanced towards Pinsk it became necessary to bring forward the right wing, which held the country south to the Rumanian border. It would appear that this wing had been considerably weakened by drafts for the front farther north; but von Mackensen, who commanded the group, may well have believed that Ivanov's forces must have been still more depleted for the same purpose. The German aim, apart from the improved alignment to be gained by an advance of the right wing, was to get possession of the section of the lateral Riga-Lemberg railway between the junctions of Sarny and Rovno. The map will show the chief railway features. From Kovel the main line to Kiev runs through Sarny, and another line to Kiev and Odessa passes through Rovno, sending off a southward branch to Lutsk. The lateral railway runs from Sarny by Rovno to Lemberg. If Rovno and Sarny could be taken, the whole Volhynian system would be in German hands, and a vital section of the lateral line would have been obtained for operations against the southern flank of the Russian centre. Farther south, the railways radiating south-eastwards from Lemberg furnished magnificent communications. The chief was the main line to Kiev and Odessa, which crossed the Sereth at Tarnopol junction, and from which a line ran down the east bank of that river towards Rumania, thereby providing another valuable link in lateral transport. The Dniester receives on its north bank a series of tributaries running roughly parallel with each other—from west to east the Gnila Lipa, the Zlota Lipa, the Strypa, and the Sereth. The events of the past two months had forced the Russian left, under Lechitsky, from river line to river line, and on the 7th of September they were back on the west bank of the Sereth, with their flank on the Dniester. It was the last river position available to the defence.



Operations in Eastern Galicia in September.

On Tuesday, 7th September, the right wing of von Mackensen's central army was moving towards Sarny junction, on the hard ground just south of the Pripet marshes. Boehm-Ermolli, with Puhallo's cavalry, was advancing from Lutsk and Dubno, both of which he held, against Rovno junction. Von

Bothmer was threatening Tarnopol, and von Pflanzer was preparing for a great assault on the Sereth line and Tremblova. The Russian line had a deep sag in it south-east of Dubno, caused by Ivanov's advance the week before on the Styr, and the necessity of holding on to Tarnopol.

That day Ivanov chose for a counter-attack. The 3rd Division of the Prussian Guard, the 48th Division of Reserve, and a great artillery force had been moved against Tarnopol, when they were surprised and broken by an assault of Brussilov's army. At the same moment a blow was delivered by Lechitsky from Tremblova, farther south, against von Pflanzer. The enemy was taken unaware in both places, and in the two days' battle which followed lost the better part of an army corps. Nearly all the heavy guns in front of Tarnopol were captured, and on Wednesday night the prisoners amounted to 150 officers and 7,000 men. Next day, Thursday, the 9th, the advance continued. By that evening the total of the Russian captures on the Sereth line was 383 officers, 17,000 rank and file, 14 heavy guns, 19 field guns, and 66 machine guns. It was one of the most successful of all the local actions of the war.

Sept 8.

Sept 9.

Von Mackensen, in the north, attempted to relieve the pressure by an assault on Saturday, the 11th, upon the 3rd Russian Army on the line of the river Goryn, west of Sarny. He failed, and lost many prisoners. On that day the Russian left advanced from Tremblova, swept von Pflanzer from the banks of the Sereth, and drove him westwards across the watershed to the Strypa. There was a counter-attack next day, but on Monday, the 13th, the whole of von Pflanzer's force, as well as von Bothmer's right, was back on the Strypa. Next day the Russians had cleared most of the eastern bank, and even won a few bridge-heads. Up in the north von Mackensen and Boehm-Ermolli continued their efforts to win to Rovno and Sarny, but achieved nothing. On Friday, the 17th, they made another attempt, and once again lost heavily in prisoners and machine guns. In a week Ivanov had advanced his front in some places as much as twenty miles, and had accounted for at least 80,000 of the enemy's troops.

Sept. 11.

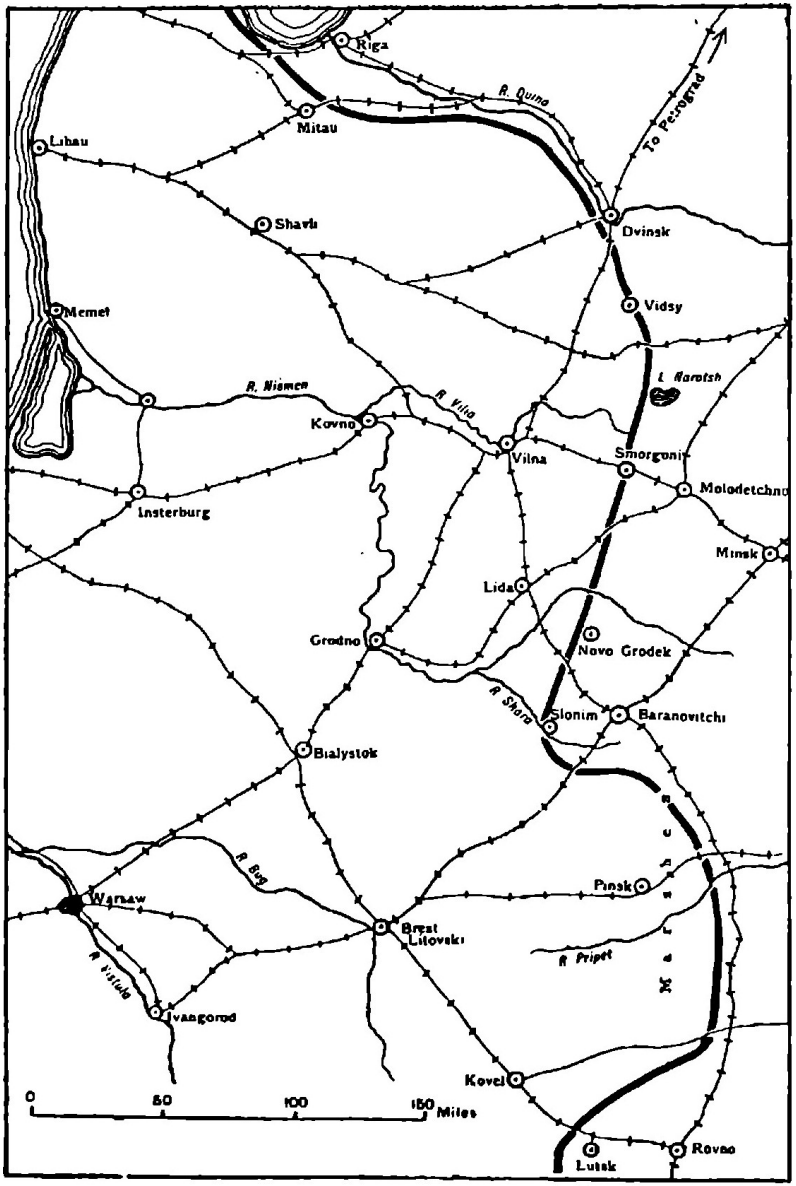
Sept. 13.

Sept. 11.

Sept. 17.

In the last fortnight of the month Ivanov continued his pressure, directing his attention to the northern sector. Dubno was retaken, and on Thursday, the 23rd, his rearguards entered Lutsk, while his cavalry seem for a moment to have threatened Kovel itself. There for the present we must leave him. He had effected something very like a demoralization of the

enemy forces opposed to him. The capture of Austrian prisoners was no new feature, for the majority of them had little heart for the war, and little love for their German masters. But the destruction of a division of the Prussian Guard and the number of German captures, as well as the huge booty of guns, point to a success won by a crushing field victory, and not from the mere lassitude of his opponents.



The Russian Front at the end of September (1915).

The end of September saw a very definite check in the triumphal German advance. Vilna and Grodno had fallen to them, but they had not made good the line of the Dvina. They possessed only a small section of the lateral railway system which they desired—that between a point south of Dvinsk and a point south of Lida. They had failed to cut off the troops in the Grodno and Vilna salients. Winter was almost upon them, and they had as yet found no suitable position for winter quarters, and must still struggle through the rains of autumn and the first snows before they could find a line of security. Above all, Russia had won time without the sacrifice of any armies. There is reason, indeed, to believe that in September the retreat was far more costly to the German attack than to the Russian defence. Arms and supplies were coming in, sufficient to check the tide, if not yet enough to turn it.

Nevertheless no country can suffer as Russia suffered from May to September without a strong reaction. The myriads of homeless peasants pouring eastwards along every highway, the troops retiring from the front to the bases, the endless stream of wounded were a reminder of misfortunes which gave the most casual to think. The mere problem of relief was enough to strain the capacity of the country to the utmost. The refugees by the end of September were estimated at two millions. These men had enormous distances to travel, and shelter had to be provided along the highroads, as well as relief at the end of the journey. In most other countries chaos and revolution would have ensued, but in Russia the patience and docility of the sufferers lightened the task of the Government. "From conversations with the officials who have to deal with them," wrote the *Times* correspondent, "as well as with the peasants themselves, I found that a large majority have accepted their lot absolutely without complaint, recognizing it as a necessary incident of a military move designed to impede the enemy and delay his advance. The entire highway to-day is steeped in the traditions of 1812, and the superintendent of a certain post-house, before which hundreds of refugees were camped, informed me that every one talks of the events of to-day as they were wont to do of the campaign of Napoleon. They feel that they are playing their part to defeat the hated enemy, as their fathers did before them, hoping for an early and cold winter, in order that their enemy may perish of cold and starvation—and this regardless of the sufferings that the winter may bring for themselves. . . . I have heard the same comment again and again—'We must win now, regardless of the cost and the time it takes. The sacrifices we have suffered are too great to hesitate at anything short of victory.' "

But such a disruption of society could not leave the political situation unaffected. We have seen the consequences of the first Galician *débâcle*, which led to the disgrace of the War Minister, who had prophesied smooth things; the appointment of Polivanov in his place, and of Gouchkov as Minister of Munitions. The bureaucracy had been purged of many incompetent and corrupt elements, but the purge was not yet sufficiently drastic. At the meeting of the Duma in August astounding revelations were made as to the extent of subterranean German influence. It was alleged that various banks were under German influence, and had endeavoured to "corner" certain commodities and hamper the manufacture of munitions; that half the shares of the Putilov Armament Works were owned by Skoda and controlled by Krupp, and that in consequence the company had dismissed workmen, or limited them to a five hours' day. Such revelations inspired a profound uneasiness among all classes of society. The Duma, when it met in August, was looked to for the expression of the national will.

But the Duma, as is the manner of popular assemblies, tended to dissipate its energies. It was given complete freedom of speech, and for a little seemed about to be at once a safety-valve for popular feeling and a new broom to sweep clean the bureaucratic chamber. A Progressive *bloc* was formed, under the presidency of M. Miliukov, comprising all the moderate and liberal elements in the Assembly. Its avowed purpose was, in the words of its declaration, "strict conformity of the Administration with the law for the removal of duality in civil and military operations, the dismissal of unworthy and incompetent administrators, and the adoption of a wise and tolerant policy in internal affairs, so as to remove racial, class, and religious differences."

Unfortunately, the *bloc* began to develop a Left and a Right wing. The Right wished all the energies of the Duma to be devoted to administrative reform; and the Left, under Miliukov, made the mistake of raising a controversial constitutional question, and asking that the Cabinet should be made responsible to the Duma. A blizzard is not the best moment for even the most reasonable scheme for redecorating and improving the comfort of a house. It is probable that German influence had been indirectly brought to bear upon some of the more foolish spirits of the Left, for this kind of agitation was completely in accordance with Germany's desires.

The Premier, M. Goremykin, secured the Emperor's assent to the prorogation of the Duma till November. It was indubitably a blunder, for the Duma was the only means of expression for the popular voice. The immediate result was a week of confusion and danger. There were serious

riots in the cities, and strikes in the munition factories. The agitation was patriotic in intention on the part of the agitators; but once again it is likely that German *agents provocateurs* had a hand in its inception. The Emperor summoned the rival leaders to his tent in the field, and an understanding was arrived at. The Left dropped their constitutional schemes, and all parties agreed to concentrate on practical administrative reforms. The period of prorogation was cut short, and the new Minister of the Interior was chosen directly from the Duma. This was M. Khvostov, a moderate-conservative deputy from Orel, whose anti-German vigour in the August session now gave him the office once held by Stolypin.

The unrest was a blessing in disguise. It convinced reasonable men that internal disputes were the enemy's gain, and must at every cost be avoided. It persuaded all parties that the Duma was indispensable, and for the first time in the history of Russia a popular Chamber was demanded by reactionaries and progressives alike. Meanwhile, as political strife died down and as the Russian armies drew clear of danger, news came which opened a new stage in the campaign. For on 25th September the long expected offensive in the West had begun.

Sept. 25.

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[1] For example, at Mars-la-Tour, Vionville, and Loigny-Poupry.

[2] The classic instances of "handiness" in cavalry are found in the American Civil War, such as the defence of the Confederate horsemen before Spottsylvania in May 1864, and Sheridan's pursuit of Lee in 1865.

[3] Von Hindenburg, commanding on the left, was nearly seventy; Prince Leopold of Bavaria, the Generalissimo of the centre, was over that age. Suvarov was just on seventy in his Italian-Swiss campaign; Bluecher was seventy-three at Waterloo; Kutusov, in 1812, was sixty-seven; and Radetzky won Novara at the age of eighty-two. Aged generals have usually been unfortunate. Würmser at Castiglione, Melas at Marengo, and the Duke of Brunswick at Jena were all well over seventy. In the American Civil War, which produced generalship of the highest order, the youth of the leaders was remarkable. At the beginning of the struggle all the great figures—Lee, Grant, Jackson, Sherman, Thomas—were under fifty. The chief cavalry leaders, Jeb Stuart and Sheridan, were under thirty.

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE ALLIED OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST.

Nature of the Western Front—The Lessons of the Summer—A Typical Section of the German Lines—What is meant by "Breaking" a Front—The Three Positions—Improvement in Allied Munitionment—German Numbers—German Commands—A German Divisional Order—The Allied Dispositions—Allied Numbers—The Allied Plan—Strategical Importance of Thrust in Champagne—The Champagne Terrain—The Supporting Attack in the North—The Early Weeks of September—The Allied Bombardment—Work of Allied Aircraft—The Bombardment increases—Friday, 24th September—The Night before the Advance—Dawn on the 25th.

In September a man with a passion for discomfort and ample leisure might have walked in a continuous ditch from the North Sea to the Alps. Two trenches, from thirty to two hundred yards apart, represented the first lines of the opposing armies. Behind the British front there were second and third lines, and further positions at intervals in the rear. But the Germans had these, and something more. From the day when their High Command resolved to stand on the defensive in the West, they had expended immense ingenuity and labour in strengthening their position. The ramifications of their trenches were endless, and great redoubts, almost flush with the ground, consisting of a labyrinth of trenches and machine-gun stations, studded their front. In natural defensive areas, such as the mining districts of the Pas de Calais, every acre contained a fort. The German lines in the West were a fortress in the fullest sense of the word. The day of manœuvre battles had for the moment gone. There was no question of envelopment or outflanking, for there were no flanks to turn. The slow methods of fortress warfare—sap and mine, battery and assault—were all that remained to the offensive.

The past nine months had taught the Allies many lessons. They perceived the formidable nature of the enemy's defence. Though inferior in numbers, his position and his weight of artillery made him impregnable to any ordinary attack. Guns must be met by guns or equal calibre and equal munitionment. Before infantry could advance, a section of the stronghold

must be destroyed by bombardment. Further, it was clear that this destruction must be on a broad front. That was a moral which had been drawn in bitterness after the summer's campaign in the Artois. The attached diagrams, A and B, will explain the futility of breaches which did no more than create a fresh salient. To tear a rent no more than five miles wide meant that time was given for local reserves to come up and hold the gap, so that the enemy's front hardened like concrete before the advance. After the Donajetz the German plan in the East, as we have seen, had been to drive in the Russians in two adjacent sections, and then attempt to cut off the salient thus formed between them by striking inward at its re-entrant angles (Diagram C). That plan was, perhaps, the best in a country where the communications were precarious, and where the opposing front was not continuous. But on the West, where ample roads and railways lay behind every section, where there were no natural difficulties in the *terrain*, and where the whole front was a continuous fortress wall, one rent on a great scale would be sufficient. If the German position could be broken on a front of twenty miles, there would be no time for reserves to hasten up from the flanks and re-form the line. The fortress would be breached, and the assailants, manœuvring in the gap, might compel a general retreat.

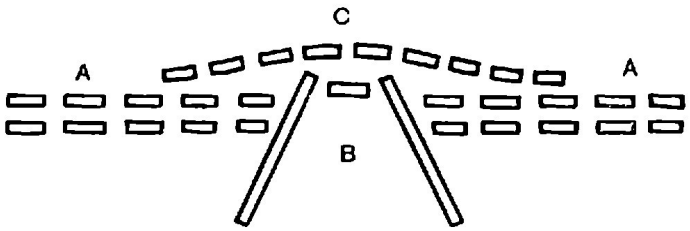


Diagram A.
If B breaks the line A on a narrow front, the reserves C will have time to come up and fill the gap.

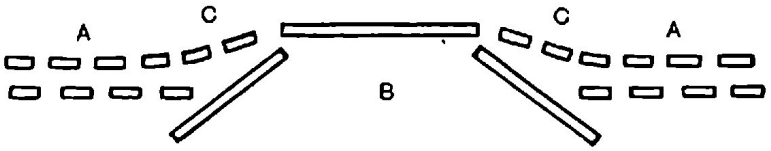


Diagram B.
If B breaks the line A on a broad front, the reserves C will only have time to cover the fringes of the gap, and B will get through.

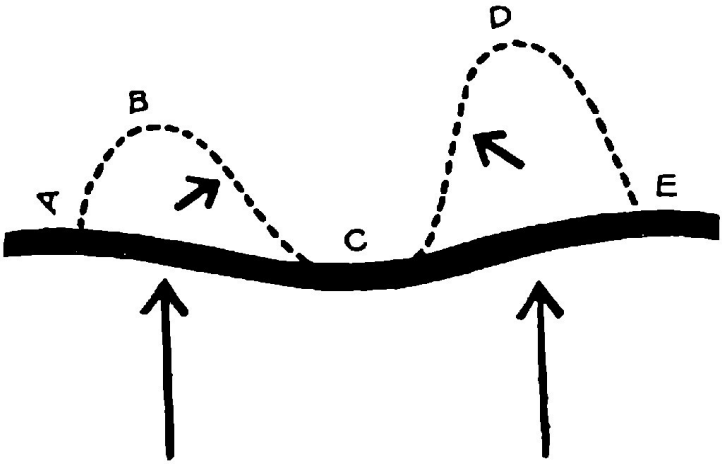


Diagram C.
The driving in of the fronts A-C and C-E creates the salient B-C-D. The roots of that salient are then assailed in the direction of the short arrows.

Let us examine, from the information acquired by our air reconnaissance, a typical section of the German Western front. The first position consisted of several trench lines, with strong redoubts at intervals. Their trenches were very deep, and below them were dug-outs and bomb-proof shelters, sometimes as much as forty feet beneath the surface. The reason of this extraordinary depth was that in the event of a heavy artillery bombardment shelter might be found for the machine-gun sections, who, when the hostile infantry advanced, could come up and man what remained of the defences. Behind this first position, from five to eight hundred yards in the rear, lay the second, prepared on the same lines as the first, with wire entanglements, redoubts, and several lines of trenches. A mile or more back lay the third main position, usually a little stronger than the second.[1] The ground between the three was, of course, not undefended. Apart from a maze of communication trenches, it usually contained a certain number of isolated *fortins*. But the three main positions were clearly defined, and formed the successive lines of the German defence. Behind the third there was for the most part open country for a distance varying from ten to twenty miles, where were the alternative lines prepared in case of a disaster. Other such alternatives extended back at intervals to the German frontier. But the important point was that the first three positions were those held by the German field forces; the more easterly were unmanned, and their manning meant the loss of the main lines and a comprehensive retirement.

It is important that the reader should grasp what exactly was meant by breaking the German front. Let us suppose that an artillery bombardment has destroyed the first position; the infantry advance, and are brought up against the second. The second position is more difficult for artillery to destroy, since it is, as a rule, outside direct observation, and can only be dealt with by indirect fire. This means that its bombardment is not likely to be so complete as the bombardment of the first, and the advancing infantry will be held up by patches of parapet and wire which have not been cut. Let us assume, however, that a large number of infantry get through the second position, and confront the third, and probably final, position. Here they will be able to do little, for presumably that position has not been touched by artillery at all.

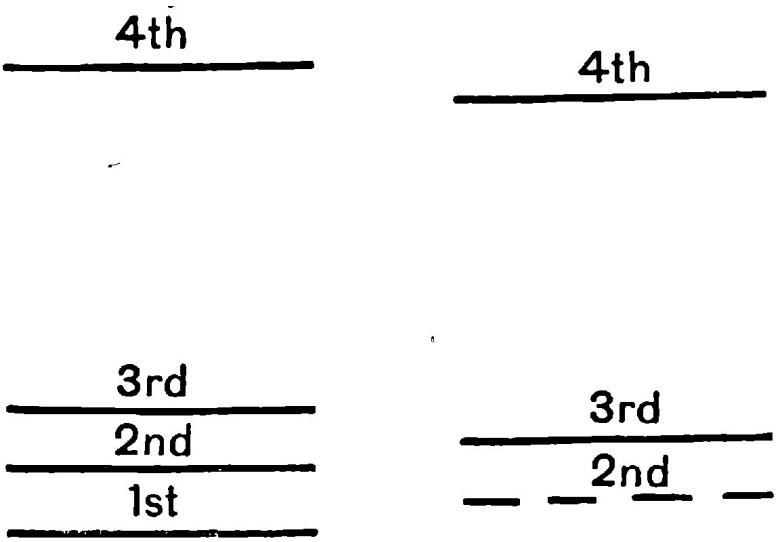


Diagram D.
After the attack the 1st position has gone and the 2nd is broken; but the 2nd must be cleared before the 3rd can be properly attacked.

Therefore a halt must be called and an artillery concentration directed against the third position. But before this can be done the second position must be fully cleared, for, as we have seen, there are likely to be a good many points there still held by the enemy (Diagram D). These must be cleared one by one before the true final assault can begin. Hence the operation cannot be a swift and continuous thing. There will be a great dash the first day; then a halt, while counter-attacks are being beaten off, and the enemy is being cleared out of points of vantage in his old second position. That takes time, but it must be done before the third position can be properly

assaulted. If that assault, when it comes, is successful, and the final lines are carried with a sufficiently broad breach, then the enemy's front may be said to be pierced. The troops which get through have a more or less undefended hinterland to operate in (Diagram E). They can take in flank or in rear other parts of the enemy's front which have not been broken. Their cavalry can cut the main enemy communications. If we remember that the German Western front was very much the shape of a right-angled triangle, it will be obvious that any success of this kind would put a large part of their forces in dire peril (Diagram F). They would be compelled to fall back to positions ten or twenty miles in rear under an overwhelming pressure, and with a perpetual risk of being outflanked. Such a retreat must involve a great loss in prisoners and guns, and under certain circumstances might develop into a rout.

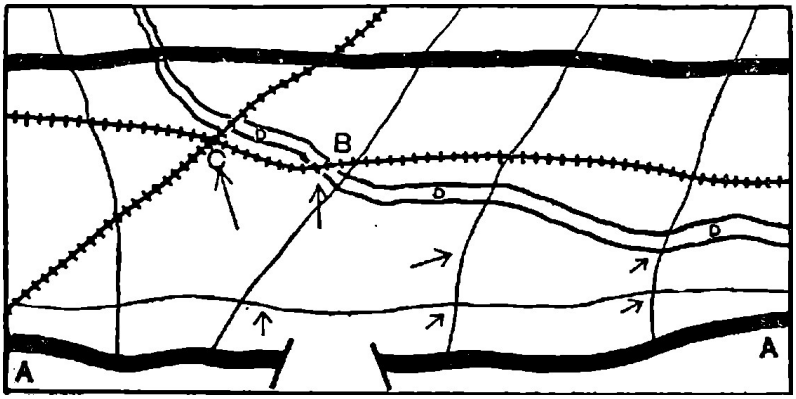


Diagram E.

The force which has broken through the front A can destroy the junction at C, the railway bridge at B, and the various road bridges over the river D.

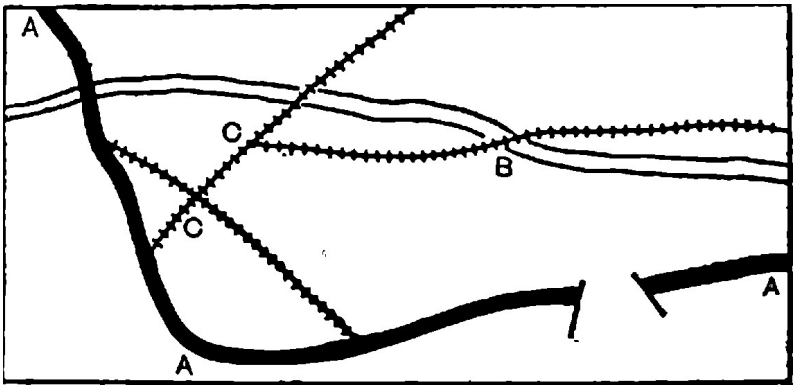


Diagram F.
The force which has broken through A, if it destroys the railway junction at C and the river bridge at B, will have cut the communications of the whole angle of the force AAA.

Such were the elements of the problem which faced the Allies in September. Success depended upon a full complement of artillery and shells, for the bombardment must be overwhelming and continuous. It depended not less upon superior numbers. In protracted operations there is always the risk that the enemy will fortify new lines behind those threatened, so that when his positions are broken, the attack is faced not with open country but with a new set of defences. To construct fortifications on the modern scale, however, demands either ample time or a great number of workmen. The German man-power, as the Allies well knew, was wearing thin, and the whole of German strategy in the West was directed to holding their lines with fewer troops than their opponents. If after the first attack a constant pressure was maintained along the whole front, the reserves brought up would be used in the fighting line, and there would be no great surplus for the work of fortification. The Allied plan, therefore, fell into three stages—the destruction of one or more positions at the first attack; the consolidation of the ground won in such a way as to prepare for the next blow, and to leave the enemy no leisure to strengthen his remoter defences; the attack on the final position, and such movements thereafter as fortune might grant.

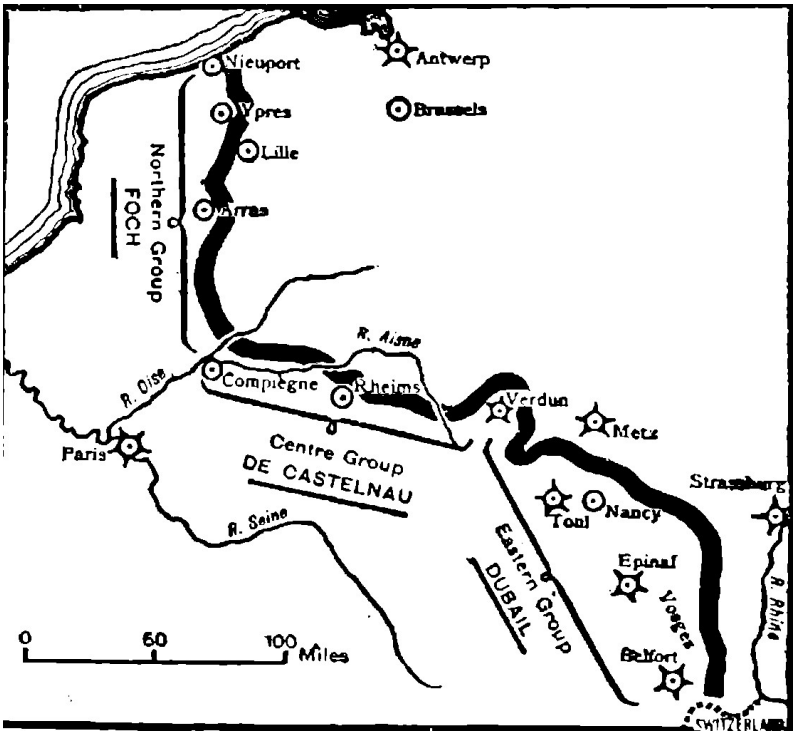
The full munitionment of the British army was not possible before the spring. But in September there was a welcome change from the lean days of the early summer. In one branch of explosives alone, the production was thirty times as great as it had been in the end of May. Over a thousand factories were now “controlled establishments” under the Ministry of Munitions, and these employed little short of a million workers. Many

thousands of soldiers, who before the war had been skilled mechanics, had been released for munitions work. The purchase of supplies and men had been centralized and organized, every machine-tool factory in the United Kingdom was under Government control, and, in addition to the twenty national shell factories, eleven new Government projectile works had been established. The situation of France was even better. The hope expressed in the summer, that by October the full French complement of shells would be attained, seemed likely to be realized. The six thousand guns of different calibres which Germany possessed on the Western front were now equalled by the Allies, and the accumulation of shell from June to the end of August had risen to a gigantic figure.

In numbers the German front in September was generally estimated to contain close on two millions of men, or, if we count combatants only, something like a million and a quarter bayonets. For a continuous line of 570 miles this might well seem an inadequate force, were it not for the strength of its defences, its perfect railway communications, and the power of its artillery. The front was held in varying degrees of force. Round Ypres, Armentières, La Bassée, Lens, and all the avenues to Lille the Germans were heavily massed. In the Somme and Oise areas, and along the Aisne, their lines were thin; they thickened in Champagne, around Verdun, and in the Woëvre, but thinned again in the Gap of Nancy and the Northern Vosges, and drew to a reasonable strength in front of Mulhouse. The commands had been little changed since the summer. On the Yser and in front of Ypres lay the Duke of Wurtemberg. The Crown Prince of Bavaria was in charge of the lines south to Arras. Beyond was the 2nd Army of von Buelow, and at the apex of the angle of the Aisne and the Oise was the old 1st Army of von Kluck, now, since that general had been wounded, under von Fabeck. Von Heeringen and von Einem commanded on the Upper Aisne and in Champagne, the Crown Prince in the Argonne and north of Verdun, von Strantz in the Woëvre, von Gaede and von Falkenhausen in Lorraine and Alsace.

The stagnation of the summer, and the consciousness of strong fortifications, may well have taken the edge off the enemy's ardour. To stand for long on the defence without any offensive purpose is always a severe test of the *moral* of an army. A German divisional order, which was captured early in October, cast an interesting light on the difficulties of the German commanders. The order complained that it had become a habit for the infantry to fire as little as possible in order not to provoke a reply from their opponents. When a bombardment began the infantry called immediately for artillery support, and were overjoyed when the bombardment ceased. Such

conduct, said the order, must tend to kill the spirit of the offensive, and convince the enemy of his superiority. "Our comparative inactivity has certainly been put to profit in strengthening our positions, but this applies also to the enemy. All efforts should be made in order to be able to take an early offensive, which will be all the more difficult the longer it is delayed, inasmuch as the enemy will be found more strongly entrenched and morally stronger." Brigadiers and regimental commanders were therefore urged to make a great effort to keep offensive activity and the spirit of the offensive up to the highest pitch all along the front. "Instead of being subject to the will of the enemy, we must impose our will upon him."

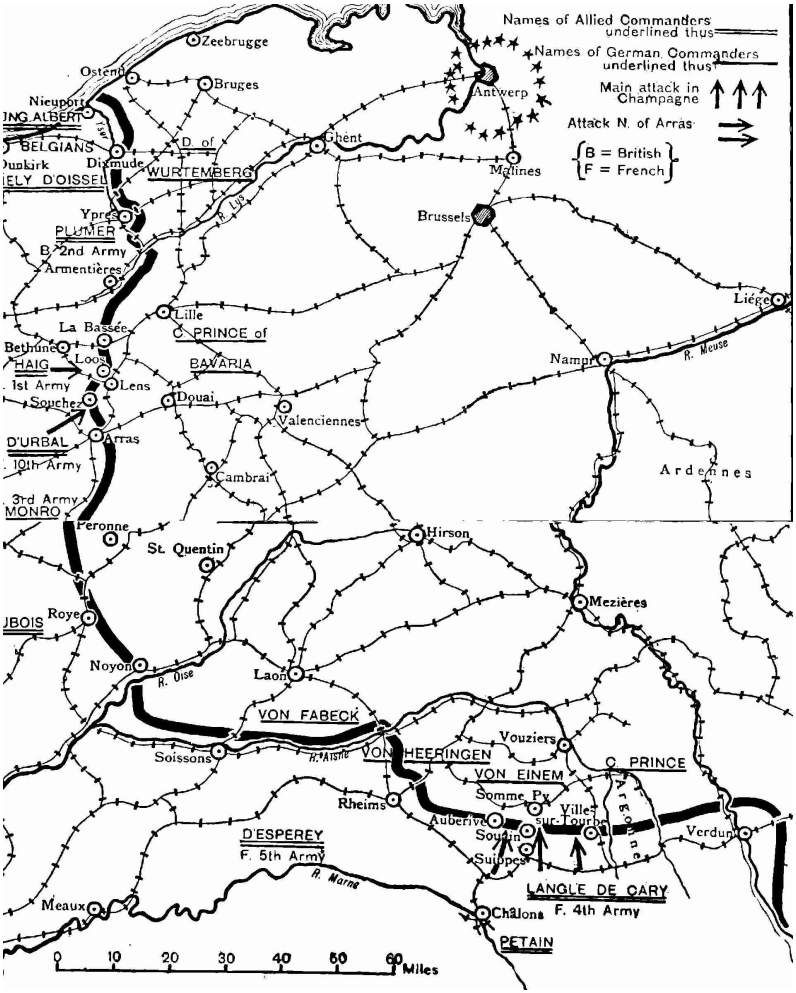


Allied "Groups of Armies," 1915.

The Germans made no secret of their main dispositions and commands, publishing as a matter of course in their daily bulletins the names of generals and corps engaged in most actions. For some reason this practice was not followed in the Allied armies, and it is therefore only possible to give bare details. During the late summer there had been comprehensive changes on the Western front. The British force had taken over some thirty miles of additional line, and one of their armies was separated from the rest by a

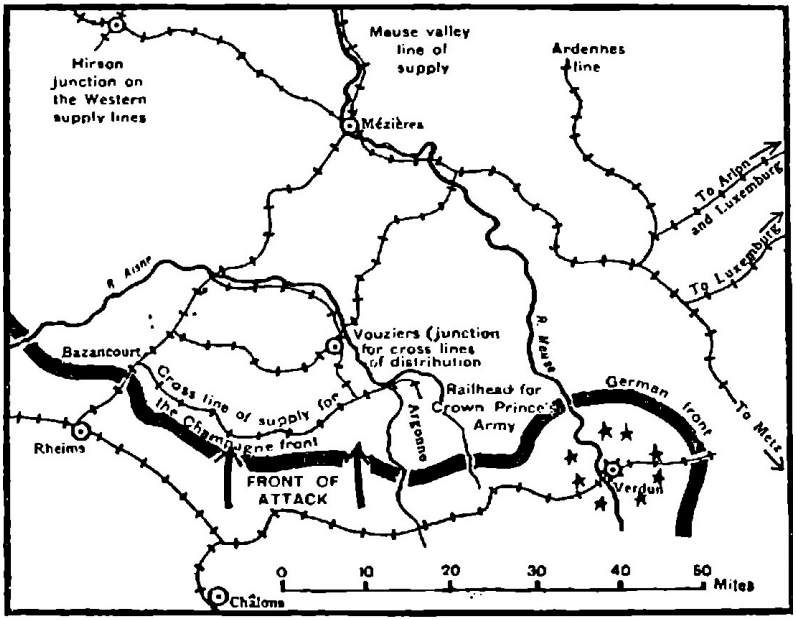
French command. As before, there were the three *secteurs*—the northern under Foch, extending from the North Sea to Compiègne; the central, under de Castelnau, from Compiègne to Verdun; and the southern, under Dubail, from Verdun to Belfort. Taking the commands from north to south, the French detachment in support of the Belgians on the Yser was now under General Hely d'Oissel, who had succeeded Putz. Then came the British Second Army, under Sir Herbert Plumer, from Boesinghe, on the Ypres Canal, to a point south-west of Armentières. Thence the British First Army, under Sir Douglas Haig, extended southwards to Grenay, due west of Lens. Then came the French, d'Urbal's 10th Army, to a point south of Arras, whence the new British Third Army, under Sir Charles Monro, continued the line to the Somme. Southwards lay a French army under General Dubois, formerly in command of the famous 9th Corps. In de Castelnau's section the forces were, from left to right, Franchet d'Esperey's 5th Army, Langle de Cary's 4th Army, and Petain's Army,[2] in reserve behind the line. General Humbert had succeeded Sarrail in the command of the 3rd Army of Verdun. The commands in the southern *secteur*—Dubail and Maud'huy—remained unchanged.

The number of the Allies can only be given approximately. Sir John French commanded in September a force of little short of a million men, out of which we can rank from half a million to 600,000 men—say thirty divisions—as combatants. The French line of battle was manned by some two million troops, and there were considerable reserves preparing in the depôts. Such numbers gave us a handsome superiority over the enemy, but every atom of that superiority was needed for a successful attack. It is probable that the plan which matured in September was a change of policy. For long it had seemed that no great offensive could be undertaken before the spring. But the unexpected improvement in the supply of munitions and the arrival of several of the new British divisions made an attack possible, and the brightening of the skies in the East made it desirable. Russia had escaped her worst peril, and was beginning to hold her enemy. The German armies of the East seemed to be rapidly getting into a position where they could neither force a decision nor break off the combat. If von Hindenburg could send few reinforcements westwards, it was clearly the moment for an attack, for, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, it is when the enemy is held in one field that there is good prospect of breaking him in another.



The September Offensive on the Western Front.
Map showing the line of contact from Verdun to the sea, the fronts attacked, the Army commands, and the enemy's railway communications.

It is idle to speculate on the mind of the High Command, but it may be reasonably assumed that the main purpose of the new offensive was not to break through. If that happened, it could only be by a miracle of good fortune. The contingency was, of course, prepared for, but the definite and calculated elements in the scheme were to win positions in the enemy's defence from which subsequent blows could be struck, to distract him in his Eastern strategy, and to wear down his already declining man-power.



German lines of communication and supply menaced by the French offensive in Champagne.

Champagne and the *secteur* of de Castelnau was chosen as the scene of the main attack. The reason is obvious, if we remember the nature of the ground. The German front in the West formed a blunt salient with its apex at Compiègne, and the corner of Northern Champagne and the Argonne was its re-entrant angle. A wedge driven in there would threaten the communications of all the southern side of the salient, and would threaten them at a point far from their railheads. If communications can be cut, it is obvious that the most effective blow will be that delivered most near to their base. A brief study of the map will reveal the main lines which might be imperilled. The first was the lateral line, Bazancourt-Grand Pré, which had been the object of the French attack in February. Beyond that was the great trunk line running from Rheims by Rethel to Mezières, and continued to Trèves by Sedan, Montmédy, and Luxemburg. Still farther north was the line from Mezières west to Hirson. Any blow which embarrassed these communications would cut the direct avenues of supplies from the central Rhine valley, and force the whole transport of the Western front into the northern railway system based on Maubeuge. If at the same time the Western front could be forced back, this congestion might involve disaster. Moreover, if the French advanced any distance in Champagne, there was a chance of penning the Crown Prince's army between that advance and the

defences of Verdun. These, of course, were possibilities on the far horizon of the main objective. They could scarcely be realized in one effort, but they might be the result in which succeeding efforts would culminate.

Apart from its strategical importance, Champagne offered a *terrain* peculiarly suited to an attack of massed artillery and an infantry concentration. The rolling chalk downs and their shallow valleys were open and bare. In Flanders the entanglements of meadows, villages, and all the appurtenances of high cultivation made any advance a piecemeal business. In the Pas de Calais the coal-pits, mining hamlets, and numerous mineral railways produced a natural fortress. But in Champagne the only defences must be those hollowed out of the ground. The whole landscape was well fitted for artillery obscuration and air reconnaissance. Guns could be used to the best advantage, and infantry could reap to the full the fruits of a bombardment. There was something due also to sentiment and tradition. On those dull levels thrice in history had the freedom of France been won. Every Frenchman looked on the chalky downs about the Camp of Attila as a place of destiny for his country. It was as if a British fleet were fighting again in the waters off Cape Trafalgar.

But to support the grand attack there must be others. The salient must be assaulted on its other side, and the place chosen was the sector between La Bassée and Arras. There the French had delivered their great attack in May, clearing the ridge of Notre Dame de Lorette, and winning a line from Souchez village to the trench network called the Labyrinth, between Neuville and Ecurie. An advance here into the plain of the Scheldt towards Douai and Valenciennes would threaten the German lateral communications from Lille to Soissons. The immediate objective was Lens, and Lens is situated in the flats between two low swells of ground. South are the Vimy Heights, which d'Urbal had failed to carry in May. North lie the insignificant slopes around the village of Loos. An advance along the whole front might make Lens untenable, and prepare the way for a movement against Douai and Valenciennes, and even against Lille itself. It should be noted that, while the Artois movement had its immediate strategic objective, this did not rank on the same scale as the end sought in Champagne. The country was too difficult to look for any swift and sudden break in the line. It was conceived rather as a subsidiary operation to distract other parts of the German front, to prevent reliefs being sent south, end to induce some uncertainty in the minds of the enemy's staff as to which was the main effort of the Allies.

Other subsidiary attacks were necessary for the same purpose, and these were entrusted to the British forces. As we have seen, the whole German position from La Bassée to Ypres was thickly held. It was essential that these forces should not be depleted to reinforce other parts of the front, and to ensure this there must be a number of lesser assaults. If these succeeded, and ground was won, so much the better, but it was not essential that they should succeed. They were strictly holding battles, and it was enough if they distracted and occupied the attention of the enemy.

The early weeks of September saw perfect autumn weather, with the clear cool days that an east wind brings. In the evening the smoke from the little fires of field refuse cloaked the country like a sea fog. Early in the month a general bombardment began along the whole Allied front. Its purpose was to serve as a screen behind which the preparations for attack could be made, and to puzzle the enemy as to which section of his line was chiefly threatened. It was violent in Lorraine, in Champagne, in the Artois, and around Ypres, and it naturally elicited a counter-bombardment. But it was fitful, a demonstration rather than an attack, and though it did much damage it was not intended to be the real work of preparation. Much had to be done, also, to make ready the front for the advance. In some sections new trenches had to be dug in front of the old, fresh telephone wires had to be laid, and special bomb stores constructed.

The Allied aircraft were also busy, for it was vitally important that no German machines should reconnoitre over our lines and find out what we were doing. In every week of September there were at least a score of fights in the air; in many cases the German airmen were brought down, and in every case they were driven back. In the third week there were twenty-seven fights over the British lines alone, and only one British machine suffered damage. Brilliant work was done, too, in reconnaissance, airmen remaining in many cases for over two hours at an altitude of 7,000 feet above enemy territory, subject to a constant bombardment. As the 25th of the month approached our airmen went farther afield, and bombed vital parts of the German railways. They burned Valenciennes station, derailed and blew up trains, and interfered ruthlessly with the enemy's communications. The "Taube" shrank from crossing that frontier of death, the Allied first line; and we believed that we had kept our screen of secrecy unbroken. In Champagne all the country about Châlons and Bar-le-Duc had been cleared of its civilian inhabitants, and had become a military zone where troops and guns moved by day and night behind the defences of the northern batteries.

On Thursday, 23rd September, the main bombardment began. From La Bassée to Arras, and along the Champagne front, hell was loosed from thousands of pieces. The German first position was being methodically destroyed yard by yard, while by indirect fire the howitzers were battering their second line. To such a storm there could be no reply, and the long German front seemed bereft of life. That night the wind changed to the south-west, and the morning of Friday, the 24th, dawned mild and wet, with a Scots mist settled on all the countryside. Any section of the front that day was a curious sight. All the roads were full of returning gun teams without their guns, and long files of ammunition wagons. Everywhere there was an atmosphere of stress and expectancy. Commanders knew only the orders for their own men, but there was that sub-conscious tension which heralds the coming of some great event. And every mind, in the pauses of its own business, turned southwards, and tried to fathom the chances of the mighty effort which rumour had spoken of in whispers.

Sept. 23.

Sept. 24.

About midnight the Allied bombardment drew to a head. Every gun on our front was speaking, and speaking without rest. From thirty miles off it sounded like the roll of giant drums. There was no cessation, but sometimes it rose to a crescendo, when it had the volume of thunder near at hand. Close to the front the sound was beyond description. In the misty night nothing was visible but the flashes from the guns or bursting shells. Modern battles are not pictures for the eye. They are assaults upon the ear, and that never-ending growl of artillery conveyed a grimmer impression to the brain than any spectacle.

From the small hours of the morning, in a pandemonium of din, troops were moving into the communication trenches. The great masses just behind the front were beginning to percolate into the labyrinth of narrow ways which led to the first line. Between them and the skies was a canopy of flying projectiles, and when they could raise their heads they saw the dark, dripping night lit with splashes of fire. Dawn began to struggle through the gloom, and that day, Saturday, 25th September, opened in a drizzle.

Sept. 25.

Suddenly the guns ceased. The instant quiet seemed deathlike, and smote on the ear and brain with a shock like icy water. The troops crawling forward knew what it meant. The gunners were shifting range and lengthening their fuses. The first of the infantry were getting over the parapets, and the great battle had begun.

[1] The numbering of these positions is immaterial, provided their general nature is understood. French writers tend to treat what is called above the second position as only a reserve part of the first, and to call the final German position the second.

[2] The rise of Petain seems to have been the most striking of all the French commanders. At the beginning of the war he was a colonel, commanding the 33rd Regiment of infantry at Arras.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

CHAMPAGNE.

Position of French Lines in Champagne—Morning of 25th September—Description of Country—The French Force—The Eve of the Battle—General Joffre's Order to his Troops—The Infantry leave the Trenches—First German Position carried—Splendour of the French Charge—Use of the Guns—Baratier's Cavalry—The Advance of Marchand's Colonials—General Marchand Wounded—Position in the Evening of the First Day—The Night of the 25th—Sunday, the 26th—German Reserves—The Crown Prince counter-attacks in the Argonne—The Battle of Wednesday, 29th—German Final Position pierced—Nature of Champagne Fight—The Siege of a Fortress—Valour and Discipline of French Army.

Sept. 25.

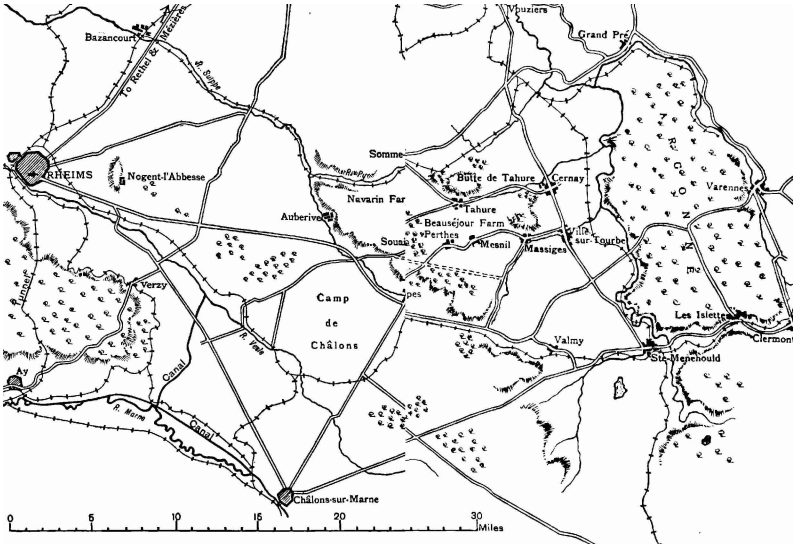
At dawn on that Saturday morning the French lines lay roughly east and west from just south of Auberive to just north of the little town of Ville-sur-Tourbe. The position must be carefully noted. From the southern outskirts of Auberive—the Germans held the village—they ran east in undulating ground just north of the old Roman road, and enclosed the village of Souain. In this section the Germans faced them on a number of ridges, where were situated four famous redoubts—the Palatinate, the Magdeburg, the von Tirpitz, and the Wilhelm II. From Souain the French position skirted the south end of the Bois Sabot, and cut the road from Perthes-les-Hurlus to Tahure, a little over two miles north of the former place. Here the German lines lay on a series of swells, the chief of which was Hill 170, with important redoubts at the Trou Bricot Mill and the spot called the Cabane. North-east of Souain, half-way on the road to Tahure, was the German work which the French called La Baraque. Going east, the French lay along the south end of the Bois Jaune Brûlé to just north of Massiges, cutting across the southern flank of Hill 171. This belt is part of the curious flat down known from its shape as the Hand of Massiges. Between the Perthes-Tahure road and the Hand of Massiges the Germans were strongly posted on a ridge—the Butte of Mesnil—which commanded the shallow valley of the river Dormoise. From Massiges the French position ran in an almost straight line to a point north of the town of

Ville-sur-Tourbe, where it bent northwards by Servon to Binarville in the Argonne.

It is hard to present a bird's-eye picture of that strange countryside. It is a land of low chalky downs, without walls or hedges, separated by the shallow waters of little muddy streams. The downs are some 600 feet above the sea, but no more than 150 or 200 feet above the level of the valleys. New plantations of scrubby firs—sure proof of an impoverished soil—vary the monotony, but the shell-fire of months had ploughed them into ragged shadows, and in some cases left only a chaos of splinters. The country is the same northwards beyond the railway. It is the watershed of many inconsiderable waters—the Suippe and the Py flowing north-west, the Dormoise, the Alin, and the Tourbe going north-eastwards to the Aisne. As the Argonne is neared and the broad Servon valley the streams grow more limpid, and oaks and poplars replace the pines of the barrens. From almost any observation point the whole landscape lies clear to the eye. In the coarse chalk the great scars of trenches and earthworks show up white among the rough grasses, so that under a blue sky the place has the air of an alkali desert.

The striking force of the French movement was Langle de Cary's 4th Army. It is not yet possible to give the dispositions in full detail. It contained the troops of the 2nd Corps, the men of Picardy; the Colonial Corps; the 7th Corps, the men of Franche-Comté; and the Lorrainers and Burgundians of the 21st Corps. A number of Chasseur battalions recruited from all France, were present, and to them and the Colonials was entrusted the most difficult part of the advance, the attack of the left centre.

The German lines in Champagne were immensely strong, since the section was strategically so vital. Apart from the infinite ramification of the trenches, there were huge dug-outs, protected by timber and steel casings, capable of holding nearly a hundred men. There were several hundred miles of light trench railways. All the critical points were held by machine guns in concrete and steel casements, deeply buried in the earth. No part of the front showed such colossal industry in defence. It was one vast semi-subterranean encampment, fortified in every yard with the latest devices of science.



General Sketch Map of the country between Rheims and the Argonne—the scene of the main advance of the French, September 1915.

In the days before the 25th there was a feverish activity behind the French lines. The men had been carefully instructed, so that every platoon knew precisely its objective. Besides their ordinary equipment they were armed with trench knives for the desperate close-quarter fighting of which the summer's work at the Labyrinth had warned them. Shelters and assembly trenches had to be improvised for the advancing infantry, and in some places saps and tunnels had been run out towards the German lines, so that the first assault should spring suddenly from the earth. As the troops moved forwards in their new horizon-blue and the steel helmets, which made them look like the pikemen of Gustavus, an intense anticipation grew along the lines. The huge new Creusot howitzers, which the men christened "Les Vainqueurs," were speaking night and day, and under their loud canopy soldier whispered to soldier, "*C'est l'offensive.*" On the night of the 24th an extra ration of wine was issued, and the packed trenches waited with little sleep for the morning. At dawn they drank coffee and looked out on a gray and dismal world. A thin, fine rain was falling, and the wet chalk clung to boots and clothes. Yet those who had read history had a memory to console them. It was the weather of Valmy. One hundred and thirteen years before, in the same month, on those sodden downs, the guns of the Army of the Revolution had checked an invasion and turned homewards the most reputed troops in Europe, whose only trophy was dysentery from a debauch of Champagne grapes.[1]

The words of General Joffre's order were in every man's heart:—

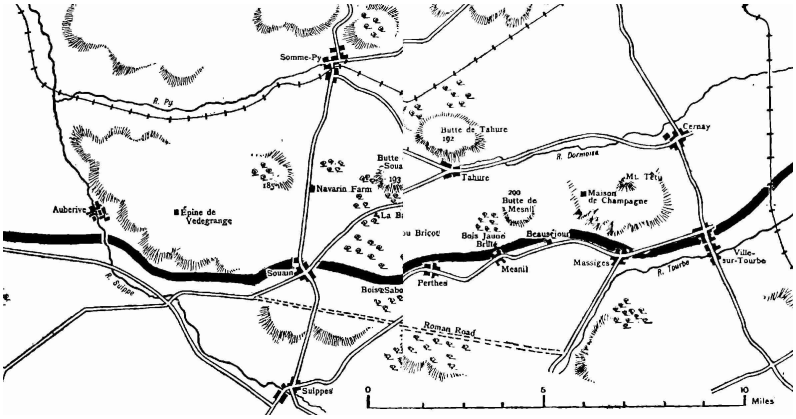
> "Soldiers of the Republic! After months of waiting, which have enabled us to increase our strength and our resources, while the enemy was using his, the hour has come to attack and to conquer, to add fresh pages of glory to those of the Marne, of Flanders, the Vosges, and Arras.
>
> "Behind a storm of iron and fire, unloosed, thanks to the labour of the factories of France, where your comrades have worked day and night for you, you will go to the assault, all together, upon the whole front, in close union with the Armies of our Allies.
>
> "Your dash will be irresistible.
>
> "It will carry you with your first effort up to the enemy's batteries beyond the fortified line opposing you.
>
> "You will leave him neither truce nor rest until the achievement of victory.
>
> "Forward, then, with your whole heart for the liberation of our Fatherland and for the triumph of right and liberty."

The artillery for a little ceased fire. In a strange quiet the men waited, magazines were filled, bayonets fixed, and their officers passed the word, "*Vaincre ou mourir.*" At a quarter-past nine suddenly the bugles rang out. The *Marseillaise* burst forth in parts like a ragged cry, and there came the hoarse, gasping sound which tells of the release of pent-up ardour. Silence was the official order, but in such a moment human nature will not be restrained. Singing, laughing, and praying, mingling bars of the *Marseillaise*, the *Carmagnole*, marching songs and old child's rhymes, on a fifteen-mile front, from Auberive to Massiges, the blue-gray wave surged from the trenches. That was at the start, but soon the only sound was the gritting of teeth and the sharp intake of breath. At the same moment, at lengthened ranges, the guns flung their curtain of fire between the enemy and his supports.

The first German position, consisting of four or five parallel trenches, and about five hundred yards deep, had been devastated by the great bombardment. The Champagne-Pouilleuse has been compared to a frozen sea, and now the image was just, for whole acres of chalk had been churned by shell-fire into the likeness of surf and spume. Over this the French swept

in their stride, under a hail of fire from the German batteries. From the reports of soldiers we can learn something of that resistless charge. Plunging through the debris of the first line, they left detachments to “clear up”—to ferret out prisoners from the deeper dug-outs, and take the machine guns which a few heroic survivors still tried to man.[2] These machine guns took heavy toll of the attack, and the German artillery from far in the rear were “watering” the path of the advance. The road was marked by piles of blue-gray dead, but the impetus did not slacken. Slipping and stumbling among fragments of wire and the slimy chalk, now horribly marked with blood, the infantry crossed the support and reserve trenches of the first position. Every now and again the hurricane of shells became so fierce that the officers made their men lie prone, and twenty yards or so would be covered by crawling. In a lull they would rise again to their feet, and now they were on the edge of the woods, where the German field batteries, unable to get away, were firing at point-blank range. The goal was clear before them, and with wild cheers they flung themselves on the guns. In a few seconds the 77’s, the 105’s, the big Austrian 147’s were theirs. Whole batteries were taken, while the gunners lay dead in their shelters. The men were dripping with sweat and breathless with the exaltation of victory. Prisoners were gathered in in batches—broken, terror-stricken men, paralyzed by the long bombardment and the lines of shining steel, backed by the fierce, flushed faces of the attack.

The French position before the charge had been fantastically configured, some trenches looking east, some north, some west. The German lines corresponded, so that there were many awkward corners to be rounded off. This explains why in some parts the assault went clear into the German second lines, and in others battled desperately with the first. There were moments of confusion, such as are inevitable in every great attack. Battalions were mixed up, and junior officers found themselves in command of brigades. But, in a very little, order was restored by the brilliant French regimental leading. The wounded cried to their friends to leave them, and to think of nothing but bringing up the guns. Coloured flags were carried by all the battalions, and in that hell of carnage the rags of red cotton made a rallying point for the units, even on that broken ground heavy with autumn mist and the smoke of death.



The September Battle in Champagne.
1. Showing the front from which French attacked on the first day, September 25, 1915.

Then the guns came—the cherished 75's, whose efficiency was to the French an article of faith, and whose service was a ritual. The field batteries had taken up position in open country, as in the days before the war of trenches began. It has always been the French fashion to fight with their guns far forward, for the precision of these marvellous weapons enables them to fire a very little way ahead of their own troops. The pennants of the infantry gave the gunners their line, and the close co-operation of the two arms enabled the attack to call upon the batteries from moment to moment for special duties—to batter down a piece of parapet still standing, or to put a curtain of fire behind a batch of Germans. One gunner officer has described the day:—

"On Saturday morning my battery was ordered to advance quite close to the trenches of the first line. My men were delighted. For the first time since the Marne we were galloping to battle, guns and limbers jolting and shells bursting all around us. We crossed over the crest of a hill, and saw the German trenches 600 metres away. They were quite easy to distinguish, for the parapet, damaged by our artillery fire, had been hastily repaired, and the new-turned chalk marked clearly the zigzag of the defence. We got to work quickly, for the enemy's batteries were finding us out.

"We had scarcely given the enemy more than a foretaste of our shells on their trenches when the order came to lengthen our fire. At the same moment our infantry started off in a sevenfold blue wave. It was a glorious sight. We changed our position, galloping behind a slight rise, and began our duel again with the enemy's batteries. We were firing on a point four kilometres

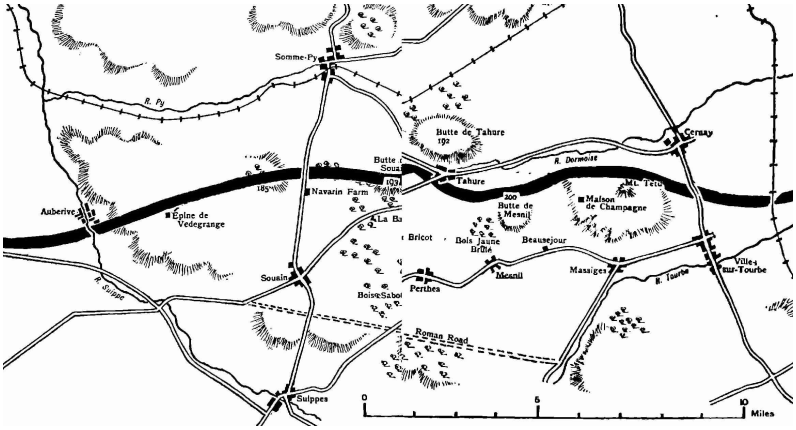
behind the German line, our heavy artillery doing likewise, in order to prevent the enemy reinforcements of shells reaching him. . . . At two o'clock we got the order to follow up the infantry. They wanted us to destroy some obstruction to their advance. Shells were still falling all around us, and we had some horses killed. We got through all the same, and a staff officer showed us our target. It was a little collection of farm buildings which the Germans had turned into a blockhouse. The doors and windows had been filled up with sandbags and cemented together, and the whole work protected with a thick field of barbed wire. The enemy's machine guns were turned at once on my battery, which, however, got into action so quickly that after twelve rounds the mitrailleuses were silenced, the garrison waving the white flag."

If the guns now fought in the open so did the cavalry. Behind the French lines were drawn up the Cavalry Corps—dragoons, chasseurs, and the burnoused Spahis—waiting for the time when the infantry might have breached the last German line and opened the gate for a wild ride to the north. But in the meantime squadrons were used for a tactical purpose. It was a bold thought to hurl cavalry into that shell-swept gap between the first and second German positions, but the risk was taken. The Colonial horsemen of General Baratier in especial charged through the debris of the broken trenches, and swept up masses of prisoners before they could reach the sanctuary of the reserve positions. To this experiment was largely due the great capture of guns.

The most desperate fighting was on the left, where the Burgundians, the Chasseurs, and the Colonials charged the line of wooded hills between Auberive and Souain—the trenches around the lonely house called the Epine de Vedegranges and on Hill 150. On the extreme left the attack was held up after a kilometre, but on its right trench after trench was taken, the first position was cleared, and by midday the troops had reached the great line known as the Lubeck trench, which ran east to Hill 193. The charge of the Colonials there and farther east was a marvellous feat of arms. Seventeen years before, in the same month, Lord Kitchener met at Fashoda a slim, travel-stained French officer, who had reached the White Nile after his classic journey from the Atlantic coast. "I congratulate you," said the British general, "on all you have accomplished." "No," replied the Frenchman, pointing to his troops, "it is not I but these soldiers who have done it."[3] It was this officer, General Marchand, who now commanded the Colonial Corps, and he showed the same gifts of leadership which had brought him through the Sahara and the Congo forests, and the same self-sacrificing devotion to his men. He led the assault in person, and as the fierce lines

raced past the first captured trenches they saw their general standing calmly on the parapet, smoking his pipe, and waving encouragement to his infantry. *Panache*, but the *panache* which wins battles and is the truest wisdom![4] Marchand and two of his brigadiers fell, badly wounded, in the first hours of battle, but his intrepidity had done its work. The Colonials would not be denied. With bombs and with the bayonet they poured through the gaps which the guns had made, and if they erred it was in pushing their assault beyond the bounds of what is possible for mortal men.

All through the dripping afternoon the struggle continued, and as the twilight fell it became possible for the French Staff to take stock of its winnings. On a front of fifteen miles the advance had been carried forward an average of two and a half miles. For every yard of front an unwounded prisoner had been taken, and nine guns for every mile. Let us follow the new position from left to right. Between Auberive and Souain the great redoubts of the Palatinate, Magdeburg, von Tirpitz, and Wilhelm II. had all fallen, and the French faced the Lubeck trench, the chief position in the second line. On the road from Souain to Tahure the Colonials had carried La Baraque, and were looking down on the farm of Navarin, which lies on the slopes towards the lateral railway. Eastwards the Colonials, assisted by the men of the 7th Corps, held Hill 193, but had not reached the German second line east of Navarin Farm, since the enemy still clung to the woods which they had christened Spandau and Kamerun. From this point eastwards the position was complicated. The men of Picardy—whose ancestors had held the woodland pass at Malplaquet—commanded but had not reached the village of Tahure, north of which lay the Butte de Tahure, defending the railway. They had cleared and made great captures of men and guns in the Cabane, the mill of Trou Bricot, and on the slopes of Hill 170. Here the French guns had blown up an ammunition depôt of the enemy. North of Beauséjour Farm the resistance had been stubborn, and no impression had been made on the Butte of Mesnil. But part of the Hand of Massiges had been carried, and the great shell-hole called the “Crater,” and the right wing had won the farm called Maisons de Champagne, which stands on the edge of the shallow vale of the Dormoise. Practically the whole German first line had gone, and the French held large parts of the second line, west of Navarin Farm, and east of Tahure.



The September Battle in Champagne.
2. Showing the line held by the French on September 29, 1915.

The critical moment of the battle was still to come. It was essential to prevent the enemy consolidating his remoter defences and bringing up reserves, so the artillery was pushed forward, and all that night of 25th September the bombardment was resumed. Meantime the French dug themselves in in their advanced position, adjusted the captured trenches, and got their machine guns ready against counter-attacks. It was no light task bringing up heavy batteries across that scarred and pitted battlefield, but the work was accomplished in the hours of darkness. On Sunday the left wing cleared all the summits of the downs from Auberive to Souain. The centre cleared the woods east of Souain, and joined up with the right of the left wing on Hill 193. The so-called "Camp of Sadowa," with great quantities of *matériel*, was taken. Hill 201, facing the Butte of Tahure, was captured by the evening, and a position won in the great Trench of the Vistula on the slopes in front of Tahure village. The northern slopes of the Hand of Massiges were cleared, perhaps the finest achievement of all, for the German commander had boasted that the place could be held by a washerwoman and two machine guns. Some progress was also made against the strong German lines on the Butte of Mesnil, which now formed a salient menaced from east to west. All along the front, by means of alternate artillery bombardments and bomb attacks, the line was advanced. That second day was far more trying for the French troops than the great sweep forward of the Saturday. "If you only knew what these days and nights are like," wrote one officer. "Condemned to remain crouching in the mud, under an avalanche of shells, under an almost unceasing rain, with but few supplies brought up; in the midst of bodies

Sept. 26.

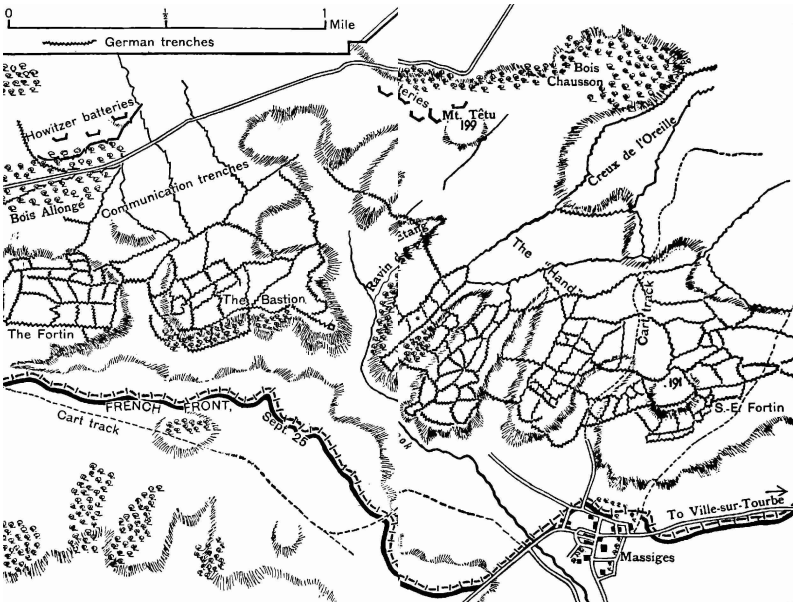
more or less mangled by shot and shell, and in our ears always the groans of the dying and the moaning of the wounded!"

In these days the Germans rushed up all available men to the point of danger, and for that purpose they seem to have drawn on all parts of their line. The most effective were those which appeared at the Hand of Massiges from the Crown Prince's army, to the east. That they had no great body of reserves was shown by the fact that the prisoners taken in Champagne during the first week's fighting belonged to no less than fifty-six different regiments. On the Monday the Crown Prince in the Argonne attempted a diversion. The great attack in Champagne had not been unexpected; but its date and its momentum had been miscalculated, and the diversion was forty hours late. It achieved nothing. The Germans advanced, as in July, on the point called La Fille Morte, and after a gas attack delivered five separate assaults on Humbert's left wing. They won in places a few yards of trenches, but the attack was so weak that not a single man was drawn off to meet it from the Champagne armies.

Sept. 27.

The second great French effort, which we may take as marking the end of the first stage of the battle, was made on Wednesday. The place chosen was to the west of Navarin Farm, where the second position had already been pierced. Such an attack, so soon after the first, could not be delivered with the same vigour. Reconnaissances could not be so complete or the artillery concentration so strong. Yet for one moment the attempt seemed about to be crowned with success. It was at first rumoured that the last German position had been carried on a front of three divisions—say, five kilometres—and all along the Allied lines from Nieuport to Belfort there was a moment of wild anticipation. Men asked each other if the cavalry could go through at last and ride for the key-points of the railways. The rumour was false. The position had been breached, but on a front of less than a kilometre between the Lubeck trench and the coppice called the Chevron Wood. The gap was too narrow for use. The enemy's guns were moved behind it, and poured in a torrent of shell, and all that the French could do was to dig themselves shelter-trenches, and cling to the position under a heavy enfilading fire. There they remained, while the great machine in the rear was nursing its strength for another effort.

Sept. 29.



The German trenches on "La Main" (the Hand) of Massiges and the adjacent heights—ground over which the right of the great French attack was pushed forward.

In every battle there is a large element of sheer luck. Two strategical plans may be equally well laid, but the tactical situation in which they culminate may result in a victory for one and a check or a defeat for the other, though in the latter case it is impossible to point to any error on the part of the High Command. We are too apt, reading history after the event, to regard a battle as the culmination of a strategical purpose. It is often, in fact, such a culmination, but in most cases it is a dramatic end not anticipated, a sudden interruption of a plan where all has to be staked on a single throw, and nine times out of ten good fortune plays a major part in the victory. Hence in judging of the value of a campaign and the merits of a general we should not be too much obsessed by those incidents called battles, and we should remember the element of luck in the most glittering achievements. We should remember, too, that a battle may be lost and the campaign won, and that a series of undisputed victories may still leave the campaign a failure. "Justice would rather demand that the great captain should be judged by the light in the eyes of his men, by the endurance under him of immense fatigues, by the exact accomplishment of one hundred separate things a day, clearly designed and remembered, by his grasp of great sweeps of landscape, by his digestion of maps and horizons, and finally and particularly by this—that the great captain, whether he loses or

he wins, *risks* well: he smells the adventure of war, and is the opposite of those who, whether in their fortunes or their bodies, chiefly seek security."[5]

The Battle of Champagne was clearly not a battle in the old sense of the word. It was not a tactical accident, but a strategic move, and it is, perhaps, more properly regarded as a campaign. But it was a campaign stripped of all ordinary strategy. There could be no subtle reading of the enemy's mind and plan, for his purpose was obvious—to sit still. There could be no lightning movements and sudden surprises, for the *terrain* was inexorably delimited. There could be no flanking movements, for there were no flanks. The tactics of the advance were determined by iron necessity—a frontal attack in the hope of piercing the enemy's position. The Germans knew the French aim and the French methods; General de Castelnau knew with equal clearness the German modes of defence. The situation was exactly that of the siege of a fortress—a straightforward trial of strength. Both sides were approximately equal, if we allow the intricacy of the German defences to balance the greater numbers of the French troops.

Now in a struggle between forces approximately equal it is luck which turns the scale. A little extra good fortune—a weakening at a vital point, an unexpected celerity in the handling of guns, any one of those thousand chances which may happen in action—would have taken de Castelnau through the German front. He had the right to hope for such fortune, but it did not come. For a moment it looked as if the game were won, but the defence was too strong to fall at the first attack. The Allies must still sit down in front of the fort and prepare for the next assault. But the outer works had crumbled, and the main wall of the citadel had been weakened. To change the metaphor, de Castelnau had not yet opened wide the gate, but he had shattered the bolts and forced it ajar.

It is well to remember what such fighting meant for the men engaged in it. In other battles there have been advances under desperate fire, but they have been short, and have been cheered by the hope of a rout and a pursuit. But this warfare involved an endless procession under the heaviest shelling known to history. When one trench was cleared another awaited, and there was no respite for a second from the tornado of the defence's fire. We praise the *élan* of the Napoleonic armies, but what degree of courage and vigour was needed to drive forward an assault which could not lead to the rout of the enemy, but only pave the way for another desperate attack, and still another? We praise the discipline of those marvellous armies of the eighteenth century, with their inhuman steadiness under fire. There was Marlborough's attack on the Schellenberg, when he lost in one hour more

than a third of his men, and the Guards had twelve officers down out of seventeen. There was the great attack by Cutts's left on Blenheim village, when Row led his men steadily up under the French volleys till he tapped the palisade with his sword. Most famous case of all, there was the advance of Cumberland's centre at Fontenoy, up to within fifty yards of the French guard, when Lord Charles Hay toasted the enemy, and the British looked coolly at a row of muzzles till the order came for their volley. Or, to take an instance from the end of the old *régime*, there were the Prussian infantry, who, on the day of Jena, faced Lannes at the village of Vierzehnheiligen, and for two hours stood dressed in line volleying at sheltered enemies, because these were their orders. Such discipline was equalled by the troops who pushed from trench to trench in the mire and rain of the Champagne battle. The new armies of France united the drive and surge of the Grande Armée and the ordered steadfastness of the men of Marlborough and Frederick.

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[1] Hence the song of Dumouriez's men:—

"Savez-vous la belle histoire
De ces fameux Prussiens?
Ils marchaient à la victoire
Avec les Autrichiens;
Au lieu de palme et de gloire
Ils ont cueilli des raisins."

[2] Of the strength of the German position one observer wrote (*Times*, November 16, 1915): "One striking sign of their confidence was the number and size of the underground refuges, more than 20 feet deep, which they had laboriously carved out of the solid chalk all along the line. In one small sector there were 150 of them, strongly buttressed with stout timber props, and fitted with double rows of berths for a large number of men. This solidity is typical of the whole scheme of the defences. In that twenty miles of front there are hundreds and hundreds of miles of trenches and light railways. The line is so irregular, and so broken up by salients, big and little, that almost everywhere it could be defended by lateral as well as by direct frontal fire."

[3] The story is told in Mr. Winston Churchill's *The River War*.

[4] It may be paralleled by the story of the volunteer cadets of Saint-Cyr, who went into their first action wearing white gloves, as a girl wears white for her first communion.

[5] H. Belloc, *Blenheim*.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE ADVANCE IN THE NORTH: THE BATTLE OF LOOS.

The Plan in the North—Subsidiary to Champagne Operations—D'Urbal's Attack in the Artois—Souchez captured—The French take the Heights of Vimy—Nature of Fighting—The British Holding Battles—Hooge—Le Bridoux—Attack by Indian Corps—Givenchy—Difficulty of Holding Actions—The Main British Attack—Description of *Terrain*—British Dispositions—German Dispositions—Advance of 9th Division—Capture of Fosse 8 and Hohenzollern Redoubt—7th Division enter Cité St. Elie and Haisnes—1st Division enter Hulluch—Advance of 47th London Division—Advance of 15th Division—Capture of Loos—Capture of Hill 70—Highlanders reach Cité St. Auguste—The Ebb of the Attack—The Available Reserves—The 21st and 24th Divisions—Critical Position on Sunday—Cavalry Brigade comes up—Achievement of 15th Division—Loss of Fosse 8—Advance of Guards Division—British Line on 1st October—Sir John French's Order to his Troops—Results of Action—Losses.

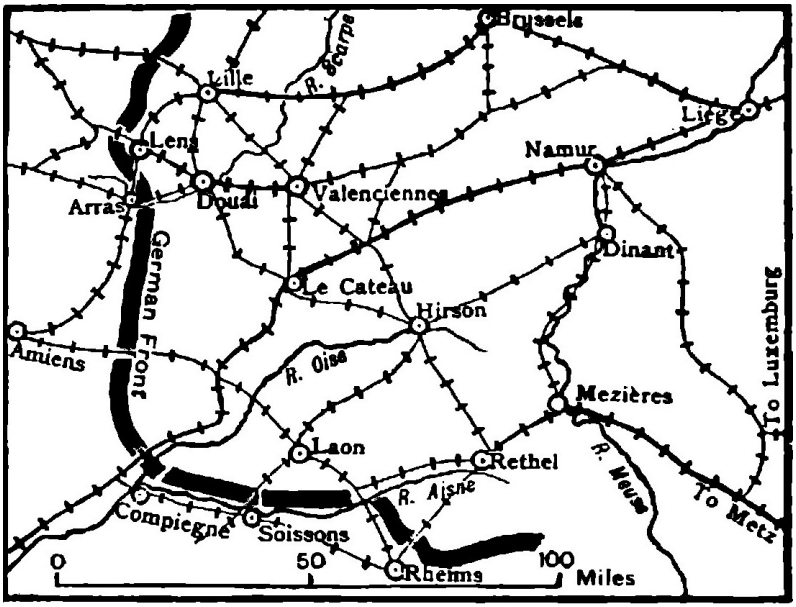
Sept. 25.

The attack in the north which was launched on the 25th of September was a movement subsidiary to the great effort in Champagne. While it was under the general direction of General Foch, the details were left to two different commands—the French 10th Army and the British First and Second Armies. There was a smaller concentration of men and guns than in the south, and inevitably there was less co-ordination in the parts. We may divide it into two main operations—D'Urbal's attack upon the Vimy Heights and the advance of the British First Army against the line La Bassée-Haisnes-Hulluch-Loos. Both had the same purpose—to isolate the railway junction of Lens and open the road into the plain of the Scheldt. In addition, four attacks were undertaken north of the La Bassée Canal—one by the British 2nd Division from Givenchy; one by the Indian Corps from Neuve Chapelle; one by the Third Corps from Bois Grenier; and one by the Fifth Corps in the south of the Ypres salient. These were secondary attacks, designed to distract the attention of certain parts of the German front. But it should be noted that the main attacks from La Bassée southwards were themselves, in a sense, subsidiary to the Champagne operations. They were not aimed at gaining ground in the same

sense as de Castelnau's great movement, though it was hoped that much ground would be won. Their purpose would be served if they so engaged the German northern forces that no thinning of their ranks was possible by way of reinforcements for the south.

It may fairly be assumed that the fact that the Artois attack was not the main movement of the Allies was partly responsible for certain misfortunes in the handling of the troops. For what happened was that almost by accident the British force did find a real weakness in one section of the German front, and, had the plan been to push through at all costs, a comprehensive disaster might have overtaken the enemy in the north. But for this success we were not prepared. Reserves were not ready in time, or in sufficient strength. The lesser gain which we had anticipated was secured, the greater success slipped from hands unprepared to receive it. This was true not only of the push towards Lens, but, as we shall see, of at least one of the lesser movements farther north. It was the kind of misfortune which is frequent in an assault upon a long front, and it was made almost inevitable by the fact that the British army formed a quasi-independent command. In spite of the closest and most cordial relations, operations controlled by two separate staffs, differing in quality and methods, are not likely to reach complete co-ordination or a uniform strength at every point.

In considering the complex fighting along a front of nearly fifty miles, it will be well to deal first with the doings of the French 10th Army, which had a clear objective in a self-contained *terrain*; then to consider the various holding battles fought north of the La Bassée Canal; and lastly, to describe in some detail the great movement which captured Loos, and for a moment shook the whole German northern front.



Map showing the strategical significance of the Artois attack.

D'Urbal's 10th Army, which had been increased to some seventeen divisions, on the morning of 25th September held a line from the British right at Grenay, past Aix Noulette, to the west side of Souchez village. Thence it ran just east of Neuville St. Vaast into that tangle of trenches between the roads from Arras to La Bassée and to Lens which was known as the Labyrinth. The old Labyrinth had been long ago in French hands; but since May it had extended itself, and some of the eastern trenches up to the Lens road were held by the Germans. The aim of the attack was the same as that of the battles of the early summer. East of Souchez a tiny river of the same name runs among meadows. On the west bank is a coppice called the Wood of Hache, and across the stream a little to the south a larger woodland, called the Wood of Givenchy. Just east of the trees lies the village of Givenchy-en-Gohelle, at the junction of several roads; and south and west are the slopes of the Vimy Heights. These are not high—the flat top is just over 400 feet—but they command Vimy station and the railway between Lens and Arras, and give a prospect over rolling slopes away to the valley of the Scarpe. One other point must be noted. On the southern slope, looking over the Labyrinth, lies the village of Thelus. From Souchez to Thelus the Heights of Vimy are roughly in the shape of a half-moon. The position on this day was held by the Germans with nine divisions, mainly Saxon, including what remained of the old 12th Corps.

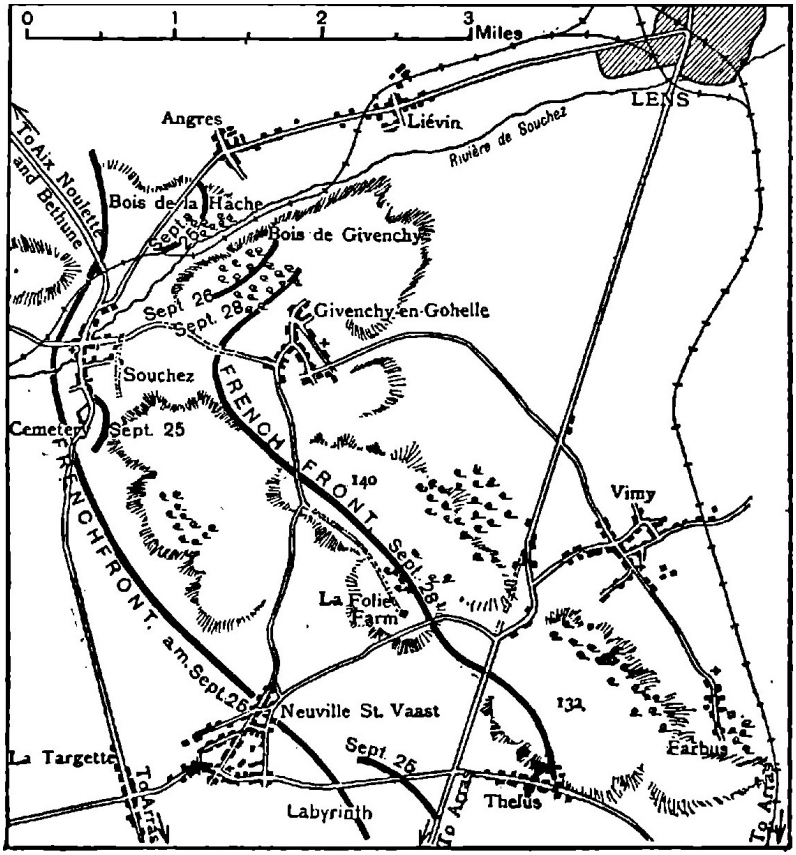
The French bombardment had been heavy for three weeks. Early on the morning of 25th September it stopped. The Germans, expecting an infantry attack, manned what was left of their front trenches, but no infantry came. Instead, the French turned their 75's on the first line, and caused great slaughter. Once again the bombardment began, and the British troops, fighting at Loos, could see nothing in the south but a pall of smoke torn by flashes of fire.

For some reason not yet clear the French infantry attack did not begin till one o'clock, seven hours after the British in the north had gone over their parapets. At the same moment seven mines were exploded along the enemy's front, and under cover of the cloud of dust the French sprang from their trenches. The bombardment had done its work, but the position was still strong. There were three German lines west of the Souchez stream; and the remnants of the village, where no house was left standing, were held by machine guns in the cellars. The first trench was cleared, and on the French left the Germans were driven into the little Wood of Hache. The second trench was in the wood, and this and the third line, on the west bank of the stream, were quickly taken. Then came a counter-attack, heralded by a heavy bombardment, and conducted by troops in close formation, armed with grenades. Far into the misty twilight the struggle went on, and just at the darkness the enemy was pushed back across the river. In front of Souchez the centre prospered less. The cemetery was taken, but no impression could be made on the village itself. On their right the French took the last trenches of the Labyrinth, and so cleared that death-trap. Night fell on an inconclusive battle. Much had been won, but the attack was still far from the Heights of Vimy.

Sept. 26.

Next morning the weather had cleared. A strong west wind and a bright sky attended the second phase of the contest. On that day, as we shall see later, the British in the north were being heavily counter-attacked, and it would appear that the enemy at the moment had insufficient reserves to meet two strong attacks on adjoining sectors at the same time. At any rate, the French won remarkable successes. On their right they gained a position north of Thelus, on the lower slopes of Vimy. On their left the chasseurs carried the line of the Souchez River, crossing the water by means of planks left by the Germans, under a devastating artillery fire. It was a splendid feat of arms, for the German guns had the exact range, but the blue coats did not waver. With the bayonet they took the German trench on the east bank, and charged into the Wood of Givenchy, now little more than a mass of splinters. Here there was heavy fighting, the chasseurs sheltering behind tree-stumps and in shell-holes, and

bombing their way yard by yard. They had had a piece of unexpected good fortune, for they had captured a large stock of German grenades, and hoisted the enemy with his own petard. By the evening they had won the greater part of the wood, and were well up the north-west side of the Vimy slopes.



The Offensive in the North.—The French Attack on Souchez and the Vimy Heights.

That day, too, the centre carried Souchez village, and ferreted some 700 Germans out of the cellars. The place was now a naked desolation, a monument to the destructive power of the great guns. “It is not,” wrote one observer, “that there is not one stone left upon another; it is that there is not a whole stone or whole brick left; everything, except wood, which still resists in blackened splinters, has been ground to powder. The whole configuration of the place has been changed beyond recognition. One cannot trace the outline of a road or house. Where there was a hill, a series of big

shells has made a hollow and a pond; where there was a hollow, the debris and brick-dust have made a hill."

Sept. 27-28.

On Monday the French were busy reorganizing and consolidating their front. On Tuesday, a cold, grey day, they began their final movement against the Heights. The Germans had received reinforcements, perhaps as much as three corps, and among them were two divisions of the Prussian Guard. These troops had been brought some weeks earlier from the Eastern front to recuperate in the West, and had been made up to strength by the inclusion of large drafts from the Landsturm. It was strange to observe among the prisoners middle-aged, unmilitary figures, who were classed as Prussian Guards. The French guns played on the slopes, and the whole French line fought its way foot by foot up the terraced and honeycombed hillside. The same observer whom we have already quoted has described the difficulties of the task.

> "Half way up the slopes of Vimy there is a *chemin creux*, a sunk fence with a road running parallel with the crest. The Germans had burrowed from the edge of the road nearest the French deep down into the hillside, cutting flights of steps down into great subterranean shelters, each capable of holding half a company. All these shelters were connected by underground passages, and the road itself was cut up into sections by barricades; so that if a storming party succeeded in jumping into the road, they would be in possession of only a section of the position, and would be exposed to a cross fire from the barricades, while underground the Germans could concentrate their troops on any threatened section. During the bombardment the German troops stood on the steps leading down to the shelters; and when the French infantry reached the parapet, and leapt down into what seemed to be an unoccupied trench, they were shot down by the Germans on the steps, who were invisible from above. They were not slow, however, to grasp the situation, and, as they sprang into the trench, every man who was not shot down turned hastily round and, hurled his grenade with deadly effect into the closely-packed mass of men on the steps."

Sept. 29.

By Wednesday morning the Vimy Heights had been won. The French position was just behind the crest, and all the western slopes and most of the Givenchy Wood was in their hands. It was a fine achievement, and cost the enemy much in dead,

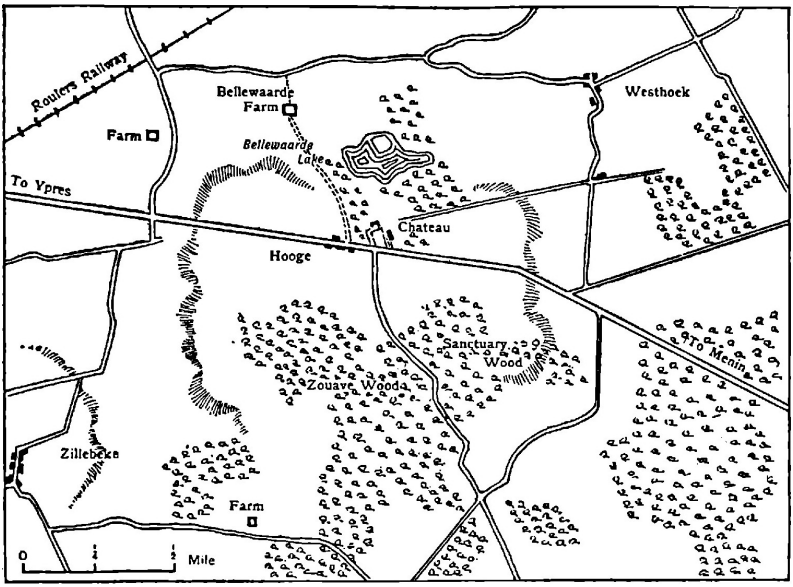
wounded, and prisoners. The next step was to clear the Vimy plateau and the eastern slopes, but the situation to the north made it necessary to hold back. The British line was very thin, and it had extended east of Loos in a deep salient beyond the French alignment, so that its right flank was to some extent in the air. General Joffre accordingly requested General Foch to strengthen the British front by taking over the south side of that salient. The 9th Corps was sent to Loos; and by the first days of October, French forces composed the pincers menacing Lens from north and south. The change, apart from the relief it afforded to the British front, was in itself desirable. If a "pinching" movement against Lens was to be undertaken, it was expedient that it should be under a single command.

In considering the various minor actions on the British front, we may begin with that fought in the Ypres salient. The advance of 9th August, it will be remembered, had brought the British line on the south side of the salient to a point west of the Bellewaarde Lake, then east of the shell-hole called the Crater, whence it ran south of the highroad into Sanctuary Wood, at the northern corner of which was a dangerous German *fortin*. The whole Ypres region was strongly held by the enemy. From there, if from anywhere, reinforcements could be sent south; and it was essential to detain the left wing of the Duke of Wurtemberg's command. The force actually holding the Hooge ground on the morning of 25th September was a Reserve Division and one regiment of the 15th (Alsace) Corps north of the Menin road, and the rest of that corps extending south through Sanctuary Wood. The British attack was entrusted to General Allenby's Fifth Corps, which for the purpose borrowed the 14th Division from the Sixth Corps. This 14th Division had been engaged in the Hooge fighting of 30th July, and had suffered severely. It was now more seasoned to war, and eager for its revenge.

Sept. 24.

All day on the 24th Ypres was heavily shelled. But Ypres was no longer the neck of the bottle. We had other ways of bringing up troops and supports to the salient, and the bombardment of the ruined city did little harm. At four o'clock on the morning of the 25th we began our final bombardment of the Hooge trenches. At 4.30 we exploded a mine north of the road, and a few minutes later the attack was launched by General Haldane's 3rd Division on the right and General Couper's 14th Division on the left. On the left we were attacking Bellewaarde Farm, and on our right moving towards the fortress in the north of Sanctuary Wood.

Sept. 25.

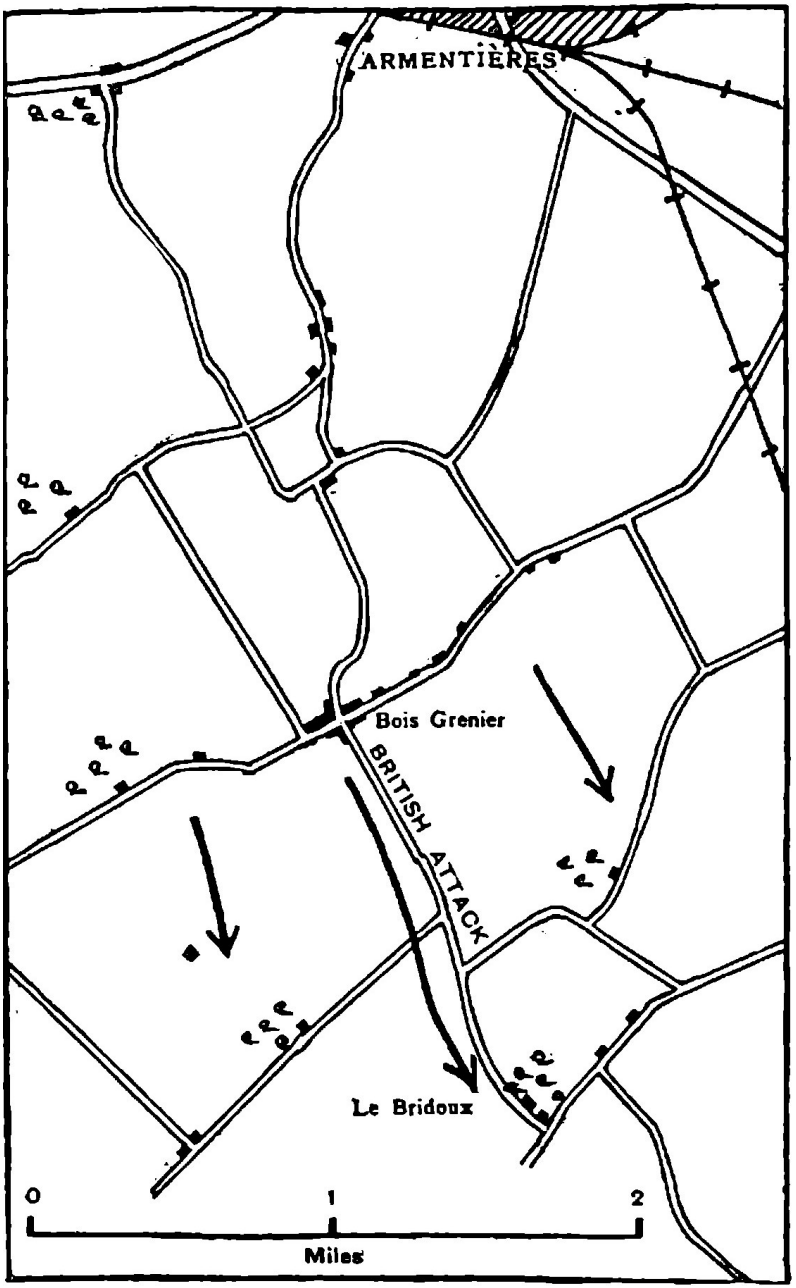


The Hooge Area.

The Germans, except in the area of the exploded mine, were not taken by surprise. They had looked for an attack in the salient, and the bombardment of their right wing on the coast by a squadron of the British Fleet under Admiral Bacon seems to have convinced them that here the main British effort was to be made. When the assault began they hurried up reserves from farther south of their front, thereby admirably assisting the Allied purpose. But no forewarning enabled them to support the shock of the British infantry. Presently the whole of their first line gave way. Bellewaarde Farm and the ridge on which it stood were carried,[1] and south of the Menin road we advanced for 600 yards. Two officers and 138 rank and file of the 15th Corps were taken prisoners.

But gains on the Ypres salient were hard to hold. The big guns from the Passchendaele ridge and from the neighbourhood of Hill 60 on the south came into play against our new front. Moreover the Germans had a far greater artillery concentration behind their lines. The Bellewaarde ridge could not be maintained, and long before the evening our left was driven back to its old line. But south of the highway we clung to some of the ground we had won, and managed to consolidate our position. It may fairly be said that the thrust at Hooge completely fulfilled its purpose. We had occupied the attention of at least three German corps, while greater matters were in progress in the south.[2]

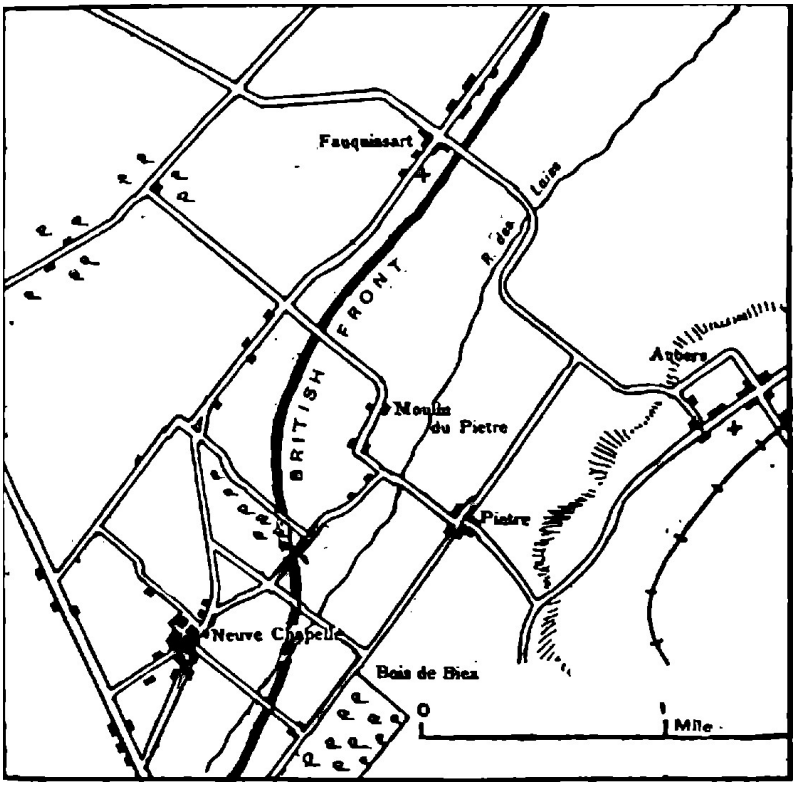
The second of the minor operations was that undertaken by General Pulteney's Third Corps. Its front before and south-west of Armentières was held from left to right by the 27th Division, the 8th Division, and the 20th Division of the New Army. The attack in this section was made by the 8th Division,[3] the division which had fought at Neuve Chapelle, and had attacked at Fromelles on the 9th of May. It moved from in front of Bois Grenier against the German trenches at Le Bridoux. The attack was timed to begin before dawn at 4.30 a.m. on the 25th, after the usual bombardment. The first charge went well, save at a point in the centre where a German searchlight revealed the movement, and one unit was held up by a deadly fire from machine guns. Except at this point the whole German first line was carried; and by six o'clock a large part of the second line was taken, when the guns lengthened their range and played on the enemy's third line. By this time the Germans were recovering from the first shock, and a strong counter-attack with bombs was delivered. Our advance had been uneven, and while the wings were far forward the German centre formed a wedge which exposed us to enfilading fire, and checked effective communication between our units. The 25th Brigade on our right did well, notably the 2nd Rifle Brigade, whose bombing work was highly effective. The 2nd Lincolns stormed the redoubt of Le Bridoux, taking eighty prisoners; and the 2nd Berkshires took the work called "The Lozenge," where 100 German dead were counted. By three o'clock in the afternoon the action was closed, for it had abundantly achieved its object. Our troops were withdrawn in perfect order, and thanks to the heroism of the stretcher-bearers, all our wounded were safely brought in. This affair was a model of what a holding battle should be—an advance not pushed beyond the possibility of an orderly retirement, but conducted with sufficient vigour to absorb the whole energies of the immediate enemy front.[4]



The Bois Grenier Area.

The third operation, which took place just north of Neuve Chapelle, is still shrouded in mystery. No battle in the campaign was fought in a thicker fog of uncertainty, and, while the main details are plain, it is still impossible

to be clear as to the why and wherefore of the movements. At this time the Indian Corps, under General Anderson, held the line from Fauquissart through Neuve Chapelle to the neighbourhood of Festubert. It had on its left the 20th Division of the Third Corps, and it linked up on its right with the 2nd Division of the First Corps at Givenchy. Its dispositions were as follows: On the left lay the Meerut Division, under General Jacob—the Bareilly Brigade and the Garwhal Brigade being in the first line and the Dehra Dun Brigade in reserve. Then came General Keary's Lahore Division—the Ferozepore and Julundur Brigades in line, and the Sirhind Brigade in reserve. On its right was one brigade of General Fasken's 19th Division of the New Army, the other two being in reserve. The main movement on the 25th of September was to be that of the Meerut Division, whose line ran roughly from a little east of Fauquissart to the place called the Duck's Bill, north-east of Neuve Chapelle village. In front of it lay the Moulin du Piètre, for which we had struggled fruitlessly on the second day of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. A thousand yards beyond that point was the first swell of the Aubers ridge, the village of Aubers being about a mile and three-quarters from the British lines.



Moulin du Piètre Area.

The orders seem to have been for the Meerut Division to attack strongly towards the Moulin du Pietre. The Lahore Division was to follow in support on the right, but the Meerut was to press the main attack. At dawn there was an elaborate artillery bombardment in the sections of both divisions, but that in the Lahore area was insufficient. The Meerut Division loosed a cloud of gas, but in the mist and drizzle, with only a light wind behind it, the gas clung to the ground; and when the Bareilly and Garwhal Brigades went over their parapets, they suffered from it in spite of their helmets.

The brigades met with little resistance. In their first rush they took three or four successive lines of German trenches, and pressed on towards the Aubers slopes. They did not follow the French practice of leaving clearing parties to occupy the captured positions, assuming, not unreasonably, that supports would follow and perform that task. They raced impetuously into the mist, and disappeared from the ken of the British front.

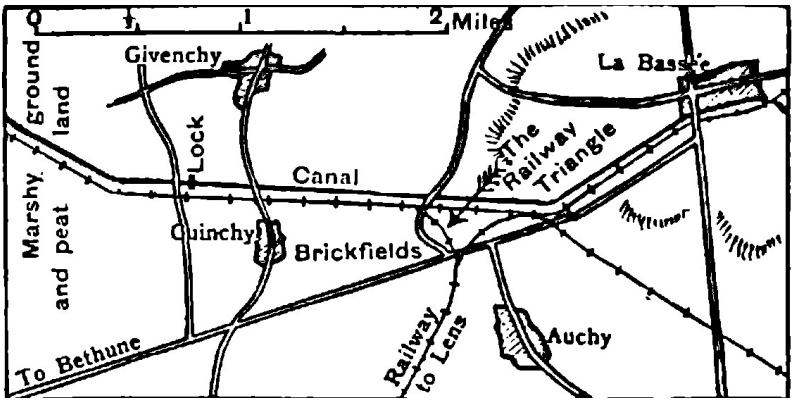
Then followed a strange situation. The Germans reoccupied the trenches in the rear of the attacking brigades, and bombed them from behind. There

was no adequate support from our heavy artillery, most of its ammunition having been expended in the preliminary bombardment. In the foggy weather, made thicker by the fumes of gas and lyddite and asphyxiating shells, men lost their way, orders miscarried, and all morning there was a wild confusion. A German counter-attack drove in the line of the 20th Division on the left, and thereby exposed the flank of the attack. The Lahore Division advanced a little way from their trenches, found the enemy's defences still unbroken, and returned. The Dehra Dun Brigade, the reserves of the Meerut Division, moved up to the first trenches and stayed there. They had no orders, and could find no one to give them any. If they raised their heads above the parapet they were shot down by the Germans in the front enemy trenches, which the attacking brigades were by way of having captured. Meanwhile these brigades were somewhere far forward in the gloom, completely cut off by the enemy. All day there was a curious stillness, broken only by intermittent firing from the Moulin du Piètre region. The attack had vanished, and the whole plan of operations had dissolved. No doubt much of the blame was to be attributed to the weather and the difficult conditions of the attack, but there must have been some defect in the co-ordination of the movement to make so wholesale a confusion possible.

Meanwhile, the devoted brigades were fighting a hopeless battle inside the enemy's lines. Their impetus, which with adequate support might have carried the Aubers ridge, ebbed under the encircling counter-attacks. Nothing was left but to fight their way back. This they achieved with many casualties. The Bareilly Brigade came out 1,600 strong. Its two British battalions, the 2nd and 4th Black Watch, which had advanced with the pipes playing, were so reduced that they had to be amalgamated. The remnant of the 2nd Leicesters, one of the hardest-fighting units in the Army, did not return till the following day. A tribute should be paid to the splendid quality of the British battalions in the Indian Corps.[5] In the battle of December 19-22, 1914, at Neuve Chapelle, and in the fierce struggle of 9th May, they had acquitted themselves like heroes, and again and again redeemed a lost situation. On 25th September they showed their old prowess, but on a fruitless field. The action—whether by malign conditions or by a defect in leadership—had been too costly to rank as a legitimate holding battle.[6]

The fourth of the minor actions was fought by troops of the 2nd Division, assisted by part of the 19th Division, in front and south of Givenchy. So far as *terrain* was concerned, it was the most vital, for the great thrust was being made south of La Bassée; and, if the movement on

the north succeeded, La Bassée would be enclosed between two fires. But the Givenchy district, as we knew from bitter experience, with its brickfields and lines of railway and canal, was one of the strongest fortresses in the German front. Of this fine action we have as yet few tactical details. Some advance was made, and part of the German first line was occupied; but since no reserves were available, our gains had to be relinquished before the evening. In the attack on the right by General Daly's 6th Brigade, the 2nd South Staffords made a gallant and fruitless effort against the Railway Triangle. Yet the movement had effected its purpose. It had detained considerable German forces, which might otherwise have been used against the main armies to the south.



The Givenchy Area.

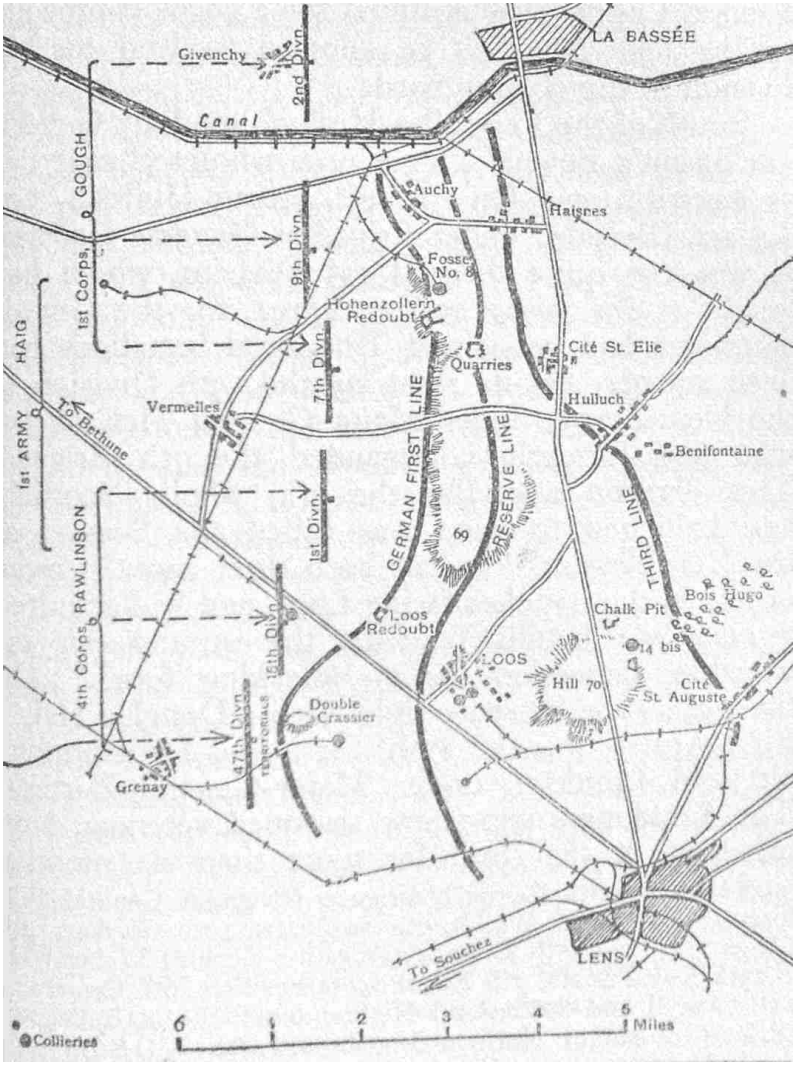
Apart from local failures, we may consider that the series of lesser actions on 25th September won a reasonable success. It should not be forgotten that in a large concerted movement the troops who have to fight containing battles have the most difficult task of all. They have none of the exhilaration of a great advance; they have usually but a small artillery support; their line may be none too strong. Their business is to hold the greatest possible number of the enemy, and it is generally a costly business. They are fighting for somebody else to win. The battalions in the main movement earn high honour, but let us not forget those others whose duty it is to stand and wait. They capture no great position, but without their aid no position would be captured.

We come now to the main British attack, which was directed against the German line from the La Bassée Canal to the slopes in front of Grenay. The elements of the ground are simple. The German front ran south from the rise

of Auchy La Bassée over a flattish tract to the Vermelles-Hulluch road. Thence a long low swell runs southwards, on the west side of which the German lines continued just below the crest till the Béthune-Lens road was reached. South of that the British held the crown of the ridge to Grenay. Several points in the enemy front need to be remembered. A mile west of Haisnes stands a slag-heap marked on the map as Fosse 8, which lay about half a mile inside the German line, and commanded all the country to the south. South of that, and about a mile and a quarter west of Cité St. Elie, a great redoubt, the Hohenzollern, had been pushed out some five hundred yards in front of the line. It was connected with the main front by two trenches, known to our men as "Big Willie" and "Little Willie," and also with the defences of Fosse 8. South of this was another work, the Kaiser Wilhelm; and three-quarters of a mile north-west of Loos, on the summit of the ridge, was a strong fort, the Loos Road Redoubt, where a track from Vermelles crossed the downs. Just opposite Grenay is a large slag-heap, called the Double Grassier. Behind the German front was a string of mining villages—Haisnes in the north, a mile and a half from La Bassée; Cité St. Elie, a mile south, on the Lens road; Hulluch, half a mile farther, and a little to the east, a village strung out along a little stream; Loos, two miles to the south-west, and about the same distance from Lens. Loos lies in a shallow hollow, and to the south-east rise farther slopes, the highest point being marked on the map as Hill 70. From Hill 70 the ground falls away eastwards to the hamlet of Cité St. Auguste, about a mile from Lens, and virtually a suburb of that place. All these points were strongly fortified, and there were, besides, a number of other slag-heaps, pits, and natural features which lent themselves to defence. The most notable were the Quarries, half-way between the German front and Cité St. Elie; the Chalk Pit, three-quarters of a mile north-east of Loos; and the Pit No. 14 *bis*, between the Chalk Pit and Hill 70. The German reserve position was roughly just west of Loos, and west of the Quarries. The final position, so far as it was located, ran from west of Cité St. Auguste northwards, behind the string of fortified villages, Hulluch and Benifontaine, Cité St. Elie and Haisnes.

The landscape, as seen from some one of the slag-heaps behind the British front, was curiously open. The opposing trench lines showed up clearly in the coarse chalk, and the country seemed a dead-flat plain, scarred with roads and studded with the headgear of collieries and mean little red houses. But this openness was deceptive. Every acre had its possibility of a fortress, and the long downs west of Loos screened at least half of the hinterland. Still, as compared with the Flanders battlefields, it was a clear *terrain*, where artillery could operate to some extent by direct observation,

and where, in case of success, cavalry might be used. There was scarcely a tree to be seen except in the south, where several small coppices cloaked the north-eastern slopes of Hill 70. But for the collieries and slag-heaps the place had something of the air of the South African veld, coarse grasses and self-sown crops being scattered sparsely over the baked gray soil. The land was well-drained, but two hundred years ago it was swampy, and even to-day after rain the mud might be formidable. It had been part of the field of Marlborough's Flanders campaign, and it was between Hulluch and Cuinchy that Villars, on June 14, 1709, began to construct the first section of the famous "Lines of La Bassée."



Battle of Loos.—The Front from La Bassée to Grenay, showing the British dispositions.

The disposition of the British forces must be carefully noted. From Givenchy to the Vermelles-Hulluch road lay the First Corps, under General Hubert Gough. The bulk of General Horne's 2nd Division on its left was engaged in the subsidiary attack from Givenchy. Opposite Fosse 8, in the centre, lay the 9th Division[7] of the New Army. It had been originally commanded by Major-General Landon, formerly of the 3rd Brigade, but he had been compelled by ill-health to hand over his command to Major-General George Thesiger. On the right, facing Cité St. Elie, was the famous

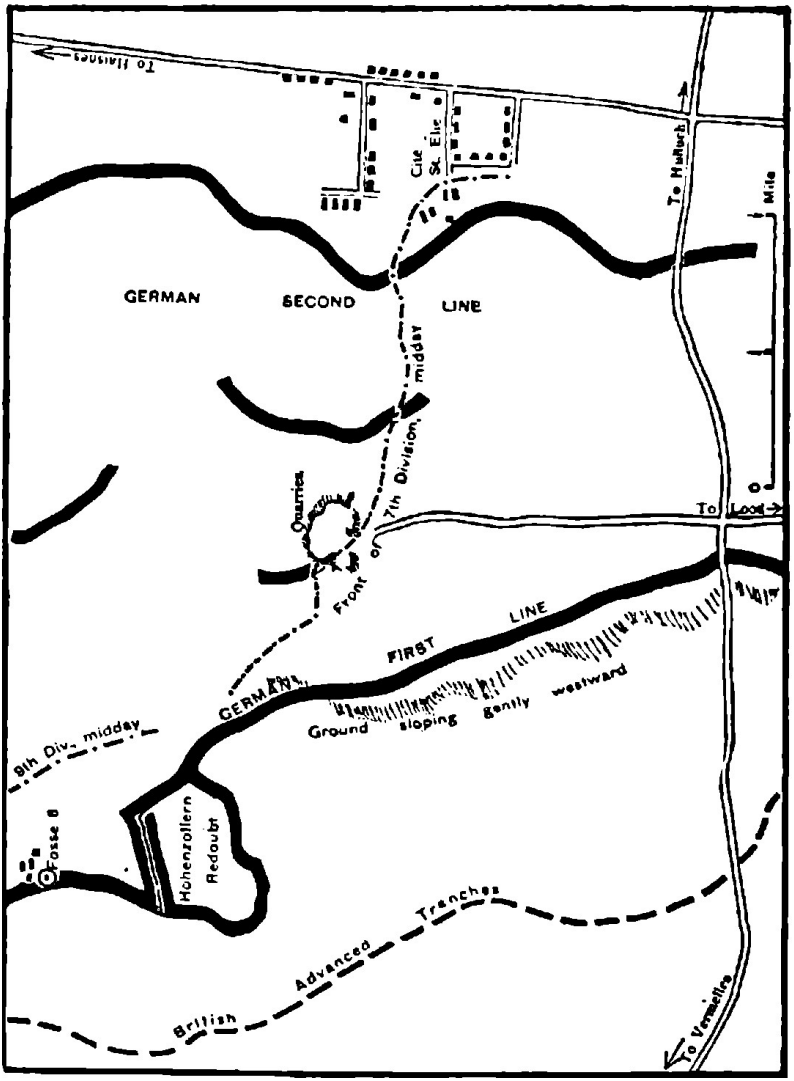
7th Division, under Major-General Sir Thompson Capper. General Capper was destined for a corps command, but he had asked to be allowed to lead his old division in the coming battle.

South of the Vermelles-Hulluch road lay General Rawlinson's Fourth Corps, now wholly changed in its constitution. On the left, facing Hulluch, was the 1st Division, under Brigadier-General Holland. It was not quite the old 1st Division which had fought at the Aisne and at Ypres, for the Guards battalions had gone, and Territorial battalions had been added. On its right lay the 15th Division of the New Army, under Major-General McCracken, who had formerly commanded the 7th Brigade. This division was, like the 9th, wholly Scottish, and belonged to what was called the Second of the New Armies. It had been three months more or less in the trenches facing Loos, and had acquired a complete familiarity with the ground—an invaluable possession for an attacking force.[8] On the right—the extreme right of Sir Douglas Haig's First Army—was the 47th Territorial Division (the old 2nd London), under Major-General Barter.[9] The Londoners were now seasoned veterans, having been at the front for more than six months, and having greatly distinguished themselves in the May battles around Festubert. They lay in front of Grenay, facing the south end of Loos and the big slag-heap called the Double Crassier.

The German forces holding this section were the 4th (Silesia) Corps, largely recruited from the Slav population of the Polish frontier. As reserves they had behind them a portion of the Prussian Guard. They were confident in the strength of their position, which, indeed, could hardly have been bettered. Fosse 8, and the rows of mining cottages clustered about its foot, the Hohenzollern Redoubt, the Loos Road and Lens Road Redoubts, and the Double Crassier—besides the endless points of vantage behind them—gave them excellent observation posts and ideal ground for machine guns. They believed that an attack, even if it carried the first fire trenches, would shipwreck grievously on the deadly labyrinth behind them. The Hohenzollern was a typical example of German skill and industry in this kind of fortification. It was shaped like a pear, with its broad end pointing northwards, and had a frontage of some 500 yards. From the south end the trench called "Big Willie," and from the north end "Little Willie," ran back to the main line. The work was situated on a gentle rise, with before it a clear field of fire, every inch of which could be swept by the machine guns inside. From end to end ran a main trench, from which cross trenches radiated to the extremities, and each trench was studded with machine-gun

emplacements. The troops which had to cross the open in the assault might look for severe handling.

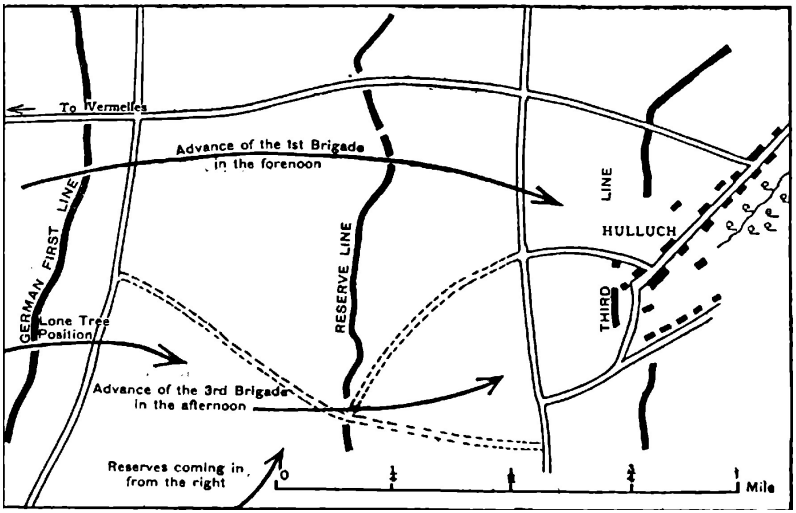
At 6.30 on 25th September, when the great bombardment slackened, the 9th Division made for Fosse 8 and the Hohenzollern. On the extreme left the fire from the rise at Auchy La Bassée enfiladed the advance, and the 28th Brigade had desperate fighting. They pushed beyond the Vermelles-La Bassée railway, and took the first line of the German trenches. But the position was too precarious to hold, and slowly during the day the Lowlanders were driven back. Meanwhile the 26th Highland Brigade had succeeded better with the Hohenzollern. Saps had been run up to within a short distance of "Little Willie," and the artillery bombardment had played havoc with the interior of the redoubt. It was taken, but not without heavy losses, and the 5th Camerons and the 7th Seaforths, with the 8th Black Watch in support, captured Fosse 8 after a violent struggle. They had to advance over a perfectly bare, shell-swept piece of ground; the machine guns on the Fosse played on them unmercifully; and, owing to the hold-up of the advance on their left, their flank was in the air. The 27th Brigade was brought up, and was employed to clear the maze of trenches and cottages to the east of Fosse 8. By midday this section of the British line had driven forward in a broad salient, capturing the chief works of the enemy. But our gains were precarious. Fosse 8 was cleared but not occupied in strength, for our reserves were scanty, and all the land between it and Haisnes was filled with isolated *fortins* and sections of trenches still held by the enemy's machine guns.



Battle of Loos.—Ground won by the 9th and 7th Divisions by midday, September 26.

On the right of the 9th Division the 7th Division had made good progress. With no Fosse or Hohenzollern to hold them back, they swept forward across the first German position. They reached the western side of the Quarries, where a sector of the German second line, strongly posted, held up that part of the advance. Their van entered the village of Cité St. Elie, and then pushed northwards, and by ten o'clock in the forenoon had actually reached the village of Haisnes. Had the advance been made in greater strength it might have caught between two fires the Germans still

clinging to the eastern skirts of Fosse 8 and the Hohenzollern. As it was, the extreme ground won could not be maintained. The hold on Haisnes slackened, and by midday the line of the 7th Division ran from the western end of Cité St. Elie to the west side of the Quarries, and so north to the right of the 9th Division east of the Hohenzollern. We held a trench line at the Quarries looking across to the German position on the other side, while between them at the bottom of the hole lay a German howitzer battery, which we could not get near enough to destroy or the enemy to use.



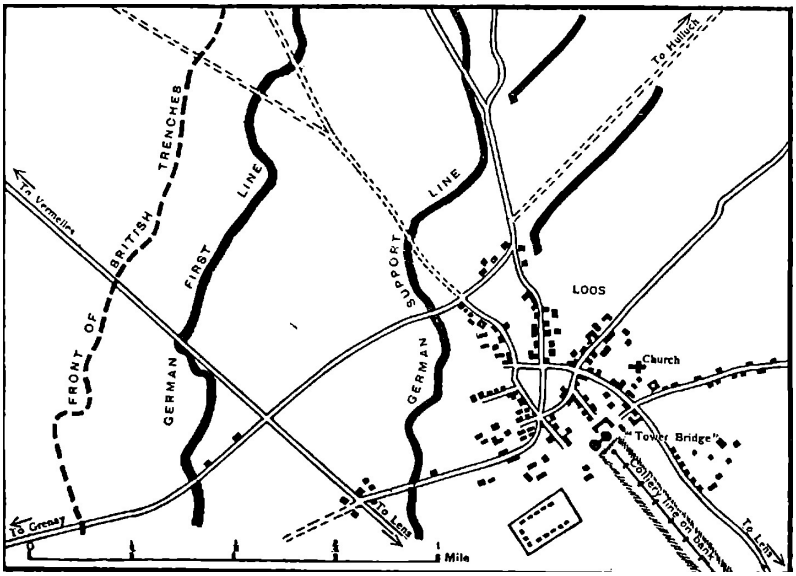
Advance of the 1st Division against Hulluch Village. September 26.

But it was farther south, in the sector of the Fourth Corps, that the advance reached its height. We have seen that the left south of the Vermelles-Hulluch road was held by the 1st Division. Its attack was made by two brigades, and the 1st Brigade on the left had a straight course. It swept forward for a mile and three-quarters, and early in the forenoon was in the outskirts of Hulluch, and up against the German last position. This charge was the more splendid, since its right was in the air. The 2nd Brigade, on the right, found themselves held by the German first position near the spot called Lone Tree, where the parapets and wire had been insufficiently destroyed by our bombardment. They had to lie pinned to the earth till afternoon, when it was found possible to send in the divisional reserves through the great rent torn by the 15th Division to the south. This brought them in on the flank of a German detachment, 700 strong, which was completely cut off and captured. The whole division was then able to advance, and take position on the ground won by the 1st Brigade.[10]

We now reach the brilliant advance made by the 15th and 47th Divisions, which resulted in the capture of Loos and—for a moment—the shaking of the whole German northern front. The Londoners, on the right, carried all before them. Their Staff work was admirable, and they had prepared assiduously for the day, working out the operations on a big model of the countryside, so that every battalion knew the lie of the land before it. Consequently, when one battalion—the 19th London—lost all its officers, the men still carried out the plan with complete precision. The 18th (London Irish), the 19th (St. Pancras), and the 20th (Blackheath and Woolwich) were on the left of the attack, and the 6th, 7th, and 8th (Post Office Rifles) on the right. As the French gunners watched the start, they were amazed to see one of the London Irish kick off the football from the parapet and dribble it across the thousand yards to the first German line. They learned that day that the stolid British had their own *panache*.

In half an hour the Double Crassier was theirs, and they were pushing on across the Lens-Bethune road, a veritable death-trap, every yard of which was dotted with shrapnel. Presently they had seized Loos Cemetery, and their left had swung into the outskirts of the village. The whole movement was admirably planned. The chalk-pit south of Loos was taken, and the group of miners' cottages which we called the Enclosure, so that the flank of the central advance was fully safeguarded. Before eight o'clock they had joined hands with the Highlanders in the shattered streets beneath the twin Towers of Loos.

The advance of the 15th Division deserves to be told in some detail, not only because it was the most conspicuous achievement during the first day of the battle, but because it was a type of the actions fought that day in various parts of our front. The plan was for the 44th Brigade to make the direct assault; the 46th Brigade, on the left, was to fetch a circuit and come in on the north side of the village; and the 45th Brigade was held in divisional reserve. Let us follow the doings of the 44th Brigade, where the point of the thrust was the 9th Black Watch and the 8th Seaforths, with the 7th Camerons in support and the 10th Gordons following.

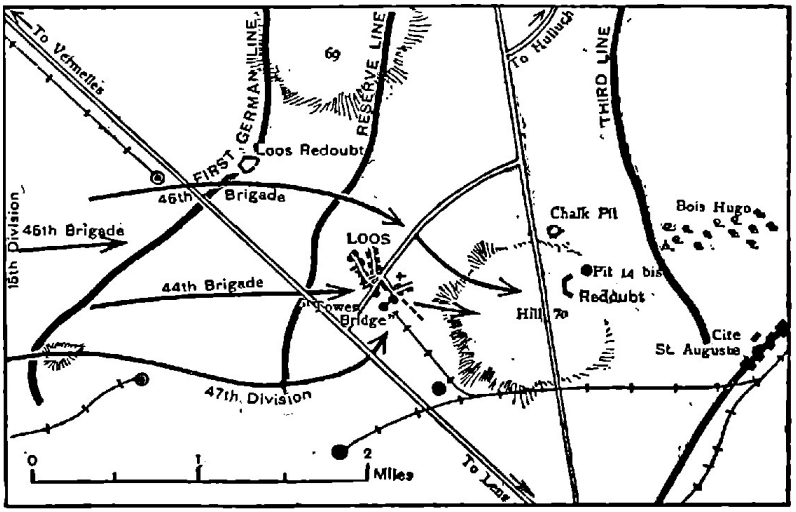


Sketch of the German position at Loos village.

The gas attack was delivered about ten minutes to six. The men watched anxiously as the whitish cloud moved slowly upwards towards the German trenches near the crown of the slope. The wind was very light, and the cloud clung too close to the ground. Worse still, the breeze came from the south-west, and since Loos lies in a hollow, and a wind, as every stalker knows, is apt to eddy down a hollow, the gas blew back to some extent on the 46th Brigade on the left.[11] The cloud was greeted with a fusillade of rifle and machine-gun fire, but as it passed over the enemy trenches the fire slackened. At 6.30 the whistles blew, and the Highlanders scrambled up the steps and were over the parapet.

The first rush from the firing trench was a dramatic moment. For months that narrow ditch had been the *ne plus ultra* of movement. From it, through periscopes, the men had observed day by day the green-gray sandbags of the German entrenchments. In the hours of darkness in the debatable ground between they had worked at saps and wire entanglements, but in the daylight to show the head over the parapet was to take chances with death. Now what had been the limit suddenly became the starting-point. Our own wire had all been cut during the night, and the dark tartans of the Black Watch and Seaforths raced over the no-man's-land and flung themselves on the German lines. Our artillery had made short work of the great defences. The wire was blown to pieces, the parapets were crushed like a child's sand castle which has been destroyed in a fit of temper, the strong redoubts of Loos Road and

Lens Road were pounded into dust. The trenches were filled with German dead; but from the deepest dug-outs a gallant remnant, who had survived the bombardment, brought up machine guns and turned them on the advancing infantry. But nothing stayed the rush of the Scots. By five minutes past seven the whole of the German first position, several trenches deep, was in their hands, and the battalions swept across the 800 yards intervening between the crest of the ridge and Loos. In that sinister mist, reeking of powder and gas and blood, the fury of battle possessed the souls of men who a year before had been sober, law-abiding civilians. Singing, cheering, and shouting mad encouragements, the Highlanders went down the slope. One sergeant is reported to have rebuked the profanity of his men. "Hold your swearing, lads," he cried, "and keep your breath. The next stop's Potsdam."



Battle of Loos.—Advance to Loos and Hill 70.

In front of Loos was the German reserve line. The entanglements here had been largely destroyed by indirect fire, a fine performance for our artillery. But patches remained unbroken, and these were cut by the Black Watch under heavy shelling. They lost severely, and the ground here was terribly carpeted with their dead. But the brigade did not waver. It carried the reserve position, and at twenty minutes to eight, an hour and ten minutes after they had left their trenches, the Highlanders were surging through the streets of Loos.

South-west of the church stand the tall twin towers, the headgear of a colliery connected by a bridge, which our men called the Tower Bridge or the Crystal Palace, and which they believed had been constructed by the

Germans before the war as an observation station. It was visible on a clear day from as far off as the Hill of Cassel, and from our old trenches the tops showed foreshortened over the downs, like the masts of a ship seen at a great distance at sea. The village itself consists of four rambling streets, surrounded by many small gardens and enclosures. The clearing of Loos did not take long. The 47th Division was in its southern outskirts, firmly holding the flank, and the 46th Brigade of Scots Lowlanders was closing in on the north. Meantime the Highlanders—the Camerons and Gordons now supporting the thinned ranks of the leading battalions—bombed the enemy out of the houses and cellars. "Every house was a fort," wrote one soldier, "and from every window and cellar belched machine-gun fire." One Cameron sergeant, putting his machine gun to his shoulder like a rifle, poured a stream of bullets into window after window. Most of the enemy seemed demoralized, and surrendered readily. But there were heroic individuals who stayed in the deeper dug-outs and directed by telephone the German shell-fire upon the British advance. In that place of death some fifty civilian inhabitants were found—women and children—who were sent back to the British lines. Before nine o'clock all resistance was at an end, the battalion headquarters had advanced, and Loos was in our hands.

But the Highlanders were not content. Their orders had been not only to take Loos, but to occupy the rising ground to the east—the broad down marked in the map as Hill 70. This at least is clear; but there seems reason to believe that a further order had been given, or at least had been so understood by the men, to push on as far as possible, since supports were following. The rise begins just outside the village, and the crest of the flat top is about a mile from the church. The 46th Brigade was closing in on the slopes from the north, and the remnants of the Highland Brigade, with the Camerons and Gordons leading,[12] advanced up the western slope. The fire from the defence for a moment gave them pause, and the German infantry came out of their trenches as if to counter-attack. The sight spurred the Highlanders to a great effort. They streamed up the hill like hounds, with all battalion formation gone, the green tartans of the Gordons and the red of the Camerons mingled in one resistless wave. All the time they were under enfilading fire from south and north, but with the bayonet they went through the defence, and at nine o'clock were on the summit of the hill.

On the top, just below the northern crest, was a strong redoubt, destined to become famous in the succeeding days. The garrison surrendered—they seem scarcely to have resisted—but the Highlanders had no time to spare to secure the place. They streamed onward down the eastern side—now only a few hundreds strong—till they were on the skirts of the village of Cité St.

Auguste and beyond the last entrenched German position. The attack had now passed outside the legitimate operations of war. It had reached a district which was a nest of potential fortifications. The Germans had a great array of machine guns on a small slope outside the village, and they were busy installing others on the railway embankment north-east of Lens. The Highlanders formed a mad salient, with no supports on south or north. The captured garrison had manned the redoubt on Hill 70, and assailed them with reverse fire; while from Cité St. Auguste, from near Pit No. 14 *bis* and the Keep to the north-west, from the environs of Lens and from the unbroken positions south-east of Loos, came a converging bombardment. The last stage of the Highland onslaught had been magnificent, but it had not been war, for there were no reserves to follow them. Had the supports been there, had their flanks been more secure, the enemy's northern front must have been pierced. In less than three hours the heroic brigade had advanced nearly four miles, and had passed beyond all the German trench lines. Lens seemed already fallen, the enemy was feverishly getting away his heavy guns, and for one moment the fate of Lille and the plain of Douai trembled in the balance.

Between nine and ten Lieutenant-Colonel Sandilands of the Camerons arrived on the hill. Being the senior officer present, he took command, and planted the headquarters flag of his battalion on the top. It was his business to recall the van of the advance, now lost in the fog and smoke of the eastern slopes, and to entrench himself on the summit. The Redoubt was now out of our hands, and the line taken ran just under the crest on the west, and was continued north of Loos by the 46th Brigade. To retire the van was no light task. Two officers whose names deserve to be remembered, Major Crichton of the Gordons and Major Barron of the Camerons, volunteered for the desperate mission. They fell in the task, but the order reached the stragglers, and they began to fight their way back. In the midst of encircling fire it was a forlorn hope, and few returned to the British lines on the hill. All down the slopes towards Lens lay the tartans, Gordon and Black Watch, Seaforth and Cameron, like the drift left on the shore when the tide has ebbed. By midday our line was consolidated with the help of the first troops of the 45th Brigade, the divisional reserve.[13]

It is necessary at this point to consider what provision had been made by the High Command for supports. A modern battle is won by the superiority of numbers at the proper place and moment. The day has gone when a battalion may conquer a kingdom, as Garibaldi's Thousand won Sicily. To pierce an enemy's lines by a frontal attack is merely a question of reserves. The great successes in this type of operation, such as Sheridan's at

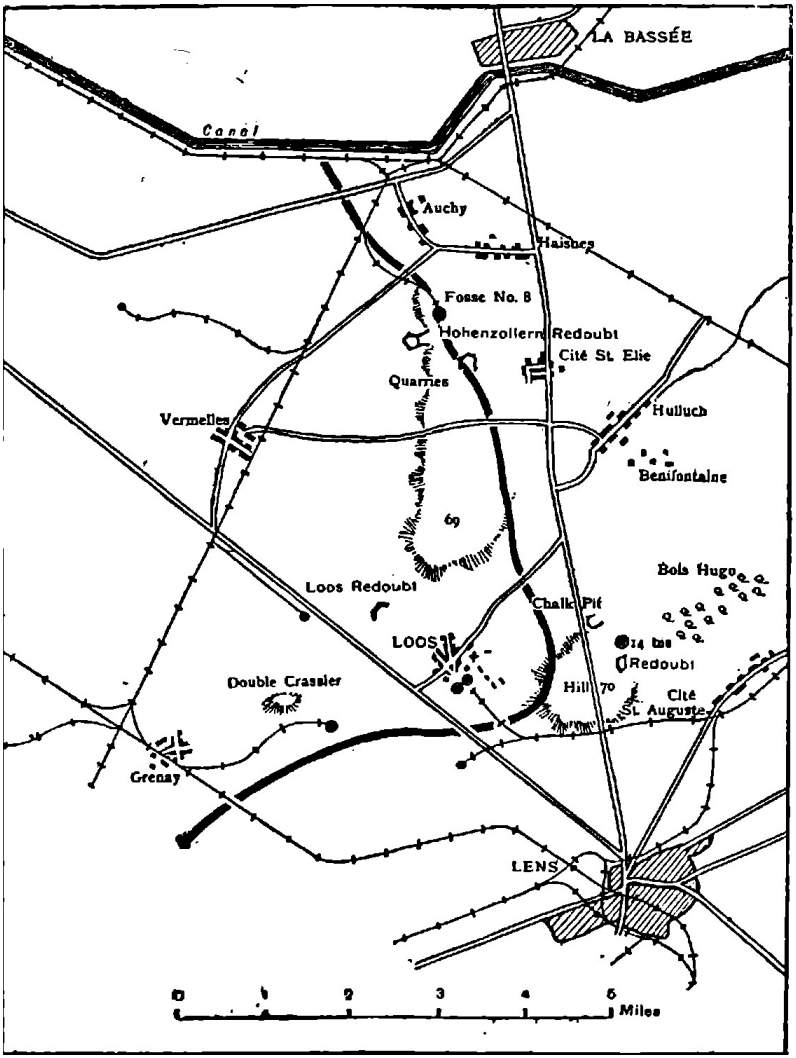
Chattanooga and Longstreet's at Chickamauga, were won by the presence at the proper moment of adequate supports; the failures—Meade at Fredericksburg, Pickett at Gettysburg, Grant on 10th May at Spottsylvania, the Prussian Guard at Saint-Privat, Osman at Plevna—by their absence. The principal British reserves were General Haking's new Eleventh Corps, consisting of the Guards Division, under Lord Cavan, and the 21st and 24th Divisions of the New Army. These troops Sir John French kept under his own hand, since our operations, according to his own statement, were on so long a front and he did not know where the need might be greatest. There was the further difficulty that the French advance on Souchez was delayed, and it might be necessary to send troops to support our right flank. On the night before the battle the two New Army Divisions were on the line Beuvry-Nœux-les-Mines—about five miles at the nearest point from our old firing line. The Guards Division that night was at Lillers, thirteen miles as the crow flies from the front and nearly twenty from the Loos area. Farther north, General Bulfin's 28th Division had been drawn out of the line of the Second Corps, and taken to Bailleul to be ready to move when orders came. The whole of General Fanshawe's Cavalry Corps, less one division, was in general reserve some twenty miles back; while General Rimington's Indian Cavalry was at Doullens ready to co-operate with the French cavalry in exploiting any infantry success. General Briggs's 3rd Cavalry Division was just behind the line of the Fourth Corps. The position on the eve of the battle was, therefore, that Sir Douglas Haig had no reserves under his control except the 3rd Cavalry Division. The Eleventh Corps, the 28th Division, and the rest of the cavalry were in Sir John French's hands.

At 9.30 a.m., when Loos had fallen and the Highlanders were in front of Cité St. Auguste, the Commander-in-Chief placed the 21st and 24th Divisions at the disposal of Sir Douglas Haig. At the moment they were about eight miles from our new front, and the route of their advance would be difficult as soon as the German counter-attack began. There were thus no reserves immediately available for our hard-pressed first line except the extra brigade kept in hand in each division. During the afternoon of the 25th these were brought up, and at the same time the Germans massed their supports. Part of the Prussian Guard was apparently used, and the 15th Bavarian Division was hurried down from the neighbourhood of Wytschaete. Till the darkening the counter-attacks continued in a drizzle of rain, which broke towards twilight into a flight of rainbows and a stormy sunset. Our hold on Fosse 8 was getting desperately precarious, and east of Loos the 46th Brigade was driven from Pit 14 *bis*, and the position on Hill 70 was gravely threatened.

Meanwhile, through the rain and the darkness, the two divisions of the Eleventh Corps were marching towards the firing line. Their object was to relieve the 1st and 15th Divisions of the Fourth Corps. They were new troops, some of whom had landed in France only a few days earlier. They had been reviewed by Sir John French, who was impressed by their fine physique and their soldierly bearing, qualities which may well be nullified by lack of actual fighting experience. These men had never been "entered" to this kind of warfare, they had never been under fire, and they were destined to take their place in the front of one of the severest actions of the campaign. It was a trial too high for the finest material in the world. To add to their difficulties, the 21st Division was taken up to the trenches over exposed ground, where they were heavily shelled. Their transport, including their water-carts and copper cookers, was knocked to pieces; and when, early on the morning of Sunday, they advanced to relieve the two brigades of the 15th Division, they were in no condition to endure a prolonged strain.

That night German counter-attacks were frequent against our new front. The 7th Division at the Quarries were driven out of their trenches, but for the most part our line stood firm. Sunday, the 26th, dawned clear and bright. All that day fighting was severe against the line of the First and Fourth Corps, but in the afternoon the 7th Division managed to advance and regain the ground lost at the Quarries. The new 24th Division attacked with one brigade—the 72nd—in the gap between Hulluch and the Loos Chalk Pit, and pushed forward most gallantly to the German last position in front of Vendin le Vieil. Their advance was carried too far, and in the afternoon they were compelled to fall back, with heavy losses, to their original line. For that afternoon a British attack had been projected against the redoubt on Hill 70, but it was anticipated by the enemy. Early in the forenoon he flung his reserves against our front, and the troops of the 21st Division, who had been for hours without food or water, were driven in. They thrice attempted to rally, but by that time their cohesion was gone. This lost us the Chalk Pit north-east of Loos and the advanced ground towards Hulluch, and caused our line to bend sharply back from Hill 70 to the Loos-La Bassée road. On Hill 70 itself we lost some trenches, and our hold on the hill was in jeopardy.

Sept. 26.

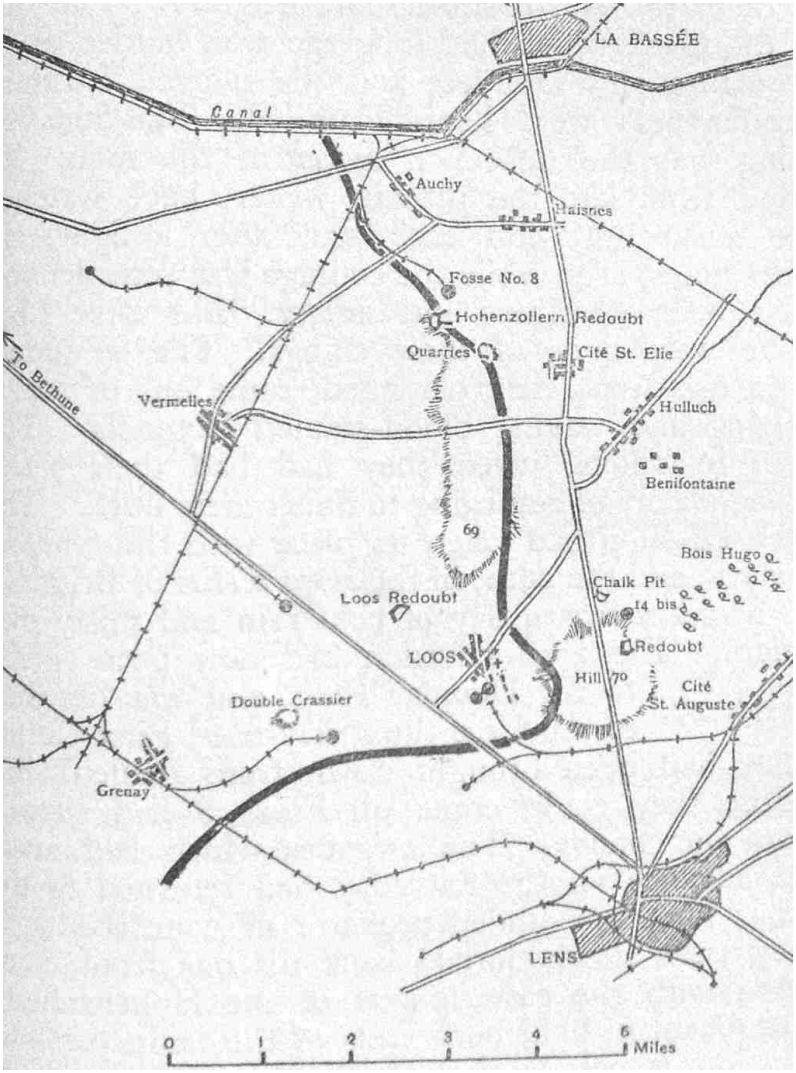


Battle of Loos.—The British Front on the evening of Sept. 25th.

It was a critical moment, for there were no reserves at hand. At six o'clock on the previous evening the Guards Division had arrived at Nœux-les-Mines, and on the Sunday morning Sir John French placed them at the disposal of Sir Douglas Haig. They were then eight miles distant, and were not hurried, for they were intended to be used in the next stage of the advance. But the fate of the two New Divisions upset all our plans. The 44th and 46th Brigades of the 15th Division, which had been taken out, were sent back to hold the reserve trenches, and a dismounted brigade of the 3rd Cavalry Division—the 6th, under General David Campbell[14]—was flung

into Loos to form a garrison. To the 45th Brigade of the 15th Division was given the task of retaking the lost ground on Hill 70. They advanced most gallantly to the attack, but found themselves faced by strong German reserves, and under a severe converging shell-fire. In the afternoon the 6th Camerons added to the renown of the regiment, whose 4th, 5th, and 7th Battalions had won unperishable fame in the two days' battles. They lost their heroic commander, and eight other officers died with him on the field of honour. That commander—Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas-Hamilton[15]—led forward his men four times to the attack, and fell himself at the head of a remnant of fifty.

All that day and the succeeding night the situation was desperate. The 45th Brigade and two companies of the 9th Gordons were for long the only troops holding the first lines. Had the Germans attacked in force we must have been driven out of Loos. The 3rd Dragoon Guards came up at nightfall and occupied the trenches east of the village, and they and the Highlanders hung on during the darkness under a constant enfilading fire from Pit 14. It was not till after midday on the Monday that the Guards Division took over the front.



Battle of Loos.—British Front on Monday morning, Sept. 27th.

The 15th Division had done its work, and went back to billets. Its losses were heavy—over 6,000 for the two days' fighting—but it had earned a reputation second to none in the British forces. A year ago its men had followed civilian trades, and now they ranked in courage and discipline and every military virtue with the veterans of our army. The farthest rush of the Highland Brigade may have been a blunder, but it is not yet clear that the men exceeded their orders, and in any case it was an error nobly retrieved. Not even at Fontenoy or Toulouse, at the Alma or Dargai, did the fighting spirit of the North shine more brightly. The fury of the Gael, which had long

ago won battles under Montrose and Dundee, and the dogged Lowland steadfastness were happily united. The Amazing thing was the unbroken *moral* of the men. To those who, like the present writer, have watched the melancholy ebb backwards after a fight, the chief notes, even while the courage was conspicuous, have been weariness and satiety. But after Loos there were none of these things. The wounded, even the desperately wounded, came out of action singing and waving blood-stained bayonets. The men in billets, when they had had their sleep, thought only of returning to finish their work. The 15th Division had taken its place with the Guards, the 7th, and the 29th, in the *corps d'élit*e of Britain.

Sept. 27.

Monday was a day of cold rain and misty distances. The 28th Division had now been given to Sir Douglas Haig, and was destined to reinforce the sorely-tried First Corps. They had been brought down from Bailleul, but before they could come up Fosse 8 had slipped from our hands. The brigades which had made the advance on the Saturday had returned to the firing line, but under pressure of counter-attacks they were slowly forced back till our front coincided with the eastern part of the Hohenzollern. The Germans held both ends of the main communication trench, and gradually bombed our men out of the centre, while the recapture of the Fosse meant that we were terribly enfiladed by machine-gun fire. The German counter-attack was a well-managed affair, their artillery acting in perfect co-operation with their infantry.

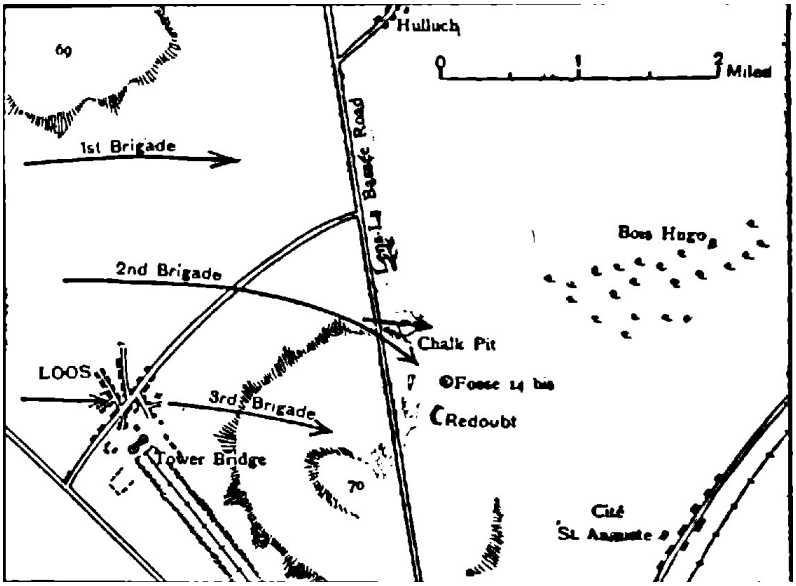
But the great event of the day was the advance in the afternoon of the Guards Division in the area of the Fourth Corps. The line on the Monday morning ran from a point between Hulluch and the Loos-La Bassée road, dipping back to that highway and continuing round the north-east end of Loos, to the western slopes of Hill 70. Nearly three-quarters of a mile of ground had been lost on the left and centre during the Sunday, and it was the business of the Guards to win it back. It was the first time in the war that they had taken the field as a division,[16] and great things were expected of them. There was a sense of anticipation along the British front, comparable to the excitement on the eve of the battle, when the rumour spread that "the Guards were going in."

These hopes were not disappointed. Two brigades of the Guards held the old first-line German trenches, the 1st on the left in front of Hulluch, and the 2nd to the north of Loos. The 3rd Brigade was for the moment in reserve behind the ridge west of Loos. The business of the 1st Brigade was to advance and straighten the left of that section, so that it should run parallel with the Lens-La Bassée road. The 2nd was directed against the Chalk Pit

and Pit 14 *bis*, since the enemy possession of these points made Hill 70 untenable; and immediately on their success the 3rd Brigade was to advance through Loos and attack the summit of Hill 70. The 1st Brigade succeeded in its task almost immediately, and during the subsequent fighting it safeguarded the brigade on its right from any enveloping movement.

General Ponsonby's 2nd Brigade was placed on the western slope of the shallow valley through which runs the Loos-Hulluch road. It looked across to the Chalk Pit, about three-quarters of a mile away, which lay in the north end of a small spinney. South stood Pit 14, a large colliery and a tall chimney, with beside it a red house and a fortified "Keep." Behind it, on the east, was a tattered wood, the Bois Hugo, which, though badly thinned by our artillery fire, still gave cover to machine guns. The first attack of the 2nd Irish Guards and the 1st Coldstream was directed against the Chalk Pit. When that had been taken, the 1st Scots Guards were to move on the right against the Pit, while the 3rd Grenadiers were held in reserve.

At 4 p.m., after a sustained artillery bombardment, the attack began. The Irish Guards and the Coldstream had at first an easy task, and took the spinney with few losses. But the Scots Guards, on their right, who were facing the Pit, had a difficult time. When they had passed the Hulluch-Loos road, and begun to ascend the opposite slope, they were deluged with shrapnel, and had to face a furious machine-gun fire from the Bois Hugo. Their colonel fell, and eleven officers, but with the assistance of two companies of the Grenadiers they won the Pit. The enfilading fire, however, was too severe, and the line in the evening did not extend beyond the south side of the spinney, though the Chalk Pit was firmly in our hands.



Battle of Loos.—The Advance of the Guards Division.

Meanwhile General Heyworth's 3rd Brigade had advanced against Hill 70. The ground had been well reconnoitred by the Brigade Staff, and it was obvious that so soon as they crossed the ridge west of Loos they would come under a heavy bombardment. Accordingly the men were deployed in artillery formation.[17] Once on the ridge the shrapnel tornado burst on them, but the Guards advanced with all the steadiness of parade. It was Fontenoy over again, and the wearied Londoners and cavalrymen who had been holding the front cheered madly as the ordered line of the Guards swept inexorably into Loos, where a battalion of the Grenadiers was left in reserve. Once through the town they had to face a storm of gas shells. Some companies of the Grenadiers on the left of the line came into touch with the 2nd Brigade and the attack on Pit 14. The Welsh Guards and the rest of the Grenadiers advanced on Hill 70, and on the dead ground of the lower slopes met with nothing but scattered rifle fire. When they gained the crest, and were outlined against the sky, they were greeted by a fierce bombardment, and by machine-gun fire from the redoubt. The 2nd Scots Guards presently relieved the Welsh, and the brigade, realizing that the line on the crest was too good a target for the enemy, entrenched itself about 100 yards to the west of it. Here it had the 3rd Cavalry Brigade on its right; but its left was in the air, since there was a gap in the front between the Hill and Pit 14. The same day the 47th Division, on the extreme right of the British line, had made a slight farther advance. They had captured a wood to the south-east of

Loos which had held them up on the Saturday, and repelled a severe counter-attack.

Sept. 28.

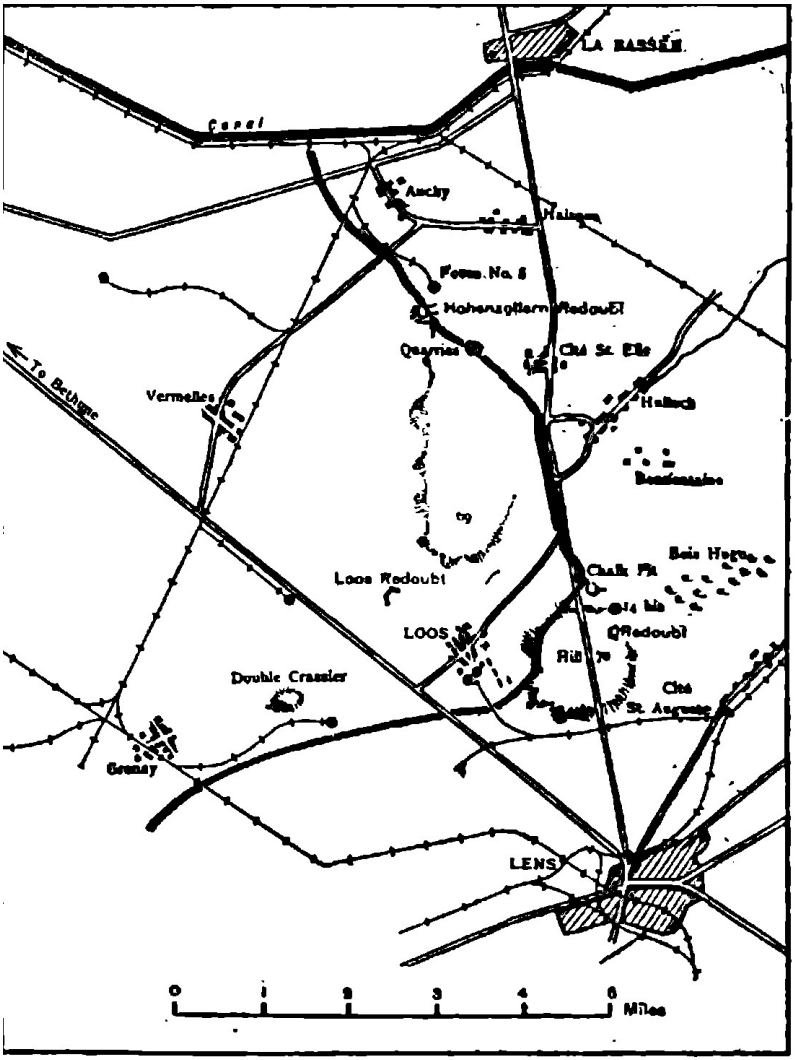
Next day, Tuesday, the 28th, the 2nd Brigade renewed the assault on Pit 14. The place was important, for, being situated on the northern slopes of Hill 70, so long as it was in German hands it enfiladed our whole position east of Loos. At 3.45 in the afternoon the 1st Coldstream attacked Pit 14 from the south end of the Chalk Pit, supported on the right by the 2nd Irish Guards, while our guns were turned on the Bois Hugo. Once again the enemy's machine-gun fire proved deadly, but a small party managed to reach Pit 14. The place could not be held, and we fell back in the evening to the Chalk Pit and the spinney, thus connecting with the 3rd Brigade east of Loos. Pit 14 was now a no-man's-land, which could not be effectively held by either side. That day the 47th Division again made some ground, capturing a field piece and a few machine guns.

Sept. 29-30.

The first phase of the battle was now drawing to a close. The enemy during the 29th and 30th shelled our line heavily, while we in turn laboured to consolidate our positions and to replace by reserves the more weary of our front line divisions. All round the Hohenzollern there was constant fighting, where, with heavy losses, the Germans won small sections of trenches.[18] Our line from north to south ran roughly from the Vermelles-La Bassée railway, west of Fosse 8, just east of the Hohenzollern, through the Quarries, east of the Chalk Pit, west of Pit 14 *bis*, and along the western slopes of Hill 70, a hundred yards short of the crest. South of Loos we curved back in a sharp salient towards Grenay.

Oct. 2.

By the 2nd day of October the readjustment of the front was complete. The French 9th Corps had taken over the line on the right from our original point of junction with d'Urbal's command to the north slopes of Hill 70, including the village of Loos. The 47th Division was moved farther north, and they and the 12th Division of the New Army under Major-General Wing completed the relief of the Fourth Corps. The First Corps had received the 28th Division as supports, and the Guards Division was under orders to move to that part of the front which included the Hohenzollern. The 46th Territorial Division (the old South Midland) was moving south to take its place with the Guards and the 12th Division in the Eleventh Corps.



Battle of Loos.—British Front on October 1st.

On the last day of September Sir John French issued an order[19] to his troops setting forth the details of the victory. Lord Kitchener in his congratulatory telegram described it as a “substantial” success, and that is perhaps the truest epithet. On a front of 6,500 yards we had everywhere carried the enemy’s first line, we had broken up his reserve line, and in one case we had pierced his last position. We had captured over 3,000 enemy rank and file and over 50 officers. We had taken 26 field guns and 40 machine guns, besides great quantities of other war material. A substantial success it was beyond doubt, the most substantial the British Army had seen

since trench warfare began. Our artillery had shown a brilliant competence, our subsidiary services had been good, and Sir John French in his dispatch paid a well-deserved tribute to the work of the Royal Engineers. Above all, our battalion fighting had been magnificent. Old Army, New Army, and Territorials had shown an *élan* in advance and a stubbornness in defence which can scarcely be paralleled from the classic days of our military history. Where battalions failed, the cause was not to be found in any defect of the human material.

Yet the exhilaration of victory, the sense that at last we were advancing, was tempered by a profound disappointment. We had had a great chance of which we had failed to take full advantage. Most of the results of surprise and of initial impetus had been lost during that tragic interregnum from Saturday at midday till noon on Monday, when a few weary and broken brigades clung heroically to an impossible front. Mistakes were no doubt made of which the future historian will have much to say. In such a work as this criticism would be premature and improper. But the damping of national ardour and the pessimistic forebodings which followed the close of the action were not really justified. The true significance of the battle did not lie in captures of men or guns or in gains of ground. It lay in the fact that the Allies had done something which they could do again. They had taken something from the enemy which he could not recover. The next blow would be delivered from a point of vantage and against a weakened foe. With the third, if a third should be needed, their advantage and the enemy's disadvantage would be still greater. They had not struck one blow and thereby exhausted their strength. They had initiated a movement which must continue till their purpose was achieved. There might be delays of weeks or months between the successive stages, but the movement would go on all the while, drawing out the enemy to his full stretch, and preventing him adding to his fortifications. They knew that a certain kind of action could break down the German defences, and they knew also that that kind of action was within their power. They believed that the next time, or the time after that, they would win not a success but a decision.

One result of Loos was that criticism of our Staff work, which had been rife during the summer, rose to a pitch which demanded the attention of the nation. During the battle which began on 25th September, as during Neuve Chapelle, Festubert, Ypres, and Hooge, there were doubtless instances of Staff mismanagement. It would be hard to find a great battle in history which was free from them. Friction between the Staff and the battalions is as old as human warfare. The one always tends to put the blame of failure on the other. Overwrought regimental officers are apt to regard the Staff as a

Capua of ease and leisure, and to forget that the burden of the men behind the fighting line may be greater than that of the battalion in the trenches. As regards its Staff, the British army was in a special difficulty. The admirable Staff which belonged to our original Expeditionary Force had had to be multiplied many times, and the brain of the Army is precisely what it is least easy to improvise. Again, at their best, our Staff officers had not been trained to handle large masses of men after the fashion of our Allies and opponents. On this subject many wild things were said, single instances of failure were magnified into a general breakdown, and critics, both military and civilian, forgot that no human Staff is infallible, and that even Berthier and his colleagues had their lapses.[20] But there was this much of truth in the complaint: we were somewhat inclined to underrate in practice the importance of the quality of a Staff, and to regard it as a residuum instead of a picked body. Men were occasionally given Staff appointments not because they were fitted for such duties, but because they were unfitted for others. We possessed many Staff officers of conspicuous ability, but in certain directions our lack of selection allowed the average of competence to decline. Our improvised Staffs, in short, had scarcely kept pace with our improvised battalions. It would have been a miracle if they had, for you cannot find good Staff officers at every street corner. The raising of this question, flagrantly unjust though most of the charges were, had one good result. It compelled the nation to realize the vital importance of the thinking side of the army, and the necessity, if we were to win the war, of seeking diligently and at all costs for capacity.[21]

The British losses up to the first day of October were in the neighbourhood of 45,000 men—almost as great as the losses of both North and South together at Gettysburg, or at the Wilderness. A large number were only slightly wounded, which was to be expected in an attack where men pass swiftly through the screens of fire. It is when acting on the defensive, when troops have to endure a protracted bombardment, that a large percentage of wounds are serious or fatal. The 15th Division, which made the most progress, lost just over 6,000; the 9th Black Watch, which had been its spearhead, came out of action a little over 100 strong, with one officer. At the German casualties we can only guess; but the French Staff calculated that along the whole Western front they were slightly greater than those of the Allies combined, and were not less than 200,000.[22] The returns for seven German battalions which fought at Loos were published, and showed losses averaging 80 per cent. of the battalions' strength. The British Army had to mourn three brilliant divisional commanders. Major-General Sir Thompson Capper, commanding the 7th Division, was wounded in the

advance of Sunday, the 26th, and died on the following morning. He had led his division at the First Battle of Ypres and at Festubert, and in his complete fearlessness and devotion recalled some crusader of the great ages rather than a modern man at arms. He was dedicated, if ever man was, to his country, and brought to battle both the skill of the professional soldier and the ardour of the visionary. On the Monday Major-General George Thesiger fell in an heroic attempt to hold Fosse 8. The commander of the 9th Division was one of the ablest soldiers whom the Rifle Brigade, that nursery of military talent, had given to the campaign. On 2nd October fell Major-General F. D. Wing, commanding the 12th Division. Up to that date twenty-eight battalion commanders had died in the battle. An attack falls heavily upon officers, but in no earlier action of the campaign was the death-rate among senior officers so high.

With the appearance of the new divisions in action our losses began to take on a new character. They affected all classes in the nation, and brought mourning to many households who in the past had little dreamed that any son of theirs would find a soldier's death. Men of distinction, too, in civilian life, scholars, politicians, captains of industry, were among the slain. Among the many whom, to quote the stateliest words in the English tongue, "it pleased Almighty God to take out of this transitory world into His mercy," let three names be specially remembered—three young men divided in their political creeds, but alike in the warmth of their patriotism, their eager loyalty, and the affection of their friends—Ninian Crichton-Stuart, Charles Mills, and Thomas Robartes.

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[1] This attack was delivered by the 42nd and 43rd Brigades.

[2] The Victoria Cross was won in this action by Second-Lieutenant Rupert Hallowes, of the 4th Middlesex.

[3] It was now commanded by Major-General Hudson, General Davies having gone to the Eighth Corps at the Dardanelles.

[4] The Victoria Cross was won by Sergeant Harry Wells, of the 2nd Royal Sussex, who fell in action.

[5] These were—for the Meerut Division—2nd and 4th Black Watch (Bareilly), 2nd Leicesters and 3rd Londons (Garwhal), 1st and 4th Seaforths (Dehra Dun). In the Lahore Division, apart from Territorial battalions, there were 1st Connaught Rangers (Ferozepore), 1st H.L.I. (Sirhind), 1st Manchesters (Jullundur).

[6] Two Victoria Crosses were won—by Lieutenant George Maling, R.A.M.C.; and by Rifleman Kulbir Thapa, of the 2/3 Gurkhas.

[7] It was a Scottish division, and contained the 26th Brigade (Brigadier-General Ritchie)—8th Black Watch, 7th Seaforths, 8th Gordons, 5th Camerons; the 27th Brigade (Brigadier-General Bruce)—11th and 12th Royal Scots, 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers, 10th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; the 28th Brigade (Brigadier-General Scrase-Dickens)—6th K.O.S.B., 9th Scottish Rifles, 10th and 11th H.L.I.

[8] It contained the 44th Brigade (Brigadier-General Wilkinson)—9th Black Watch, 8th Seaforths, 10th Gordons, 7th Camerons; the 45th Brigade (Brigadier-General Wallerstein)—13th Royal Scots, 7th Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th Camerons, 11th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; the 46th Brigade (Brigadier-General Matheson)—7th and 8th K.O.S.B., 10th Scottish Rifles, 12th H.L.I. The Divisional pioneer battalion was the 9th Gordons.

[9] It contained the 140th Brigade (Brigadier-General Cuthbert), the 141st Brigade (Brigadier-General Thwaites), and the 142nd Brigade (Brigadier-General Lewis).

[10] Three Victoria Crosses were awarded for the Hulluch action—to Captain A. M. Read, of the 1st Northamptons; to Private George Peachment, of the 2nd K.R.R. (both of whom died of their wounds); and to Private Arthur Vickers, of the 2nd Warwicks.

[11] The gas caused this brigade to hesitate for a moment, whereupon Piper Daniel Laidlaw, of the 7th K.O.S.B., mounted the parapet and marched up and down, piping the company out of the trenches. The tune he played was "Blue Bonnets over the Border," and he then continued with "The Standard on the Braes of Mar," till he fell wounded. For this fine deed he received the Victoria Cross.

[12] Two companies of the 9th Gordons, the pioneer battalion, were in this advance.

[13] The Victoria Cross was awarded to Second-Lieutenant F. H. Johnson, of the Royal Engineers, for his work this day on Hill 70; and to Private Robert Dunsire, of the 13th Royal Scots.

[14] It contained the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the Royals, and the North Somerset Yeomanry. The whole of the 3rd Division came up later.

[15] He received the Victoria Cross after his death.

[16] The Guards Division was under Major-General Lord Cavan, and comprised the 1st Guards Brigade (Brigadier-General Geoffrey Feilding)—2nd Grenadiers, 2nd Coldstream, 3rd Coldstream, 1st Irish (it had been Cavan's original 4th Brigade); the 2nd Guards Brigade (Brigadier-General John Ponsonby)—3rd Grenadiers, 1st Coldstream, 1st Scots, 2nd Irish; the 3rd Guards Brigade (Brigadier-General Heyworth)—1st Grenadiers, 4th Grenadiers, 2nd Scots, 1st Welsh. The 1st Coldstream and the 1st Scots Guards had been in the 1st Brigade, the 1st Grenadiers and the 2nd Scots Guards in the 20th Brigade. The 3rd and 4th Grenadiers, the 2nd Irish and the 1st Welsh Guards were new battalions. The 4th Coldstream acted as divisional pioneer battalion.

[17] Columns of half platoons, with the sections 100 yards apart, and between the lines a space of about 250 yards. It is the formation which suffers fewest casualties under artillery fire.

[18] Four Victoria Crosses were won in the Fosse 8—Hohenzollern section—by Corporal J. D. Pollock, of the 5th Camerons, on the 27th; by Lieutenant A. B. Turner, of the 1st Royal Berkshires, on the 28th; and by Second-Lieutenant A. J. T. Fleming-Sandes, of the 2nd East Surrey, and Private Samuel Harvey, of the 1st York and Lancaster, on the 29th.

[19] *Special Order of the Day by Field-Marshal Sir John French, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., Commander-in-Chief, British Army in the Field.*

We have now reached a definite stage in the great battle which commenced on the 25th inst.

Our Allies in the south have pierced the enemy's last line of entrenchments and effected large captures of prisoners and guns.

The Tenth French Army, on our immediate right, has been heavily opposed, but has brilliantly succeeded in securing the important position known as the Vimy Ridge.

The operations of the British forces have been most successful, and have had great and important results.

On the morning of the 25th inst. the First and Fourth Corps attacked and carried the enemy's first and most powerful line of entrenchments, extending from our extreme right flank at Grenay to a point north of the Hohenzollern Redoubt—a distance of 6,500 yards.

This position was exceptionally strong, consisting of a double line, which included some large redoubts and a network of trenches and bomb-proof shelters. Dug-outs were constructed at short intervals all along the line, some of them being large caves 30 feet below the ground.

The Eleventh Corps, in general reserve, and the Third Cavalry Division, were subsequently thrown into the fight, and finally the 28th Division.

After the vicissitudes attendant upon every great fight, the enemy's second line posts were taken, the commanding position known as Hill 70, in advance of Loos, was finally captured, and a strong line was established and consolidated in close proximity to the German third and last line.

The main operations south of the La Bassée Canal were much facilitated and assisted by the subsidiary

attacks delivered by the Third and Indian Corps, and the troops of the Second Army.

Great help was also rendered by the operations of the Fifth Corps east of Ypres, during which some important captures were made.

We are also much indebted to Vice-Admiral Bacon and our naval comrades for the valuable co-operation of the Fleet.

Our captures have amounted to over 3,000 prisoners and some 25 guns, besides many machine guns and a quantity of war material.

The enemy has suffered heavy losses, particularly in the many counter-attacks by which he has vainly endeavoured to wrest back the captured positions, but which have all been gallantly repulsed by our troops.

I desire to express to the Army under my command my deep appreciation of the splendid work they have accomplished, and my heartfelt thanks for the brilliant leadership displayed by General Sir Douglas Haig and the Corps and Divisional Commanders who acted under his orders in the main attack.

In the same spirit of admiration and gratitude I wish particularly to comment upon the magnificent spirit, indomitable courage, and dogged tenacity displayed by the troops.

Old Army, New Army, and Territorials have vied with one another in the heroic conduct displayed throughout the battle by officers, non-commissioned officers, and men.

I feel the utmost confidence and assurance that the same glorious spirit which has been so marked a feature throughout the first phase of this great battle will continue until our efforts are crowned by final and complete victory.

J. D. P. FRENCH, Field-Marshal,
Commanding-in-Chief,

[20] Some instances of bad Staff work under Napoleon may be quoted from Mr. Townsend Warner's *How Wars were Won*. The elaborate orders for crossing the Danube from the island of Lobau to Wagram sent Davoust and Oudinot to the wrong bridges. In the march from the Channel to Ulm the orders involved an entanglement between Davoust's and Soult's corps. Berthier told Murat to be in force at two different places at once (October 13, 1805), and Davoust was ordered to concentrate at two different places (October 1806). In 1806 Murat replaced Berthier in command of the army at Wurzburg, but Berthier was not told, and for a few days both issued orders. Bernadotte's instructions, which he obeyed, kept him away from Jena and Auerstadt; so would have Ney's, but he disobeyed them. It was the indifferent Staff work of the French which largely led to their defeat at Salamanca. Ney's Staff work in the Russian campaign was as bad as possible. Endless instances of the same thing may be found in the American Civil War—for example, Hooker's Staff at Chancellorsville and Longstreet's at Gettysburg—but the American Staffs were, of course, mainly non-professional. The Napoleonic orders were diffuse and complicated because, as Napoleon explained at St. Helena, many of his marshals did not understand what was in his mind. Efficient Staff work in the modern sense really dates from Moltke.

[21] “Take any army of the nineteenth century, famous for the excellence of its grand tactics—viz. Napoleon’s army of 1805-6-7; Wellington’s army of 1813-14; Lee’s army of 1864-1865; Grant’s, Sherman’s and Johnston’s armies of the same period; Moltke’s army of 1870: the staff of each one of them had been welded by years of experience and by the teaching of a great soldier into a magnificent instrument of war. They were not composed only of administrative officers, concerned with supply, organisation, quartering, and discipline, but of tacticians and strategists of no mean order. Combinations in war too often ‘gang agley’ from the neglect of some trifling precaution, some vagueness or omission in orders; and in the excitement of battle, and of approaching battle, when arrangements have to be made, possibly on the spur of the moment, for the co-operation of large bodies, unless he has been so trained that the measures necessary to ensure simultaneous and harmonious action occur to him instinctively, it is an exceedingly easy matter, even for an able and experienced soldier, to make the most deplorable mistakes.”—Colonel G. F. R. Henderson: *The Science of War*, p. 69.

[22] The French losses in the Champagne and Artois battles seem to have been about 120,000.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

ANZAC AND SUVLA.

SIR IAN HAMILTON'S THIRD DISPATCH.

War Office,
6th January, 1916.

The following dispatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from General Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B.:—

1 Hyde Park Gardens, London, W.,
11th December, 1915.

My Lord,

For the understanding of the operations about to be described I must first set forth the situation as it appeared to me early in July.

The three days' battle of the 6th-8th May had shown that neither of my forces, northern or southern, were strong enough to fight their way to the Narrows. On the 10th of May I had cabled asking that two fresh divisions might be sent me to enable me to press on and so prevent my attack degenerating into trench warfare. On the 17th of May I again cabled, saying that if we were going to be left to face Turkey on our own resources we should require two Army Corps additional to my existing forces at the Dardanelles. The 52nd (Lowland) Division had been sent me, but between their dates of dispatch and arrival Russia had given up the idea of co-operating from the coast of the Black Sea. Thereby several Turkish divisions were set free for the Dardanelles, and the battle of the 4th June, locally successful as it was, found us just as weak, relatively, as we had been a month earlier.

During June your Lordship became persuaded of the bearing of these facts, and I was promised three regular divisions, plus the infantry of two Territorial divisions. The advance guard of these troops was due to reach Mudros by the 10th of July; by the 10th of August their concentration was to be complete.

ALTERNATIVE PLANS.

Eliminating the impracticable, I had already narrowed down the methods of employing these fresh forces to one of the following four:—

(*a*) Every man to be thrown on to the southern sector of the peninsula to force a way forward to the Narrows.

(*b*) Disembarkation on the Asiatic side of the Straits, followed by a march on Chanak.

(*c*) A landing at Enos or Ibrije for the purpose of seizing the neck of the isthmus at Bulair.

(*d*) Reinforcement of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, combined with a landing in Suvla Bay. Then with one strong push to capture Hill 305, and, working from that dominating point, to grip the waist of the peninsula.

As to (*a*) I rejected that course—

(1) Because there were limits to the numbers which could be landed and deployed in one confined area.

(2) Because the capture of Krithia could no longer be counted upon to give us Achi Baba, an entirely new system of works having lately appeared upon the slopes of that mountain—works so planned that even if the enemy's western flank was turned and driven back from the coast the central and eastern portions of the mountain could still be maintained as a bastion to Kilid Bahr.

(3) Because if I tried to disengage myself both from Krithia and Achi Baba by landing due west of Kilid Bahr my troops would be exposed to artillery fire from Achi Baba, the Olive Grove, and Kilid Bahr itself; the enemy's large reserves were too handy; there were not fair chances of success.

As to (*b*), although much of the Asiatic coast had now been wired and entrenched, the project was still attractive. Thereby the Turkish forces on the peninsula would be weakened; our beaches at Cape Helles would be freed from Asiatic shells; the threat to the enemy's sea communications was obvious. But when I descended into detail I found that the expected reinforcements would not run to a double operation. I mean that, unless I could make a thorough, whole-hearted attack on the enemy in the peninsula I should reap no advantage in that theatre from the transference of the Turkish peninsular troops to reinforce Asia, whereas, if the British forces landed in Asia were not strong enough in themselves seriously to threaten Chanak, the Turks for their part would not seriously relax their grip upon the peninsula.

To cut the land communications of the whole of the Turkish peninsular army, as in (*c*), was a better scheme on paper than on the spot. The naval objections appeared to my coadjutor, Vice-Admiral de Robeck, well-nigh insurmountable. Already, owing to submarine dangers, all reinforcements, ammunition, and supplies had to be brought up from Mudros to Helles or Anzac by night in fleet-sweepers and trawlers. A new landing near Bulair would have added another 50 miles to the course such small craft must cover, thus placing too severe a strain upon the capacities of the flotilla.

The landing promised special hazards owing to the difficulty of securing the transports and covering ships from submarine attack. Ibrije has a bad beach, and the distance to Enos, the only point suitable to a disembarkation on a large scale, was so great that the enemy would have had time to organize a formidable opposition from his garrisons in Thrace. Four divisions at least would be required to overcome such opposition. These might now be found; but, even so, and presupposing every other obstacle overcome, it was by no manner of means certain that the Turkish army on the peninsula would thereby be brought to sue for terms, or that the Narrows would thereby be opened to the Fleet. The enemy would still be able to work supplies across the Straits from Chanak. The swiftness of the current, the shallow draft of the Turkish lighters, the guns of the forts, made it too difficult even for our dauntless submarine commanders to paralyse movement across these land-locked waters. To achieve that purpose I must bring my artillery fire to bear both on the land and water communications of the enemy.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF ANZAC AND SUVLA.

This brings me to (*d*), the storming of that dominating height, Hill 305, with the capture of Maidos and Gaba Tepe as its sequel.

From the very first I had hoped that by landing a force under the heights of Sari Bair we should be able to strangle the Turkish communications to the southwards, whether by land or sea, and so clear the Narrows for the Fleet. Owing to the enemy's superiority, both in numbers and in position; owing to underestimates of the strength of the original entrenchments prepared and sited under German direction; owing to the constant dwindling of the units of my force through wastage; owing also to the intricacy and difficulty of the terrain, these hopes had not hitherto borne fruit. But they were well founded. So much at least had clearly enough been demonstrated by the desperate and costly nature of the Turkish attacks. The Australians and New Zealanders had rooted themselves in very near to the vitals of the enemy. By

their tenacity and courage they still held open the doorway from which one strong thrust forward might give us command of the Narrows.

From the naval point of view the auspices were also favourable. Suvla Bay was but one mile further from Mudros than Anzac, and its possession would ensure us a submarine-proof base and a harbour good against gales, excepting those from the south-west. There were, as might be expected, some special difficulties to be overcome. The broken, intricate country—the lack of water—the consequent anxious supply questions. Of these it can only be said that a bad country is better than an entrenched country, and that supply and water problems may be countered by careful preparation.

Before a man of the reinforcements had arrived my mind was made up as to their employment, and by means of a vigorous offensive from Anzac, combined with a surprise landing to the north of it, I meant to try and win through to Maidos, leaving behind me a well-protected line of communications starting from the bay of Suvla.

Another point which had to be fixed in advance was the date. The new troops would gain in fighting value if they could first be given a turn in the trenches. So much was clear. But the relief of the troops already holding those trenches would have been a long and difficult task for the Navy, and time was everything, seeing that everywhere the enemy was digging in as fast as he possibly could dig. Also, where large numbers of troops were to be smuggled into Anzac and another large force was to land by surprise at Suvla, it was essential to eliminate the moon. Unless the plunge could be taken by the second week in August the whole venture must be postponed for a month. The dangers of such delay were clear. To realize them I had only to consider how notably my prospects would have been bettered had these same reinforcements arrived in time to enable me to anticipate the moon of July.

PRELIMINARY FIGHTING.

Place and date having shaped themselves, the intervening period had to be filled in with as much fighting as possible. First, to gain ground; secondly, to maintain the moral ascendancy which my troops had by this time established; thirdly, to keep the enemy's eyes fixed rather upon Helles than Anzac.

Working out my ammunition allowance, I found I could accumulate just enough high explosive shell to enable me to deliver one serious attack per each period of three weeks. I was thus limited to a single effort on the large

scale, plus a prescribed unceasing offensive routine, with bombing, sniping, and mining as its methods.

The action of the 12th and 13th of July was meant to be a sequel to the action of the 28th June. That advance had driven back the Turkish right on to their second main system of defence just south of Krithia. But, on my centre and right, the enemy still held their forward system of trenches, and it was my intention on the 12th July to seize the remaining trenches of this foremost system from the sea at the mouth of the Kereves Dere to the main Sedd-el-Bahr—Krithia road, along a front of some 2,000 yards.

On our right the attack was to be entrusted to the French Corps; on the right centre to the 52nd (Lowland) Division. On the 52nd Division's front the operation was planned to take place in two phases: our right was to attack in the morning, our left in the afternoon. Diversions by the 29th Division on the left of the southern section and at Anzac were to take place on the same day, so as to prevent the enemy's reserves from reinforcing the real point of attack.

At 7.35 a.m., after a heavy bombardment, the troops, French and Scottish, dashed out of their trenches and at once captured two lines of enemy trenches. Pushing forward with fine *élan* the 1st Division of the French Corps completed the task assigned to it by carrying the whole of the Turkish forward system of works, namely, the line of trenches skirting the lower part of the Kereves Dere. Further to the left the 2nd French Division and our 155th Brigade maintained the two lines of trenches they had gained. But on the left of the 155th Brigade the 4th Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers pressed on too eagerly. They not only carried the third line of trenches, but charged on up the hill and beyond the third line, then advanced indeed until they came under the "feu de barrage" of the French artillery. Nothing could live under so cruel a cross fire from friend and foe, so the King's Own Scottish Borderers were forced to fall back with heavy losses to the second line of enemy trenches which they had captured in their first rush.

During this fighting telephone wires from forward positions were cut by enemy's shell fire, and here and there in the elaborate network of trenches numbers of Turks were desperately resisting to the last. Thus though the second line of captured trenches continued to be held as a whole, much confused fighting ensued; there were retirements in part of the line, reserves were rapidly being used up, and generally the situation was anxious and uncertain. But the best way of clearing it up seemed to be to deliver the second phase of the attack by the 157th Brigade just as it had originally been

arranged. Accordingly, after a preliminary bombardment, the 157th Brigade rushed forward under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, and splendidly carried the whole of the enemy trenches allotted as their objective. Here, then, our line had advanced some 400 yards, while the 155th Brigade and the 2nd French Division had advanced between 200 and 300 yards. At 6 p.m. the 52nd Division was ordered to make the line good; it seemed to be fairly in our grasp.

All night long determined counter-attacks, one after another, were repulsed by the French and the 155th Brigade, but about 7.30 a.m. the right of the 157th Brigade gave way before a party of bombers, and our grip upon the enemy began to weaken.

I therefore decided that three battalions of the Royal Naval Division should reinforce a fresh attack to be made that afternoon, 13th July, on such portions of our original objectives as remained in the enemy's hands. This second attack was a success. The 1st French Division pushed their right down to the mouth of the Kereves Dere; the 2nd French Division attacked the trenches they had failed to take on the preceding day; the Nelson Battalion, on the left of the Royal Naval Division attack, valiantly advanced and made good, well supported by the artillery of the French. The Portsmouth Battalion, pressing on too far, fell into precisely the same error at precisely the same spot as did the 4th King's Own Scottish Borderers on the 12th, an over-impetuosity which cost them heavy losses.

The 1/5th Royal Scots Fusiliers, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. B. Pollok-McCall; the 1/7th Royal Scots, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Peebles; the 1/5th King's Own Scottish Borderers, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. Millar; and the 1/6th Highland Light Infantry, commanded by Major J. Anderson, are mentioned as having specially distinguished themselves in this engagement.

Generally the upshot of the attack was this. On our right and on the French left two lines had been captured, but in neither case was the third, or last, line of the system in their hands. Elsewhere a fine feat of arms had been accomplished, and a solid and enduring advance had been achieved, giving us far the best sited line for defence with much the best field for machine-gun and rifle fire we had hitherto obtained upon the peninsula.

A machine-gun and 200 prisoners were captured by the French; the British took a machine-gun and 329 prisoners. The casualties in the French Corps were not heavy, though it is with sorrow that I have to report the

mortal wound of General Masnou, commanding the 1st Division. Our own casualties were a little over 3,000; those of the enemy about 5,000.

REINFORCEMENTS AND NEW COMMANDS.

On 17th July Lieutenant-General Hunter Weston, commanding the 8th Corps, left the peninsula for a few days' rest, and, to my very deep regret, was subsequently invalided home. I have already drawn attention to his invincible self-confidence, untiring energy and trained ability.

As I was anxious to give the Commander of the new troops all the local experience possible I appointed Lieutenant-General Hon. Sir Frederick Stopford, whose own Corps were now assembling at Mudros, temporarily to succeed Lieutenant-General Hunter Weston, but on 24th July, when General Stopford had to set to work with his own Corps, Major-General W. Douglas, General Officer Commanding 42nd Division, took over temporary command of the 8th Corps; while Major-General W. R. Marshall, General Officer Commanding 87th Brigade, assumed temporary command of the 42nd Division.

Only one other action need be mentioned before coming to the big operations of August. On the extreme right of Anzac the flank of a work called Tasmania Post was threatened by the extension of a Turkish trench. The task of capturing this trench was entrusted to the 3rd Australian Brigade. After an artillery bombardment, mines were to be fired, whereupon four columns of 50 men each were to assault and occupy specified lengths of the trench. The regiment supplying the assaulting columns was the 11th Australian Infantry Battalion.

At 10.15 p.m. on 31st July the bombardment was opened. Ten minutes later and the mines were duly fired. The four assaulting parties dashed forward at once, crossed our own barbed wire on planks, and were into the craters before the whole of the debris had fallen. Total casualties: 11 killed and 74 wounded; Turkish killed, 100.

By the time this action was fought a large proportion of my reinforcements had arrived, and, on the same principle which induced me to put General Stopford in temporary command at Helles, I relieved the war-worn 29th Division at the same place by the 13th Division under Major-General Shaw. The experiences here gained, in looking after themselves, in forgetting the thousand and one details of peace soldiering and in grasping the two or three elementary rules of conduct in war soldiering, were, it

turned out, to be of priceless advantage to the 13th Division throughout the heavy fighting of the following month.

I

The Preliminaries.

And now it was time to determine a date for the great venture. The moon would rise on the morning of the 7th at about 2 a.m. A day or two previously the last reinforcements, the 53rd and 54th Divisions, were due to arrive. The first day of the attack was fixed for the 6th of August.

VARIOUS RUSES.

Once the date was decided a certain amount of Ingenuity had to be called into play so as to divert the attention of the enemy from my main strategical conception. This—I repeat for the sake of clearness—was:—

(1) To break out with a rush from Anzac and cut off the bulk of the Turkish Army from land communication with Constantinople.

(2) To gain such a command for my artillery as to cut off the bulk of the Turkish Army from sea traffic whether with Constantinople or with Asia.

(3) Incidentally, to secure Suvla Bay as a winter base for Anzac and all the troops operating in the northern theatre.

My schemes for hoodwinking the Turks fell under two heads: First, strategical diversions, meant to draw away enemy reserves not yet committed to the peninsula. Secondly, tactical diversions meant to hold up enemy reserves already on the peninsula. Under the first heading came a surprise landing by a force of 300 men on the northern shore of the Gulf of Saros; demonstrations by French ships opposite Mitylene along the Syrian coast; concentration at Mitylene; inspections at Mitylene by the Admiral and myself; making to order of a whole set of maps of Asia in Egypt, as well as secret service work, most of which bore fruit.

Amongst the tactical diversions were a big containing attack at Helles. Soundings, registration of guns, etc., by monitors between Gaba Tepe and Kum Tepe. An attack to be carried out by Anzac on Lone Pine trenches, which lay in front of their right wing and as far distant as the local terrain would admit from the scene of the real battle. Thanks entirely to the reality and vigour which the Navy and the troops threw into them, each one of these ruses was, it so turned out, entirely successful, with the result that the Turks, despite their excellent spy system, were caught completely off their guard at dawn on the 7th of August.

Having settled upon the manner and time of the diversions, orders had to be issued for the main operation. And here I must pause a moment to draw your Lordship's attention to the extraordinary complexity of the staff work caused by the unique distribution of my forces. Within the narrow confines of the positions I held on the peninsula it was impossible to concentrate even as much as one-third of the fresh troops about to be launched to the attack. Nor could Mudros and Imbros combined absorb the whole of the remainder. The strategic concentration which precedes a normal battle had in my case to be a very wide dispersion. Thus of the forces destined for my offensive, on the day before the battle, part were at Anzac, part at Imbros, part at Mudros, and part at Mitylene. These last three detachments were separated respectively by 14, 60, and 120 miles of sea from the arena into which they were simultaneously to appear.

To ensure the punctual arrival of all these masses of inexperienced troops at the right moment and spot, together with their material, munitions, stores, supplies, water, animals, and vehicles, was a prodigious undertaking demanding not only competence, but self-confidence; and I will say for my General Staff that I believe the clearness and completeness of their orders for this concentration and landing will hereafter be studied as models in military academies. The need for economy in sea transport, the awkwardness and restriction of open beaches, the impossibility of landing guns, animals, or vehicles rapidly—all these made it essential to create a special, separate organization for every single unit taking part in the adventure. A pack mule corps to supply 80,000 men had also to be organized for that specific purpose until such time as other transport could be landed.

As to water, that element of itself was responsible for a whole chapter of preparations. An enormous quantity had to be collected secretly, and as secretly stowed away at Anzac, where a high-level reservoir had to be built, having a holding capacity of 30,000 gallons, and fitted out with a regular system of pipes and distribution tanks. A stationary engine was brought over from Egypt to fill that reservoir. Petroleum tins, with a carrying capacity of 80,000 gallons, were got together, and fixed up with handles, etc., but the collision of the *Moorgate* with another vessel delayed the arrival of large numbers of these just as a breakdown in the stationary engine upset for a while the well-laid plan of the high-level reservoir. But Anzac was ever resourceful in face of misadventures, and when the inevitable accidents arose it was not with folded hands that they were met.

Turning to Suvla Bay, it was believed that good wells and springs existed both in the Biyuk, Anafarta valley, and in Suvla plain. But nothing so vital could possibly be left to hearsay, and although, as it turned out, our information was perfectly correct, yet the War Office were asked to dispatch with each reinforcing division water receptacles for pack transport at the rate of half a gallon per man.

THE WORK OF THE NAVY.

The sheet anchor on which hung the whole of these elaborate schemes was the Navy. One tiny flaw in the perfect mutual trust and confidence animating the two services would have wrecked the whole enterprise. Experts at a distance may have guessed as much; it was self-evident to the rawest private on the spot. But with men like Vice-Admiral de Robeck. Commodore Roger Keyes, Rear-Admiral Christian, and Captain F. H. Mitchell at our backs, we soldiers were secured against any such risk, and it will be seen how perfect was the precision the sailors put into their job.

The hour was now approaching, and I waited for it with as much confidence as is possible when to the inevitable uncertainties of war are to be added those of the weather. Apart from feints, the first blow was to be dealt in the southern zone.

In that theatre I had my own Poste de Commandement. But upon the 6th of August attacks in the south were only to form a subsidiary part of one great concerted attack. Anzac was to deliver the knock-down blow; Helles and Suvla were complementary operations. Were I to commit myself at the outset to any one of these three theatres I must lose my sense of proportion. Worse, there being no lateral communication between them, as soon as I landed at one I was cut off from present touch with both of the others. At Imbros I was 45 minutes from Helles, 40 minutes from Anzac, and 50 minutes from Suvla. Imbros was the centre of the cable system, and thence I could follow each phase of the triple attack and be ready with my two divisions of reserve to throw in reinforcements where they seemed most to be required. Therefore I decided to follow the opening moves from General Headquarters.

II

The Feint at Helles.

At Helles the attack of the 6th was directed against 1,200 yards of the Turkish front opposite our own right and right centre, and was to be carried out by the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division. Two small Turkish trenches enfilading the main advance had, if possible, to be captured simultaneously, an affair which was entrusted to the 42nd Division.

After bombardment the infantry assaulted at 3.50 p.m. On the left large sections of the enemy's line were carried, but on our centre and right the Turks were encountered in masses, and the attack, pluckily and perseveringly as it was pressed, never had any real success. The 1st Battalion, Essex Regiment, in particular forced their way into the crowded enemy trench opposite them, despite the most determined resistance, but, once in, were subjected to the heaviest musketry fire from both flanks, as well as in reverse, and were shattered by showers of bombs. Two separate resolute attacks were made by the 42nd Division, but both of them recoiled in face of the unexpected volume of fire developed by the Turks.

After dark officer's patrols were sent up to ascertain the exact position of affairs. Heavy Turkish counter-attacks were being pressed against such portions of the line we still retained. Many of our men fought it out where they stood to the last, but by nightfall none of the enemy's line remained in our possession.

Our set back was in no wise the fault of the troops. That ardour which only dashed itself to pieces against the enemy's strong entrenchments and numerous stubborn defenders on the 6th of August would, a month earlier, have achieved notable success. Such was the opinion of all. But the *moral*, as well as the strength of the Turks, had had time to rise to great heights since our last serious encounters with them on the 21st and 28th of June and on the 12th of July. On those dates all ranks had felt, as an army feels, instinctively, yet with certitude, that they had fairly got the upper hand of the enemy, and that, given the wherewithal, they could have gone on steadily advancing. Now that self-same, half-beaten enemy were again making as stout a resistance as they had offered us at our original landing!

For this recovery of the Turks there were three reasons: one moral, one material, and one fortuitous.

(1) The news of the enemy's advance on the Eastern front had come to hand and had been advertised to us on posters from the

Turkish trenches before we heard about it from home.

(2) Two new divisions had come down south to Helles to replace those we had most severely handled.

(3) The enemy trenches selected for our attack were found to be packed with troops and so were their communication trenches, the reason being, as explained to us by prisoners, that the Turkish commander had meant to launch from them an attack upon us. We had, in fact, by a coincidence, as strange as it was unlucky, anticipated a Turkish offensive by an hour or two at most!

Sure enough, next morning, the enemy in their turn attacked the left of the line from which our own troops had advanced to the assault. A few of them gained a footing in our trenches and were all killed or captured. The remainder were driven back by fire.

As the aim of my action in this southern zone was to advance if I could, but in any case to contain the enemy, and prevent him reinforcing to the northwards, I persevered on the 7th with my plans, notwithstanding the counter-attack of the Turks which was actually in progress. My objective this time was a double line of Turkish trenches on a front of about 800 yards between the Mal Tepe Dere and the west branch of the Kanli Dere. After a preliminary bombardment the troops of the 125th Brigade on the right and the 129th on the left made the assault at 9.40 a.m. From the outset it was evident that the enemy were full of fight and in great force, and that success would only be gained after a severe struggle. On the right and on the centre the first enemy line was captured, and small parties pushed on to the second line, where they were unable to maintain themselves for long. On the left but little ground was gained, and by 11 a.m. what little had been taken had been relinquished.

THE BATTLE OF A VINEYARD.

But in the centre a stiff battle raged all day up and down a vineyard some 200 yards long by 100 yards broad on the west of the Krithia road. A large portion of the vineyard had been captured in the first dash, and the East Lancashire men in this part of the field gallantly stood their ground here against a succession of vigorous counter-attacks. The enemy suffered very severely in these counter-attacks, which were launched in strength and at short intervals. Both our Brigades had also lost heavily during the advance and in repelling the fierce onslaughts of the enemy, but, owing to the fine endurance of the 6th and 7th Battalions of the Lancashire Fusiliers, it was

found possible to hold the vineyard through the night, and a massive column of the enemy which strove to overwhelm their thinned ranks was shattered to pieces in the attempt.

On 8th August Lieutenant-General Sir F. J. Davies took over command of the 8th Army Corps, and Major-General W. Douglas reverted to the command of the 42nd Division. For two more days his troops were called upon to show their qualities of vigilance and power of determined resistance, for the enemy had by no means yet lost hope of wresting from us the ground we had won in the vineyard. This unceasing struggle, was a supreme test for battalions already exhausted by 48 hours' desperate fighting and weakened by the loss of so many good leaders and men; but the peculiar grit of the Lancastrians was equal to the strain, and they did not fail. Two specially furious counter-attacks were delivered by the Turks on the 8th August, one at 4.40 a.m. and another at 8.30 p.m., where again our bayonets were too much for them. Throughout the night they made continuous bomb attacks, but the 6th Lancashire Fusiliers and the 4th East Lancashire Regiment stuck gamely to their task at the eastern corner of the vineyard.

There was desperate fighting also at the northern corner, where the personal bravery of Lieutenant W. T. Forshaw, 1/9th Manchester Regiment, who stuck to his post after his detachment had been relieved (an act for which he has since been awarded the V.C.), was largely instrumental in the repulse of three very determined onslaughts.

By the morning of the 9th August things were quieter, and the sorely tried troops were relieved. On the night of the 12th-13th the enemy made one more sudden, desperate dash for their vineyard—and got it! But, on the 13th, our bombers took the matter in hand. The Turks were finally driven out; the new fire trenches were wired and loopholed, and have since become part of our line.

These two attacks had served their main purpose. If the local successes were not all that had been hoped for, yet a useful advance had been achieved, and not only had they given a fresh, hard fighting enemy more than he had bargained for, but they had actually drawn down Turkish reinforcements to their area. And how can a Commander say enough for the troops who, aware that their task was only a subsidiary one, fought with just as much vim and resolution as if they were storming the battlements of Constantinople!

I will now proceed to tell of the assault on Chunuk Bair by the forces under General Birdwood, and of the landing of the 9th Corps in the neighbourhood of Suvla Bay. The entire details of the operations allotted to the troops to be employed in the Anzac area were formulated by Lieutenant-General Birdwood, subject only to my final approval. So excellently was this vital business worked out on the lines of the instructions issued that I had no modifications to suggest, and all these local preparations were completed by 6th August in a way which reflects the greatest credit, not only on the Corps Commander and his staff, but also upon the troops themselves, who had to toil like slaves to accumulate food, drink, and munitions of war. Alone the accommodation for the extra troops to be landed necessitated an immense amount of work in preparing new concealed bivouacs, in making interior communications, and in storing water and supplies, for I was determined to put on shore as many fighting men as our modest holding at Anzac could possibly accommodate or provision. All the work was done by Australian and New Zealand soldiers almost entirely by night, and the uncomplaining efforts of these much-tried troops in preparation are in a sense as much to their credit as their heroism in the battles that followed. Above all, the water problem caused anxiety to the Admiral, to Lieutenant-General Birdwood, and to myself.

The troops to advance from Suvla Bay across the Anafarta valley might reckon on finding some wells—it was certain, at least, that no water was waiting for us on the crests of the ridges of Sari Bair! Therefore, first, several days' supply had to be stocked into tanks along the beach and thence pumped up into other tanks half-way up the mountains; secondly, a system of mule transport had to be worked out, so that in so far as was humanly possible, thirst should not be allowed to overcome the troops after they had overcome the difficulties of the country and the resistance of the enemy.

III

The Anzac Battles.

On the nights of the 4th, 5th, and 6th August the reinforcing troops were shipped into Anzac very silently at the darkest hours. Then, still silently, they were tucked away from enemy aeroplanes or observatories in their prepared hiding places. The whole sea route lay open to the view of the Turks upon Achi Baba's summit and Battleship Hill. Aeroplanes could count every tent and every ship at Mudros or at Imbros. Within rifle fire of Anzac's open beach hostile riflemen were looking out across the Ægean no more than 20 feet from our opposing lines. Every modern appliance of telescope, telegraph, wireless was at the disposal of the enemy. Yet the instructions worked out at General Headquarters in the minutest detail (the result of conferences with the Royal Navy, which were attended by Brigadier-General Skeen, of General Birdwood's Staff) were such that the scheme was carried through without a hitch.

The preparation of the ambush was treated as a simple matter by the services therein engaged, and yet I much doubt whether any more pregnant enterprise than this of landing so large a force under the very eyes of the enemy, and of keeping them concealed there three days, is recorded in the annals of war.

The troops now at the disposal of General Birdwood amounted in round numbers to 37,000 rifles and 72 guns, with naval support from two cruisers, four monitors, and two destroyers. Under the scheme these troops were to be divided into two main portions. The task of holding the existing Anzac position, and of making frontal assaults therefrom, was assigned to the Australian Division (plus the 1st and 3rd Light Horse Brigades and two battalions of the 40th Brigade); that of assaulting the Chunuk Bair ridge was entrusted to the New Zealand and Australian Division (less the 1st and 3rd Light Horse Brigades), to the 13th Division (less five battalions), and to the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, and to the Indian Mountain Artillery Brigade. The 29th Brigade of the 10th Division (less one battalion) and the 38th Brigade were held in reserve.

THE ATTACK ON THE LONE PINE TRENCHES.

The most simple method of developing this complicated series of operations will be first to take the frontal attacks from the existing Anzac position, and afterwards to go on to the assault on the more distant ridges. During the 4th, 5th, and 6th of August the works on the enemy's left and

centre were subjected to a slow bombardment, and on the afternoon of the 6th August an assault was made upon the formidable Lone Pine entrenchment. Although, in its essence, a diversion to draw the enemy's attention and reserves from the grand attack impending upon his right, yet, in itself, Lone Pine was a distinct step on the way across to Maidos. It commanded one of the main sources of the Turkish water supply, and was a work, or, rather, a series of works, for the safety of which the enemy had always evinced a certain nervousness. The attack was designed to heighten this impression.

The work consisted of a strong *point d'appui* on the south-western end of a plateau, where it confronted, at distances varying from 60 to 120 yards, the salient in the line of our trenches named by us the Pimple. The entrenchment was evidently very strong; it was entangled with wire, and provided with overhead cover, and it was connected by numerous communication trenches with another *point d'appui* known as Johnston's Jolly on the north, as well as with two other works on the east and south. The frontage for attack amounted at most to some 220 yards, and the approaches lay open to heavy enfilade fire, both from the north and from the south.

The detailed scheme of attack was worked out with care and forethought by Major-General H. B. Walker, commanding 1st Australian Division, and his thoroughness contributed, I consider, largely to the success of the enterprise.

The action commenced at 4.30 p.m. with a continuous and heavy bombardment of the Lone Pine and adjacent trenches, H.M.S. *Bacchante* assisting by searching the valleys to the north-east and east, and the monitors by shelling the enemy's batteries south of Gaba Tepe. The assault had been entrusted to the 1st Australian Brigade (Brigadier-General N. M. Smyth), and punctually at 5.30 p.m. it was carried out by the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Australian Battalions, the 1st Battalion forming the Brigade reserve.

Two lines left their trenches simultaneously, and were closely followed up by a third. The rush across the open was a regular race against death, which came in the shape of a hail of shell and rifle bullets from front and from either flank. But the Australians had firmly resolved to reach the enemy's trenches, and in this determination they became for the moment invincible. The barbed wire entanglement was reached and was surmounted. Then came a terrible moment, when it seemed as though it would be physically impossible to penetrate into the trenches. The overhead cover of stout pine beams resisted all individual efforts to move it, and the loopholes

continued to spit fire. Groups of our men then bodily lifted up the beams and individual soldiers leaped down into the semi-darkened galleries amongst the Turks. By 5.47 p.m. the 3rd and 4th Battalions were well into the enemy's vitals, and a few minutes later the reserves of the 2nd Battalion advanced over their *parados*, and driving out, killing, or capturing the occupants, made good the whole of the trenches. The reserve companies of the 3rd and 4th Battalions followed, and at 6.20 p.m. the 1st Battalion (in reserve) was launched to consolidate the position.

At once the Turks made it plain, as they have never ceased to do since, that they had no intention of acquiescing in the capture of this capital work. At 7.00 p.m. a determined and violent counter-attack began, both from the north and from the south. Wave upon wave the enemy swept forward with the bayonet. Here and there a well-directed salvo of bombs emptied a section of a trench, but whenever this occurred the gap was quickly filled by the initiative of the officers and the gallantry of the men.

THE COUNTER-ATTACKS.

The enemy allowed small respite. At 1.30 that night the battle broke out afresh. Strong parties of Turks swarmed out of the communication trenches, preceded by showers of bombs. For seven hours these counter-attacks continued. All this time consolidation was being attempted, although the presence of so many Turkish prisoners hampered movement and constituted an actual danger. In beating off these desperate counter-attacks very heavy casualties were suffered by the Australians. Part of the 12th Battalion, the reserve of the 3rd Brigade, had therefore to be thrown into the *mêlée*.

Twelve hours later, at 1.30 p.m. on the 7th, another effort was made by the enemy, lasting uninterruptedly at closest quarters till 5 p.m., then being resumed at midnight and proceeding intermittently till dawn. At an early period of this last counter-attack the 4th Battalion were forced by bombs to relinquish portion of a trench, but later on, led by their commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel McNaghten, they killed every Turk who had got in.

During the 8th of August advantage was taken of every cessation in the enemy's bombing to consolidate. The 2nd Battalion, which had lost its commanding officer and suffered especially severely, was withdrawn and replaced by the 7th Battalion, the reserve to the 2nd Infantry Brigade.

At 5 a.m. on 9th August the enemy made a sudden attempt to storm from the east and south-east after a feint of fire attack from the north. The 7th Battalion bore the brunt of the shock, and handled the attack so vigorously

that by 7.45 a.m. there were clear signs of demoralization in the enemy's ranks. But, although this marked the end of counter-attacks on the large scale, the bombing and sniping continued, though in less volume, throughout this day and night, and lasted till 12th August, when it at last became manifest that we had gained complete ascendancy. During the final grand assault our losses from artillery fire were large, and ever since the work has passed into our hands it has been a favourite daily and nightly mark for heavy shells and bombs.

THE AUSTRALIAN ACHIEVEMENT.

Thus was Lone Pine taken and held. The Turks were in great force and very full of fight, yet one weak Australian brigade, numbering at the outset but 2,000 rifles, and supported only by two weak battalions, carried the work under the eyes of a whole enemy division, and maintained their grip upon it like a vice during six days' successive counter-attacks. High praise is due to Brigadier-General N. M. Smyth and to his battalion commanders. The irresistible dash and daring of officers and men in the initial charge were a glory to Australia. The stout-heartedness with which they clung to the captured ground in spite of fatigue, severe losses, and the continual strain of shell fire and bomb attacks may seem less striking to the civilian; it is even more admirable to the soldier. From start to finish the artillery support was untiring and vigilant. Owing to the rapid, accurate fire of the 2nd New Zealand Battery, under Major Sykes, several of the Turkish onslaughts were altogether defeated in their attempts to get to grips with the Australians. Not a chance was lost by these gunners, although time and again the enemy's artillery made direct hits on their shields. The hand-to-hand fighting in the semi-obscurity of the trenches was prolonged and very bitterly contested.

In one corner eight Turks and six Australians were found lying as they had bayoneted one another. To make room for the fighting men the dead were ranged in rows on either side of the gangway. After the first violence of the counter-attacks had abated, 1,000 corpses—our own and Turkish—were dragged out from the trenches.

For the severity of our own casualties some partial consolation may be found in the facts, first, that those of the enemy were much heavier, our guns and machine-guns having taken toll of them as they advanced in mass formation along the reverse slopes; secondly, that the Lone Pine attack drew all the local enemy reserves towards it, and may be held, more than any other cause, to have been the reason that the Suvla Bay landing was so lightly opposed, and that comparatively few of the enemy were available at

first to reinforce against our attack on Sari Bair. Our captures in this feat of arms amounted to 134 prisoners, seven machine-guns, and a large quantity of ammunition and equipment.

THE FRONTAL ATTACKS FROM ANZAC.

Other frontal attacks from the existing Anzac positions were not so fortunate. They fulfilled their object in so far as they prevented the enemy from reinforcing against the attack upon the high ridges, but they failed to make good any ground. Taken in sequence of time, they included an attack upon the work known as German Officer's Trench, on the extreme right of our line, at midnight on August 6-7, also assaults on the Nek and Baby 700 trenches opposite the centre of our line, delivered at 4.30 a.m. on the 7th. The 2nd Australian Brigade did all that men could do; the 8th Light Horse only accepted their repulse after losing three-fourths of that devoted band who so bravely sallied forth from Russell's Top. Some of the works were carried, but in these cases the enemy's concealed machine-guns made it impossible to hold on. But all that day, as the result of these most gallant attacks, Turkish reserves on Battleship Hill were being held back to meet any dangerous development along the front of the old Anzac line, and so were not available to meet our main enterprise, which I will now endeavour to describe.

The first step in the real push—the step which above all others was to count—was the night attack on the summits of the Sari Bair ridge. The crest line of this lofty mountain range runs parallel to the sea, dominating the under-features contained within the Anzac position, although these fortunately defilade the actual landing-place. From the main ridge a series of spurs run down towards the level beach, and are separated from one another by deep, jagged gullies choked up with dense jungle. Two of these leading up to Chunuk Bair are called Chailak Dere and Sazli Beit Dere; another deep ravine runs up to Koja Chemen Tepe (Hill 305), the topmost peak of the whole ridge, and is called the Aghyl Dere.

THE PLAN OF THE GREAT MOVEMENT.

It was our object to effect a lodgment along the crest of the high main ridge with two columns of troops, but, seeing the nature of the ground and the dispositions of the enemy, the effort had to be made by stages. We were bound, in fact, to undertake a double subsidiary operation before we could hope to launch these attacks with any real prospect of success.

(1) The right covering force was to seize Table Top, as well as all other enemy positions commanding the foothills between the Chailak Dere and the Sazli Beit Dere ravines. If this enterprise succeeded it would open up the ravines for the assaulting columns, whilst at the same time interposing between the right flank of the left covering force and the enemy holding the Sari Bair main ridge.

(2) The left covering force was to march northwards along the beach to seize a hill called Damakjelik Bair, some 1,400 yards north of Table Top. If successful it would be able to hold out a hand to the 9th Corps as it landed south of Nibrunesi Point, whilst at the same time protecting the left flank of the left assaulting column against enemy troops from the Anafarta valley during its climb up the Aghyl Dere ravine.

(3) The right assaulting column was to move up the Chailak Dere and Sazli Beit Dere ravines to the storm of the ridge of Chunuk Bair.

(4) The left assaulting column was to work up the Aghyl Dere and prolong the line of the right assaulting column by storming Hill 305 (Koja Chemen Tepe), the summit of the whole range of hills.

To recapitulate, the two assaulting columns, which were to work up three ravines to the storm of the high ridge, were to be preceded by two covering columns. One of these was to capture the enemy's positions commanding the foothills, first to open the mouths of the ravines, secondly to cover the right flank of another covering force whilst it marched along the beach. The other covering column was to strike far out to the north until, from a hill called Damakjelik Bair, it could at the same time facilitate the landing of the 9th Corps at Nibrunesi Point, and guard the left flank of the column assaulting Sari Bair from any forces of the enemy which might be assembled in the Anafarta valley.

GENERAL GODLEY'S COMMAND.

The whole of this big attack was placed under the command of Major-General Sir A. J. Godley, General Officer Commanding New Zealand and Australian Division. The two covering and the two assaulting columns were organized as follows:—

Right Covering Column, under Brigadier-General A. H. Russell.—New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade, the Otago Mounted Rifles Regiment, the Maori Contingent and New Zealand Field Troop.

Right Assaulting Column, under Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston.—New Zealand Infantry Brigade, Indian Mountain Battery (less one section),

one Company New Zealand Engineers.

Left Covering Column, under Brigadier-General J. H. Travers.—Headquarters 40th Brigade, half the 72nd Field Company, 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers, and 5th Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment.

Left Assaulting Column, under Brigadier-General (now Major-General) H. V. Cox.—29th Indian Infantry Brigade, 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, Indian Mountain Battery (less one section), one company New Zealand Engineers.

Divisional Reserve.—6th Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment, and 8th Battalion, Welsh Regiment (Pioneers) at Chailak Dere, and the 39th Infantry Brigade and half 72nd Field Company at Aghyl Dere.

The right covering column, it will be remembered, had to gain command of the Sazli Beit Dere and the Aghyl Dere ravines, so as to let the assaulting column arrive intact within striking distance of the Chunuk Bair ridge. To achieve this object it had to clear the Turks off from their right flank positions upon Old No. 3 Post and Table Top.

Old No. 3 Post, connected with Table Top by a razor back, formed the apex of a triangular piece of hill sloping gradually down to our No. 2 and No. 3 outposts. Since its recapture from us by the Turks on 30th May working parties had done their best with unstinted material to convert this commanding point into an impregnable redoubt. Two lines of fire trench, very heavily entangled, protected its southern face—the only one accessible to us—and, with its head cover of solid timber baulks and its strongly revetted outworks, it dominated the approaches of both the Chailak Dere and the Sazli Beit Dere.

STRATAGEMS.

Table Top is a steep-sided, flat-topped hill, close on 400 feet above sea level. The sides of the hill are mostly sheer and quite impracticable, but here and there a ravine, choked with scrub, and under fire of enemy trenches, gives precarious foothold up the precipitous cliffs. The small plateau on the summit was honeycombed with trenches, which were connected by a communication alley with that underfeature of Sari Bair known as Rhododendron Spur.

Amongst other stratagems the Anzac troops, assisted by H.M.S. *Colne*, had long and carefully been educating the Turks how they should lose Old No. 3 Post, which could hardly have been rushed by simple force of arms. Every night, exactly at 9 p.m., H.M.S. *Colne* threw the beams of her

searchlight on to the redoubt, and opened fire upon it for exactly 10 minutes. Then, after a 10 minutes' interval, came a second illumination and bombardment, commencing always at 9.20 and ending precisely at 9.30 p.m.

The idea was that, after successive nights of such practice, the enemy would get into the habit of taking the searchlight as a hint to clear out until the shelling was at an end. But on the eventful night of the 6th, the sound of their footsteps drowned by the loud cannonade, unseen as they crept along in that darkest shadow which fringes a searchlight's beam—came the right covering column. At 9.30 the light switched off, and instantly our men poured out of the scrub jungle and into the empty redoubt. By 11 p.m. the whole series of surrounding entrenchments were ours!

Once the capture of Old No. 3 Post was fairly under way, the remainder of the right covering column carried on with their attack upon Bauchop's Hill and the Chailak Dere. By 10 p.m. the northernmost point, with its machine-gun, was captured, and by 1 o'clock in the morning the whole of Bauchop's Hill, a maze of ridge and ravine, everywhere entrenched, was fairly in our hands.

The attack along the Chailak Dere was not so cleanly carried out—made, indeed, just about as ugly a start as any enemy could wish. Pressing eagerly forward through the night, the little column of stormers found themselves held up by a barbed-wire erection of unexampled height, depth, and solidity, which completely closed the river bed—that is to say, the only practicable entrance to the ravine. The entanglement was flanked by a strongly-held enemy trench running right across the opening of the Chailak Dere. Here that splendid body of men, the Otago Mounted Rifles, lost some of their bravest and their best, but in the end, when things were beginning to seem desperate, a passage was forced through the stubborn obstacle with most conspicuous and cool courage by Captain Shera and a party of New Zealand Engineers, supported by the Maoris, who showed themselves worthy descendants of the warriors of the Gate Pah. Thus was the mouth of the Chailak Dere opened in time to admit of the unopposed entry of the right assaulting column.

CAPTURE OF TABLE TOP.

Simultaneously the attack on Table Top had been launched under cover of a heavy bombardment from H.M.S. *Colne*. No General on peace manœuvres would ask troops to attempt so break-neck an enterprise. The flanks of Table Top are so steep that the height gives an impression of a mushroom shape—of the summit bulging out over its stem. But just as faith

moves mountains, so valour can carry them. The Turks fought bravely. The angle of Table Top's ascent is recognized in our regulations as "impracticable for infantry." But neither Turks nor angles of ascent were destined to stop Russell or his New Zealanders that night. There are moments during battle when life becomes intensified, when men become supermen, when the impossible becomes simple—and this was one of those moments. The scarped heights were scaled, the plateau was carried by midnight. With this brilliant feat the task of the right covering force was at an end. Its attacks had been made with the bayonet and bomb only; magazines were empty by order; hardly a rifle shot had been fired. Some 150 prisoners were captured as well as many rifles and much equipment, ammunition, and stores. No words can do justice to the achievement of Brigadier-General Russell and his men. There are exploits which must be seen to be realized.

The right assaulting column had entered the two southerly ravines—Sazli Beit Dere and Chailak Dere—by midnight. At 1.30 a.m. began a hotly-contested fight for the trenches on the lower part of Rhododendron Spur, whilst the Chailak Dere column pressed steadily up the valley against the enemy.

The left covering column, under Brigadier-General Travers, after marching along the beach to No. 3 outpost, resumed its northerly advance as soon as the attack on Bauchop's Hill had developed. Once the Chailak Dere was cleared the column moved by the mouth of the Aghyl Dere, disregarding the enfilade fire from sections of Bauchop's Hill still uncaptured. The rapid success of this movement was largely due to Lieutenant-Colonel Gillespie, a very fine man, who commanded the advance guard consisting of his own regiment, the 4th South Wales Borderers, a corps worthy of such a leader. Every trench encountered was instantly rushed by the Borderers, until having reached the predetermined spot, the whole column was unhesitatingly launched at Damakjelik Bair. Several Turkish trenches were captured at the bayonet's point, and by 1.30 a.m. the whole of the hill was occupied, thus safeguarding the left rear of the whole of the Anzac attack.

Here was an encouraging sample of what the New Army, under good auspices, could accomplish. Nothing more trying to inexperienced troops can be imagined than a long night march exposed to flanking fire, through a strange country, winding up at the end with a bayonet charge against a height, formless and still in the starlight, garrisoned by those spectres of imagination, worst enemies of the soldier.

BEGINNING OF THE GRAND ATTACK.

The left assaulting column crossed the Chailak Dere at 12.30 a.m., and entered the Aghyl Dere at the heels of the left covering column. The surprise, on this side, was complete. Two Turkish officers were caught in their pyjamas; enemy arms and ammunition were scattered in every direction.

The grand attack was now in full swing, but the country gave new sensations in cliff climbing even to officers and men who had graduated over the goat tracks of Anzac. The darkness of the night, the density of the scrub, hands and knees progress up the spurs, sheer physical fatigue, exhaustion of the spirit caused by repeated hairbreadth escapes from the hail of random bullets—all these combined to take the edge off the energies of our troops. At last, after advancing some distance up the Aghyl Dere, the column split up into two parts. The 4th Australian Brigade struggled, fighting hard as they went, up to the north of the northern fork of the Aghyl Dere, making for Hill 305 (Koja Chemen Tepe). The 29th Indian Infantry Brigade scrambled up the southern fork of the Aghyl Dere and the spurs north of it to the attack of a portion of the Sari Bair ridge known as Hill Q.

CAPTURE OF RHODODENDRON SPUR.

Dawn broke and the crest line was not yet in our hands, although, considering all things, the left assaulting column had made a marvellous advance. The 4th Australian Infantry Brigade was on the line of the Asma Dere (the next ravine north of the Aghyl Dere) and the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade held the ridge west of the Farm below Chunuk Bair and along the spurs to the north-east. The enemy had been flung back from ridge to ridge; an excellent line for the renewal of the attack had been secured, and (except for the exhaustion of the troops) the auspices were propitious.

Turning to the right assaulting column, one battalion, the Canterbury Infantry Battalion, clambered slowly up the Sazli Beit Dere. The remainder of the force, led by the Otago Battalion, wound their way amongst the pitfalls and forced their passage through the scrub of the Chailak Dere, where fierce opposition forced them ere long to deploy. Here, too, the hopeless country was the main hindrance, and it was not until 5.45 a.m. that the bulk of the column joined the Canterbury Battalion on the lower slopes of Rhododendron Spur. The whole force then moved up the spur, gaining touch with the left assaulting column by means of the 10th Gurkhas, in face of very heavy fire and frequent bayonet charges. Eventually they entrenched

on the top of Rhododendron Spur, a quarter of a mile short of Chunuk Bair —*i.e.*, of victory.

At 7 a.m. the 5th and 6th Gurkhas, belonging to the left assaulting column, had approached the main ridge north-east of Chunuk Bair, whilst, on their left, the 14th Sikhs had got into touch with the 4th Australian Brigade on the southern watershed of the Asma Dere. The 4th Australian Brigade now received orders to leave half a battalion to hold the spur, and, with the rest of its strength, plus the 14th Sikhs, to assault Hill 305 (Koja Chemen Tepe). But by this time the enemy's opposition had hardened, and his reserves were moving up from the direction of Battleship Hill. Artillery support was asked for and given, yet by 9 a.m. the attack of the right assaulting column on Chunuk Bair was checked, and any idea of a further advance on Koja Chemen Tepe had to be, for the moment, suspended. The most that could be done was to hold fast to the Asma Dere watershed whilst attacking the ridge north-east of Chunuk Bair, an attack to be supported by a fresh assault launched against Chunuk Bair itself.

At 9.30 a.m. the two assaulting columns pressed forward whilst our guns pounded the enemy moving along the Battleship Hill spurs. But in spite of all their efforts their increasing exhaustion as opposed to the gathering strength of the enemy's fresh troops began to tell—they had shot their bolt. So all day they clung to what they had captured and strove to make ready for the night. At 11 a.m. three battalions of the 39th Infantry Brigade were sent up from the general reserve to be at hand when needed, and, at the same hour, one more battalion of the reserve was dispatched to the 1st Australian Division to meet the drain caused by all the desperate Lone Pine fighting.

By the afternoon the position of the two assaulting columns was unchanged. The right covering force were in occupation of Table Top, Old No. 3 Post, and Bauchop Hill, which General Russell had been ordered to maintain with two regiments of Mounted Rifles, so that he might have two other regiments and the Maori Contingent available to move as required. The left covering force held Damakjelik Bair. The forces which had attacked along the front of the original Anzac line were back again in their own trenches. The Lone Pine work was being furiously disputed. All had suffered heavily and all were very tired.

So ended the first phase of the fighting for the Chunuk Bair ridge. Our aims had not fully been attained, and the help we had hoped for from Suvla had not been forthcoming. Yet I fully endorse the words of General Birdwood when he says: "The troops had performed a feat which is without parallel."

Great kudos is due to Major-Generals Godley and Shaw for their arrangements; to Generals Russell, Johnston, Cox, and Travers for their leading; but most of all, as every one of these officers will gladly admit, to the rank and file for their fighting. Nor may I omit to add that the true destroyer spirit with which H.M.S. *Colne* (Commander Claude Seymour, R.N.) and H.M.S. *Chelmer* (Commander Hugh T. England, R.N.) backed us up will live in the grateful memories of the Army.

THE FIGHT OF 8TH AUGUST.

In the course of this afternoon (7th August) reconnaissances of Sari Bair were carried out and the troops were got into shape for a fresh advance in three columns, to take place in the early morning.

The columns were composed as follows:—

Right Column, Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston.—26th Indian Mountain Battery (less one section), Auckland Mounted Rifles, New Zealand Infantry Brigade, two battalions 13th Division, and the Maori Contingent.

Centre and Left Columns, Major-General H. V. Cox.—21st Indian Mountain Battery (less one section), 4th Australian Brigade, 39th Infantry Brigade (less one battalion), with 6th Battalion South Lancashire Regiment attached, and the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade.

The right column was to climb up the Chunuk Bair ridge; the left column was to make for the prolongation of the ridge north-east to Koja Chemen Tepe, the topmost peak of the range.

The attack was timed for 4.15 a.m. At the first faint glimmer of dawn observers saw figures moving against the skyline of Chunuk Bair. Were they our own men, or were they the Turks? Telescopes were anxiously adjusted; the light grew stronger; men were seen climbing up from our side of the ridge; they *were* our own fellows—the topmost summit was ours!

On the right General Johnston's column, headed by the Wellington Battalion and supported by the 7th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, the Auckland Mounted Rifles Regiment, the 8th Welsh Pioneers, and the Maori Contingent, the whole most gallantly led by Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Malone, had raced one another up the steep. Nothing could check them. On they went, until, with a last determined rush, they fixed themselves firmly on the south-western slopes and crest of the main knoll known as the height of Chunuk Bair. With deep regret I have to add that the brave Lieutenant-

Colonel Malone fell mortally wounded as he was marking out the line to be held. The 7th Gloucesters suffered terrible losses here.

THE 7TH GLOUCESTERS.

The fire was so hot that they never got a chance to dig their trenches deeper than some six inches, and there they had to withstand attack after attack. In the course of these fights every single officer, company sergeant-major, or company quartermaster-sergeant was either killed or wounded, and the battalion by midday consisted of small groups of men commanded by junior non-commissioned officers or privates. Chapter and verse may be quoted for the view that the rank and file of an army cannot long endure the strain of close hand-to-hand fighting unless they are given confidence by the example of good officers. Yet here is at least one instance where a battalion of the New Army fought right on, from midday till sunset, without *any* officers.

In the centre the 39th Infantry Brigade and the 29th Indian Brigade moved along the gullies leading up to the Sari Bair ridge—the right moving south of the Farm on Chunuk Bair, the left up the spurs to the north-east of the Farm against a portion of the main ridge north-east of Chunuk Bair, and the col to the north of it. So murderous was the enemy's fire that little progress could be made, though some ground was gained on the spurs to the north-east of the Farm.

On the left the 4th Australian Brigade advanced from the Asma Dere against the lower slopes of Abdul Rahman Bair (a spur running due north from Koja Chemen Tepe) with the intention of wheeling to its right and advancing up the spur. Cunningly placed Turkish machine-guns and a strong entrenched body of infantry were ready for this move, and the Brigade were unable to get on. At last, on the approach of heavy columns of the enemy, the Australians, virtually surrounded, and having already suffered losses of over 1,000, were withdrawn to their original position. Here they stood at bay, and though the men were by now half dead with thirst and with fatigue, they bloodily repulsed attack after attack delivered by heavy columns of Turks.

CAPTURE OF CHUNUK BAIR.

So stood matters at noon. Enough had been done for honour and much ground had everywhere been gained. The expected support from Suvla hung fire, but the capture of Chunuk Bair was a presage of victory; even the troops who had been repulsed were quite undefeated—quite full of fight—

and so it was decided to hold hard as we were till nightfall, and then to essay one more grand attack, wherein the footing gained on Chunuk Bair would this time be used as a pivot.

In the afternoon the battle slackened, excepting always at Lone Pine, where the enemy were still coming on in mass, and being mown down by our fire. Elsewhere the troops were busy digging and getting up water and food, no child's play, with their wretched lines of communication running within musketry range of the enemy.

That evening the New Zealand Brigade, with two regiments of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, and the Maoris, held Rhododendron Spur and the south-western slopes of the main knoll of Chunuk Bair. The front line was prolonged by the columns of General Cox and General Monash (with the 4th Australian Brigade). Behind the New Zealanders were the 38th Brigade in reserve, and in rear of General Monash two battalions of the 40th Brigade. The inner line was held as before, and the 29th Brigade (less two battalions) had been sent up from the general reserve, and remained still further in rear.

The columns for the renewed attack were composed as follows:—

No. 1 Column, Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston.—26th Indian Mountain Battery (less one section), the Auckland and Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiments, the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, and two battalions of the 13th Division.

No. 2 Column, Major-General H. V. Cox.—21st Indian Mountain Battery (less one section), 4th Australian Brigade, 39th Brigade (less the 7th Gloucester, relieved), with the 6th Battalion South Lancashire Regiment attached, and the Indian Infantry Brigade.

No. 3 Column, Brigadier-General A. H. Baldwin, Commanding 38th Infantry Brigade.—Two battalions each from the 38th and 29th Brigades and one from the 40th Brigade.

No. 1 Column was to hold and consolidate the ground gained on the 6th, and, in co-operation with the other columns, to gain the whole of Chunuk Bair, and extend to the south-east. No. 2 Column was to attack Hill Q on the Chunuk Bair ridge, and No. 3 Column was to move from the Chailak Dere, also on Hill Q. This last column was to make the main attack, and the others were to co-operate with it.

At 4.30 a.m. on August 9th the Chunuk Bair ridge and Hill Q were heavily shelled. The naval guns, all the guns on the left flank, and as many as possible from the right flank (whence the enemy's advance could be enfiladed), took part in this cannonade, which rose to its climax at 5.15 a.m., when the whole ridge seemed a mass of flame and smoke, whence huge clouds of dust drifted slowly upwards in strange patterns on to the sky. At 5.16 a.m. this tremendous bombardment was to be switched off on to the flanks and reverse slopes of the heights.

General Baldwin's column had assembled in the Chailak Dere, and was moving up towards General Johnston's headquarters. Our plan contemplated the massing of this column immediately behind the trenches held by the New Zealand Infantry Brigade. Thence it was intended to launch the battalions in successive lines, keeping them as much as possible on the high ground. Infinite trouble had been taken to ensure that the narrow track should be kept clear, guides also were provided; but in spite of all precautions the darkness, the rough scrub-covered country, its sheer steepness, so delayed the column that they were unable to take full advantage of the configuration of the ground, and, inclining to the left, did not reach the line of the Farm—Chunuk Bair till 5.15 a.m. In plain English, Baldwin, owing to the darkness and the awful country, lost his way—through no fault of his own. The mischance was due to the fact that time did not admit of the detailed careful reconnaissance of routes which is so essential where operations are to be carried out by night.

THE GURKHAS REACH THE SUMMIT RIDGE.

And now, under that fine leader, Major C. G. L. Allanson, the 6th Gurkhas of the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade pressed up the slopes of Sari Bair, crowned the heights of the col between Chunuk Bair and Hill Q, viewed far beneath them the waters of the Hellespont, viewed the Asiatic shores along which motor transport was bringing supplies to the lighters. Not only did this battalion, as well as some of the 6th South Lancashire Regiment, reach the crest, but they began to attack down the far side of it, firing as they went at the fast retreating enemy. But the fortune of war was against us. At this supreme moment Baldwin's column was still a long way from our trenches on the crest of Chunuk Bair, whence they should even now have been sweeping out towards Q along the whole ridge of the mountain. And instead of Baldwin's support came suddenly a salvo of heavy shell.

These falling so unexpectedly among the stormers threw them into terrible confusion. The Turkish commander saw his chance; instantly his troops were rallied and brought back in a counter-charge, and the South Lancashires and Gurkhas, who had seen the promised land and had seemed for a moment to have held victory in their grasp, were forced backwards over the crest and on to the lower slopes whence they had first started.

But where was the main attack—where was Baldwin? When that bold but unlucky commander found he could not possibly reach our trenches on the top of Chunuk Bair in time to take effective part in the fight, he deployed for attack where he stood—i.e. at the Farm to the left of the New Zealand Brigade's trenches on Rhododendron Spur. Now his men were coming on in fine style and, just as the Turks topped the ridge with shouts of elation, two companies of the 6th East Lancashire Regiment, together with the 10th Hampshire Regiment, charged up our side of the slope with the bayonet. They had gained the high ground immediately below the commanding knoll on Chunuk Bair, and a few minutes earlier would have joined hands with the Gurkhas and South Lancashires and, combined with them, would have carried all before them. But the Turks by this time were lining the whole of the high crest in overwhelming numbers.

The New Army troops attacked with a fine audacity, but they were flung back from the height and then pressed still further down the slope, until General Baldwin had to withdraw his command to the vicinity of the Farm, whilst the enemy, much encouraged, turned their attention to the New Zealand troops and the two New Army battalions of No. 1 Column still holding the south-west half of the main knoll of Chunuk Bair. Constant attacks, urged with fanatical persistence, were met here with a sterner resolution, and although, at the end of the day, our troops were greatly exhausted, they still kept their footing on the summit. And if that summit meant much to us, it meant even more to the Turks. For the ridge covered our landing-places, it is true, but it covered not only the Turkish beaches at Kilia Leman and Maidos, but also the Narrows themselves and the roads leading northward to Bulair and Constantinople.

That evening our line ran along Rhododendron Spur up to the crest of Chunuk Bair, where about 200 yards were occupied and held by some 800 men. Slight trenches had hastily been dug, but the fatigue of the New Zealanders and the fire of the enemy had prevented solid work being done. The trenches in many places were not more than a few inches deep. They were not protected by wire. Also many officers are of opinion that they had not been well sited in the first instance. On the South African system the

main line was withdrawn some twenty-five yards from the crest instead of being actually on the crestline itself, and there were not even look-out posts along the summit. Boer skirmishers would thus have had to show themselves against the skyline before they could annoy. But here we were faced by regulars taught to attack in mass with bayonet or bomb. And the power of collecting overwhelming numbers at very close quarters rested with whichever side held the true skyline in force.

From Chunuk Bair the line ran down to the Farm and almost due north to the Asma Dere southern watershed, whence it continued westward to the sea near Asmak Kuyu. On the right the Australian division was still holding its line and Lone Pine was still being furiously attacked. The 1st Australian Brigade was now reduced from 2,900 to 1,000, and the total casualties up to 8 p.m. on the 9th amounted to about 8,500. But the troops were still in extraordinarily good heart, and nothing could damp their keenness. The only discontent shown was by men who were kept in reserve.

THE TURKISH COUNTER-ATTACK.

During the night of the 9th-10th the New Zealand and New Army troops on Chunuk Bair were relieved. For three days and three nights they had been ceaselessly fighting. They were half dead with fatigue. Their lines of communication, started from sea level, ran across trackless ridges and ravines to an altitude of 800 feet, and were exposed all the way to snipers' fire and artillery bombardment. It had become imperative, therefore, to get them enough food, water, and rest; and for this purpose it was imperative also to withdraw them. Chunuk Bair, which they had so magnificently held, was now handed over to two battalions of the 13th Division, which were connected by the 10th Hampshire Regiment with the troops at the Farm. General Sir William Birdwood is emphatic on the point that the nature of the ground is such that there was no room on the crest for more than this body of 800 to 1,000 rifles.

The two battalions of the New Army chosen to hold Chunuk Bair were the 6th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and the 5th Wiltshire Regiment. The first of these arrived in good time and occupied the trenches. Even in the darkness their commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Levinge, recognized how dangerously these trenches were sited, and he began at once to dig observation posts on the actual crest and to strengthen the defences where he could. But he had not time given him to do much. The second battalion, the Wiltshires, were delayed by the intricate country. They did not

reach the edge of the entrenchment until 4 a.m., and were then told to lie down in what was believed, erroneously, to be a covered position.

At daybreak on Tuesday, 10th August, the Turks delivered a grand attack from the line Chunuk Bair—Hill Q against these two battalions, already weakened in numbers, though not in spirit, by previous fighting. First our men were shelled by every enemy gun, and then at 5.30 a.m. were assaulted by a huge column, consisting of no less than a full division plus a regiment of three battalions. The North Lancashire men were simply overwhelmed in their shallow trenches by sheer weight of numbers, whilst the Wilts, who were caught out in the open, were literally almost annihilated. The ponderous mass of the enemy swept over the crest, turned the right flank of our line below, swarmed round the Hampshires and General Baldwin's column, which had to give ground, and were only extricated with great difficulty and very heavy losses.

THE COUNTER-ATTACK CHECKED.

Now it was our turn. The warships and the New Zealand and Australian Artillery, the Indian Mounted Artillery Brigade, and the 69th Brigade Royal Field Artillery were getting the chance of a lifetime. As the successive solid lines of Turks topped the crest of the ridge gaps were torn through their formation and an iron rain fell on them as they tried to re-form in the gullies.

Not here only did the Turks pay dearly for their recapture of the vital crest. Enemy reinforcements continued to move up Battleship Hill under heavy and accurate fire from our guns, and still they kept topping the ridges and pouring down the western slopes of the Chunuk Bair as if determined to regain everything they had lost. But once they were over the crest they became exposed not only to the full blast of the guns, naval and military, but also to a battery of ten machine-guns belonging to the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, which played upon their serried ranks at close range until the barrels were red-hot. Enormous losses were inflicted, especially by these ten machine-guns; and of the swarms which had once fairly crossed the crest line only the merest handful ever straggled back to their own side of Chunuk Bair.

At this same time strong forces of the enemy (forces which I had reckoned would have been held back to meet our advance from Suvla Bay) were hurled against the Farm and the spurs to the north-east, where there arose a conflict so deadly that it may be considered as the climax of the four days' fighting for the ridge. Portions of our line were pierced and the troops driven clean down the hill. At the foot of the hill the men were rallied by

Staff Captain Street, who was there supervising the transport of food and water. Without a word, unhesitatingly, they followed him back to the Farm, where they plunged again into the midst of that series of struggles in which generals fought in the ranks and men dropped their scientific weapons and caught one another by the throat. So desperate a battle cannot be described. The Turks came on again and again, fighting magnificently, calling upon the name of God. Our men stood to it, and maintained, by many a deed of daring, the old traditions of their race. There was no flinching. They died in the ranks where they stood.

Here Generals Cayley, Baldwin, and Cooper and all their gallant men achieved great glory. On this bloody field fell Brigadier-General Baldwin, who earned his first laurels on Cæsar's Camp at Ladysmith. There, too, fell Brigadier-General Cooper, badly wounded; and there, too, fell Lieutenant-Colonel M. H. Nunn, commanding the 9th Worcestershire Regiment; Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. Levinge, commanding the 6th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment; and Lieutenant-Colonel J. Carden, commanding the 5th Wiltshire Regiment.

CASUALTIES.

Towards this supreme struggle the absolute last two battalions from the General Reserve were now hurried, but by 10 a.m. the effort of the enemy was spent. Soon their shattered remnants began to trickle back, leaving a track of corpses behind them, and by night, except prisoners or wounded, no live Turk was left upon our side of the slope.

That same day, 10th August, two attacks, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, were delivered on our positions along the Asmak Dere and Damakjelik Bair. Both were repulsed with heavy loss by the 4th Australian Brigade and the 4th South Wales Borderers, the men of the New Army showing all the steadiness of veterans. Sad to say, the Borderers lost their intrepid leader, Lieutenant-Colonel Gillespie, in the course of this affair.

By evening the total casualties of General Birdwood's force had reached 12,000, and included a very large proportion of officers. The 13th Division of the New Army, under Major-General Shaw, had alone lost 6,000 out of a grand total of 10,500. Baldwin was gone, and all his staff. Ten commanding officers out of thirteen had disappeared from the fighting effectives. The Warwicks and the Worcesters had lost literally every single officer. The old German notion that no unit would stand a loss of more than 25 per cent. had been completely falsified. The 13th Division and the 29th Brigade of the

10th (Irish) Division had lost more than twice that proportion, and, in spirit, were game for as much more fighting as might be required. But physically, though Birdwood's forces were prepared to hold all they had got, they were now too exhausted to attack—at least until they had rested and reorganized. So far they *had* held on to all they had gained, excepting only the footholds on the ridge between Chunuk Bair and Hill Q, momentarily carried by the Gurkhas, and the salient of Chunuk Bair itself, which they had retained for forty-eight hours. Unfortunately, these two pieces of ground, small and worthless as they seemed, were worth, according to the ethics of war, 10,000 lives, for by their loss or retention they just marked the difference between an important success and a signal victory.

At times I had thought of throwing my reserves into this stubborn central battle, where probably they would have turned the scale. But each time the water troubles made me give up the idea, all ranks at Anzac being reduced to one pint a day. True thirst is a sensation unknown to the dwellers in cool, well-watered England. But at Anzac, when mules with water "pakhals" arrived at the front, the men would rush up to them in swarms, just to lick the moisture that had exuded through the canvas bags. It will be understood, then, that until wells had been discovered under the freshly-won hills, the reinforcing of Anzac by even so much as a brigade was unthinkable.

HEROISM OF THE TROOPS.

The grand coup had not come off. The Narrows were still out of sight and beyond field-gun range. But this was not the fault of Lieutenant-General Birdwood or any of the officers and men under his command. No mortal can command success; Lieutenant-General Birdwood had done all that mortal man can do to deserve it. The way in which he worked out his instructions into practical arrangements and dispositions upon the terrain reflect high credit upon his military capacity. I also wish to bring to your Lordship's notice the valuable services of Major-General Godley, commanding the New Zealand and Australian Division. He had under him at one time a force amounting to two divisions, which he handled with conspicuous ability. Major-General F. C. Shaw, commanding 13th Division, also rose superior to all the trials and tests of these trying days. His calm and sound judgment proved to be of the greatest value throughout the arduous fighting I have recorded.

As for the troops, the joyous alacrity with which they faced danger, wounds, and death, as if they were some new form of exciting recreation, has astonished me—old campaigner as I am. I will say no more, leaving

Major-General Godley to speak for what happened under his eyes:—"I cannot close my report," he says, "without placing on record my unbounded admiration of the work performed, and the gallantry displayed, by the troops and their leaders during the severe fighting involved in these operations. Though the Australian, New Zealand, and Indian units had been confined to trench duty in a cramped space for some four months, and though the troops of the New Armies had only just landed from a sea voyage, and many of them had not been previously under fire, I do not believe that any troops in the world could have accomplished more. All ranks vied with one another in the performance of gallant deeds, and more than worthily upheld the best traditions of the British Army."

Although the Sari Bair ridge was the key to the whole of my tactical conception, and although the temptation to view this vital Anzac battle at closer quarters was very hard to resist, there was nothing in its course or conduct to call for my personal intervention.

IV.

The Landing at Suvla.

The conduct of the operations which were to be based upon Suvla Bay was entrusted to Lieutenant-General the Hon. Sir F. Stopford. At his disposal was placed the 9th Army Corps, less the 13th Division and the 29th Brigade of the 10th Division.

We believed that the Turks were still unsuspicious about Suvla and that their only defences near that part of the coast were a girdle of trenches round Lala Baba and a few unconnected lengths of fire trench on Hill 10 and on the hills forming the northern arm of the bay. There was no wire. Inland a small work had been constructed on Yilghin Burnu (locally known as Chocolate Hills), and a few guns had been placed upon these hills, as well as upon Ismail Oglu Tepe, whence they could be brought into action either against the beaches of Suvla Bay or against any attempt from Anzac to break out northwards and attack Chunuk Bair.

The numbers of the enemy allotted for the defence of the Suvla and Ejelmer areas (including the troops in the Anafarta villages, but exclusive of the general reserves in rear of the Sari Bair) were supposed to be under 4,000. Until the Turkish version of these events is in our hands it is not possible to be certain of the accuracy of this estimate. All that can be said at present is that my Intelligence Department were wonderfully exact in their figures as a rule, and that, in the case in question, events, the reports made by prisoners, etc., etc., seem to show that the forecast was correct.

Arrangements for the landing of the 9th Corps at Suvla were worked out in minute detail by my General Headquarters Staff in collaboration with the staff of Vice-Admiral de Robeck, and every precaution was taken to ensure that the destination of the troops was kept secret up to the last moment.

Whilst concentrated at the island of Imbros the spirit and physique of the 11th Division had impressed me very favourably. They were to lead off the landing. From Imbros they were to be ferried over to the peninsula in destroyers and motor-lighters. Disembarkation was to begin at 10.30 p.m., half an hour later than the attack on the Turkish outposts on the northern flank of Anzac, and I was sanguine enough to hope that the elaborate plan we had worked out would enable three complete brigades of infantry to be set ashore by daylight. Originally it had been intended that all three brigades should land on the beach immediately south of Nibrunesi Point, but in

deference to the representations of the Corps Commander I agreed, unfortunately, as it turned out, to one brigade being landed inside the bay.

The first task of the 9th Corps was to seize and hold the Chocolate and Ismail Oglu Hills, together with the high ground on the north and east of Suvla Bay. If the landing went off smoothly, and if my information regarding the strength of the enemy were correct, I hoped that these hills, with their guns, might be well in our possession before daybreak. In that case I hoped, further, that the first division which landed would be strong enough to picket and hold all the important heights within artillery range of the bay, when General Stopford would be able to direct the remainder of his force, as it became available, through the Anafartas to the east of the Sari Bair, where it should soon smash the mainspring of the Turkish opposition to Anzacs.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LANDING.

On the 22nd July I issued secret instructions and tables showing the number of craft available for the 9th Corps Commander, their capacity, and the points whereat the troops could be disembarked; also what numbers of troops, animals, vehicles, and stores could be landed simultaneously. The allocation of troops to the ships and boats was left to General Stopford's own discretion, subject only to naval exigencies, otherwise the order of the disembarkation might not have tallied with the order of his operations.

The factors governing the hour of landing were: First, that no craft could quit Kephalos Bay before dark (about 9 p.m.); secondly, that nothing could be done which would attract the attention of the enemy before 10 p.m., the moment when the outposts on the left flank of the Anzac position were to be rushed.

General Stopford next framed his orders on these secret instructions, and after they had received my complete approval he proceeded to expound them to the general officer commanding 11th Division and general officer commanding 10th Division, who came over from Mudros for the purpose.

As in the original landing, the luck of calm weather favoured us, and all the embarkation arrangements at Kephalos were carried out by the Royal Navy in their usual shipshape style. The 11th Division were to be landed at three places, designated and shown on the map as A, B, and C. Destroyers were told off for these landing-places, each destroyer towing a steam-lighter and picket-boat. Every light was to be dowsed, and as they neared the shore the destroyers were to slip their motor-lighters and picket-boats, which

would then take the beach and discharge direct on to it. The motor-lighters were new acquisitions since the first landing, and were to prove the greatest possible assistance. They moved five knots an hour under their own engines, and carried 500 men, as well as stores of ammunition and water. After landing their passengers they were to return to the destroyers, and in one trip would empty them also. Ketches with service launches and transport lifeboats were to follow the destroyers and anchor at the entrance of the bay, so that in case of accidents or delays to any one of the motor-lighters a picket-boat could be sent at once to a ketch to pick up a tow of lifeboats and take the place of a disabled motor-lighter. These ketches and tows were afterwards to be used for evacuating the wounded.

THE TRANSPORTS.

H.M.S. *Endymion* and H.M.S. *Theseus*, each carrying a thousand men, were also to sail from Imbros, after the destroyers, and, lying off the beach, were to discharge their troops directly the motor-lighters—three to each ship—were ready to convey the men to the shore, *i.e.*, after they had finished disembarking their own loads and those of the destroyers. When this was done—*i.e.*, after three trips—the motor-lighters would be free to go on transporting guns, stores, mules, etc.

The following crafts brought up the rear:—

(1) Two ketches, each towing four horse-boats, carrying four 18-pounder guns and twenty-four horses.

(2) One ketch, towing horse-boats with forty horses.

(3) The sloop *Aster*, with 500 men, towing a lighter containing eight mountain guns.

(4) Three ketches, towing horse-boats containing eight 18-pounder guns and seventy-six horses.

Water-lighters, towed by a tank steamer, were also timed to arrive at A beach at daylight. When they had been emptied they were to return at once to Kephalos to refill from the parent water-ship.

A specially fitted-out steamer, the *Prah*, with stores (shown by our experience of 25th April to be most necessary)—*i.e.*, water-pumps, hose, tanks, troughs, entrenching tools and all ordnance stores requisite for the prompt development of wells or springs—was also sent to Suvla.

So much detail I have felt bound, for the sake of clearness, to give in the body of my dispatch. The further detail, showing numbers landed, etc., etc.,

will be found in the appendix and tables attached.

WATER.

When originally I conceived the idea of these operations, one of the first points to be weighed was that of the water supply in the Biyuk Anafarta valley and the Suvla plain. Experience at Anzac had shown quite clearly that the whole plan must be given up unless a certain amount of water could be counted upon, and, fortunately, the information I received was reassuring. But, in case of accidents, and to be on the safe side, so long ago as June had I begun to take steps to counter the chance that we might, from one cause or another, find difficulty in developing the wells. Having got from the War Office all that they could give me, I addressed myself to India and Egypt, and eventually from these three sources I managed to secure portable receptacles for 100,000 gallons, including petrol tins, milk cans, camel tanks, water bags, and pakhals.

Supplementing these were lighters and water ships, all under naval control. Indeed, by arrangement with the Admiral, the responsibility of the Army was confined to the emptying of the lighters and the distribution of the water to the troops, the Navy undertaking to bring the full lighters to the shore to replace the empty ones, thus providing a continuous supply.

Finally, 3,700 mules, together with 1,750 water-carts, were provided for Anzac and Suvla—this in addition to 950 mules already at Anzac. Representatives of the Director of Supplies and Transport at Suvla and Anzac were sent to allot the transport which was to be used for carrying up whatever was most needed by units ashore, whether water, food, or ammunition.

This statement, though necessarily brief, will, I hope, suffice to throw some light upon the complexity of the arrangements thought out beforehand in order, so far as was humanly possible, to combat the disorganization, the hunger and the thirst which lie in wait for troops landing on a hostile beach.

On the evening of 6th August the 11th Division sailed on its short journey from Imbros (Kephalos) to Suvla Bay and, meeting with no mischance, the landing took place, the brigades of the 11th Division getting ashore practically simultaneously; the 32nd and 33rd Brigades at B and C beaches, the 34th at A beach.

SURPRISE OF THE TURKS.

The surprise of the Turks was complete. At B and C the beaches were found to be admirably suited to their purpose, and there was no opposition. The landing at A was more difficult, both because of the shoal water and because there the Turkish pickets and sentries—the normal guardians of the coast—were on the alert and active. Some of the lighters grounded a good way from the shore, and men had to struggle towards the beach in as much as four feet six inches of water. Ropes in several instances were carried from the lighters to the shore to help to sustain the heavily accoutred infantry. To add to the difficulties of the 34th Brigade the lighters came under flanking rifle fire from the Turkish outposts at Lala Baba and Ghazi Baba. The enemy even, knowing every inch of the ground, crept down in the very dark night on to the beach itself, mingling with our troops and getting between our firing line and its supports.

Fortunately the number of these enterprising foes was but few, and an end was soon put to their activity on the actual beaches by the sudden storming of Lala Baba from the south. This attack was carried out by the 9th West Yorkshire Regiment and the 6th Yorkshire Regiment, both of the 32nd Brigade, which had landed at B beach and marched up along the coast. The assaults succeeded at once and without much loss, but both battalions deserve great credit for the way it was delivered in the inky darkness of the night.

The 32nd Brigade was now pushed on to the support of the 34th Brigade, which was held up by another outpost of the enemy on Hill 10 (117 R. and S.), and it is feared that some of the losses occurred here were due to misdirected fire. While this fighting was still in progress the 11th Battalion Manchester Regiment, of the 34th Brigade, was advancing northwards in very fine style, driving the enemy opposed to them back along the ridge of the Karakol Dagh towards the Kiretch Tepe Sirt. Beyond doubt these Lancashire men earned much distinction, fighting with great pluck and grit against an enemy not very numerous perhaps, but having an immense advantage in knowledge of the ground.

As they got level with Hill 10 it grew light enough to see, and the enemy began to shell. No one seems to have been present who could take hold of the two brigades, the 32nd and 34th, and launch them in a concerted and cohesive attack. Consequently there was confusion and hesitation, increased by gorse fires lit by hostile shell, but redeemed, I am proud to report, by the conspicuously fine soldierly conduct of several individual battalions. The

whole of the Turks locally available were by now in the field, and they were encouraged to counter-attack by the signs of hesitation, but the 9th Lancashire Fusiliers and the 11th Manchester Regiment took them on with the bayonet, and fairly drove them back in disorder over the flaming Hill 10.

As the infantry were thus making good, the two Highland Mountain batteries and one battery, 59th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, were landed at B beach. Day was now breaking, and with the dawn sailed into the bay six battalions of the 10th Division, under Brigadier-General Hill, from Mitylene.

Here perhaps I may be allowed to express my gratitude to the Royal Navy for their share in this remarkable achievement, as well as a very natural pride at staff arrangements, which resulted in the infantry of a whole division and three batteries being landed during a single night on a hostile shore, whilst the arrival of the first troops of the supporting division, from another base distant 120 miles, took place at the very psychological moment when support was most needed, namely, at break of dawn.

The intention of the Corps Commander was to keep the 10th Division on the left, and with it to push on as far forward as possible along the Kiretch Tepe Sirt towards the heights above Ejelmer Bay. He wished, therefore, to land these six battalions of the 10th Division at A beach and, seeing Brigadier-General Hill, he told him that as the left of the 34th Brigade was being hard pressed he should get into touch with General Officer Commanding 11th Division, and work in support of his left until the arrival of his own Divisional General. But the Naval authorities, so General Stopford reports, were unwilling, for some reason not specified, to land these troops at A beach, so that they had to be sent in lighters to C beach, whence they marched by Lala Baba to Hill 10 under fire. Hence were caused loss, delay, and fatigue. Also the angle of direction from which these fresh troops entered the fight was not nearly so effective.

THE FIGHTING OF 7TH AUGUST.

The remainder of the 10th Division, three battalions (from Mudros), and with them the G.O.C. Lieutenant-General Sir B. Mahon, began to arrive, and the Naval authorities having discovered a suitable landing-place near Ghazi Baba, these battalions were landed there together with one battalion of the 31st Brigade, which had not yet been sent round to C beach. By this means it was hoped that both the brigades of the 10th Division would be able to rendezvous about half a mile to the north-west of Hill 10.

After the defeat of the enemy round and about Hill 10, they retreated in an easterly direction towards Sulajik and Kuchuk Anafarta Ova, followed by the 34th and 32nd Brigades of the 11th Division and by the 31st Brigade of the 10th Division, which had entered into the fight, not, as the Corps Commander had intended, on the left of the 11th Division, but between Hill 10 and the Salt Lake. I have failed in my endeavours to get some live human detail about the fighting which followed, but I understand from the Corps Commander that the brunt of it fell upon the 31st Brigade of the 10th (Irish) Division, which consisted of the 6th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the 6th Royal Irish Fusiliers, and the 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the last-named battalion being attached to the 31st Brigade.

By the evening General Hammersley had seized Yilghin Burnu (Chocolate Hills) after a fight for which he specially commends the 6th Lincoln Regiment and the 6th Border Regiment. At the same time he reported that he was unable to make any further progress towards the vital point, Ismail Oglu Tepe. At nightfall his brigade and the 31st Brigade were extended from about Hetman Chair through Chocolate Hills, Sulajik, to near Kuchuk Anafarta Ova.

This same day Sir B. Mahon delivered a spirited attack along the Kiretch Tepe Sirt ridge, in support of the 11th Battalion Manchester Regiment, and, taking some small trenches *en route*, secured and established himself on a position extending from the sea about 135 p., through the high ground about the p. of Kiretch Tepe Sirt, to about 135 Z. 8. In front of him, on the ridge, he reported the enemy to be strongly entrenched. The 6th Royal Munster Fusiliers have been named as winning special distinction here. The whole advance was well carried out by the Irishmen over difficult ground against an enemy—500 to 700 Gendarmerie—favoured by the lie of the land.

SUFFERINGS FROM WANT OF WATER.

The weather was very hot, and the new troops suffered much from want of water. Except at the southernmost extremity of the Kiretch Tepe Sirt ridge there was no water in that part of the field, and although it existed in some abundance throughout the area over which the 11th Division was operating, the Corps Commander reports that there was no time to develop its resources. Partly this seems to have been owing to the enemy's fire; partly to a want of that nous which stands by as second nature to the old campaigner; partly it was inevitable. Anyway, for as long as such a state of things lasted, the troops became dependent on the lighters and upon the water brought to the beaches in tins, pakhals, etc.

Undoubtedly the distribution of this water to the advancing troops was a matter of great difficulty, and one which required not only well-worked-out schemes from Corps and Divisional Staffs, but also energy and experience on the part of those who had to put them into practice. As it turned out, and judging merely by results, I regret to say that the measures actually taken in regard to the distribution proved to be inadequate, and that suffering and disorganization ensued. The disembarkation of artillery horses was therefore at once, and rightly, postponed by the Corps Commander, in order that mules might be landed to carry up water.

REASONS FOR FAILURE.

And now General Stopford, recollecting the vast issues which hung upon his success in forestalling the enemy, urged his Divisional Commanders to push on. Otherwise, as he saw, all the advantages of the surprise landing must be nullified. But the Divisional Commanders believed themselves, it seems, to be unable to move. Their men, they said, were exhausted by their efforts of the night of the 6th-7th and by the action of the 7th. The want of water had told on the new troops. The distribution from the beaches had not worked smoothly.

In some cases the hose had been pierced by individuals wishing to fill their own bottles; in others lighters had grounded so far from the beach that men swam out to fill batches of water-bottles. All this had added to the disorganization inevitable after a night landing, followed by fights here and there with an enemy scattered over a country to us unknown. These pleas for delay were perfectly well founded. But it seems to have been overlooked that the half-defeated Turks in front of us were equally exhausted and disorganized, and that an advance was the simplest and swiftest method of solving the water trouble and every other sort of trouble. Be this as it may, the objections overbore the Corps Commander's resolution. He had now got ashore three batteries (two of them mountain batteries), and the great guns of the ships were ready to speak at his request. But it was lack of artillery support which finally decided him to acquiesce in a policy of going slow which, by the time it reached the troops, became translated into a period of inaction. The Divisional Generals were, in fact, informed that, "in view of the inadequate artillery support," General Stopford did not wish them to make frontal attacks on entrenched positions, but desired them, so far as was possible, to try and turn any trenches which were met with. Within the terms of this instruction lies the root of our failure to make use of the priceless daylight hours of the 8th of August.

Normally, it may be correct to say that in modern warfare infantry cannot be expected to advance without artillery preparation. But in a landing on a hostile shore the order has to be inverted. The infantry must advance and seize a suitable position to cover the landing and to provide artillery positions for the main thrust. The very existence of the force, its water supply, its facilities for munitions and supplies, its power to reinforce, must absolutely depend on the infantry being able instantly to make good sufficient ground without the aid of the artillery other than can be supplied for the purpose by *floating* batteries.

This is not a condition that should take the commander of a covering force by surprise. It is one already foreseen. Driving power was required, and even a certain ruthlessness, to brush aside pleas for a respite for tired troops. The one fatal error was inertia. And inertia prevailed.

SIR IAN HAMILTON GOES TO SUVLA.

Late in the evening of the 7th the enemy had withdrawn the few guns which had been in action during the day. Beyond half a dozen shells dropped from very long range into the bay in the early morning of the 8th, no enemy artillery fired that day in the Suvla area. The guns had evidently been moved back, lest they should be captured when we pushed forward. As for the entrenched positions, these, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, were non-existent. The General Staff Officer whom I had sent on to Suvla early in the morning of the 8th reported by telegraph the absence of hostile gun-fire, the small amount of rifle fire, and the enemy's apparent weakness. He also drew attention to the inaction of our own troops, and to the fact that golden opportunities were being missed. Before this message arrived at general headquarters I had made up my mind, from the Corps Commander's own reports, that all was not well at Suvla. There was risk in cutting myself adrift, even temporarily, from touch with the operations at Anzac and Helles; but I did my best to provide against any sudden call by leaving Major-General W. P. Braithwaite, my Chief of the General Staff, in charge, with instructions to keep me closely informed of events at the other two fronts; and, having done this, I took ship and set out for Suvla.

On arrival at about 5 p.m. I boarded H.M.S. *Jonquil*, where I found corps headquarters, and where General Stopford informed me that the General Officer commanding 11th Division was confident of success in an attack he was to make at dawn next morning (the 9th). I felt no such confidence. Beyond a small advance by a part of the 11th Division between the Chocolate Hills and Ismail Oglu Tepe, and some further progress along

the Kiretch Tepe Sirt ridge by the 10th Division, the day of the 8th had been lost. The commander of the 11th Division had, it seems, ordered strong patrols to be pushed forward so as to make good all the strong positions in advance which could be occupied without serious fighting; but, as he afterwards reported, "little was done in this respect." Thus a priceless twelve hours had already gone to help the chances of the Turkish reinforcements which were, I knew, both from naval and aerial sources, actually on the march for Suvla. But when I urged that even now, at the eleventh hour, the 11th Division should make a concerted attack upon the hills, I was met by a *non possumus*. The objections of the morning were no longer valid; the men were now well rested, watered, and fed. But the Divisional Commanders disliked the idea of an advance by night, and General Stopford did not care, it seemed, to force their hands.

So it came about that I was driven to see whether I could not, myself, put concentration of effort and purpose into the direction of the large number of men ashore. The Corps Commander made no objection. He declared himself to be as eager as I could be to advance. The representations made by the Divisional Commanders had seemed to him insuperable. If I could see my way to get over them no one would be more pleased than himself.

Accompanied by Commodore Roger Keyes and Lieutenant-Colonel Aspinall, of the Headquarters General Staff, I landed on the beach, where all seemed quiet and peaceful, and saw the Commander of the 11th Division, Major-General Hammersley. I warned him the sands were running out fast, and that by dawn the high ground to his front might very likely be occupied in force by the enemy. He saw the danger, but declared that it was a physical impossibility, at so late an hour (6 p.m.), to get out orders for a night attack, the troops being very much scattered. There was no other difficulty now, but this was insuperable; he could not recast his orders or get them round to his troops in time. But one brigade, the 32nd, was, so General Hammersley admitted, more or less concentrated and ready to move. The General Staff Officer of the division, Colonel Neil Malcolm, a soldier of experience, on whose opinion I set much value, was consulted. He agreed that the 32nd Brigade was now in a position to act. I therefore issued a direct order that, even if it were only with this 32nd Brigade, the advance should begin at the earliest possible moment, so that a portion at least of the 11th Division should anticipate the Turkish reinforcements on the heights and dig themselves in there upon some good tactical point.

In taking upon myself the serious responsibility of thus dealing with a detail of divisional tactics I was careful to limit the scope of the interference.

Beyond directing that the one brigade which was reported ready to move at once should try and make good the heights before the enemy got on to them I did nothing, and said not a word calculated to modify or in any way affect the attack already planned for the morning. Out of the thirteen battalions which were to have advanced against the heights at dawn four were now to anticipate that movement by trying to make good the key of the enemy's position at once and under cover of darkness.

I have not been able to get a clear and coherent account of the doings of the 32nd Brigade; but I have established the fact that it did not actually commence its advance till 4 a.m. on the 9th of August. The reason given is that the units of the brigade were scattered. In General Stopford's despatch he says that, "One company of the 6th East Yorks Pioneer Battalion succeeded in getting to the top of the hill north of Anafarta Sagir, but the rest of the battalion and the 32nd Brigade were attacked from both flanks during their advance, and fell back to a line north and south of Sulajik. Very few of the leading company of the Royal Engineers who accompanied it got back, and that evening the strength of the battalion was nine officers and 380 men."

THE ATTACK OF 9TH AUGUST.

After their retirement from the hill north of Anafarta Sagir (which commanded the whole battlefield) this 32nd Brigade then still marked the high-water level of the advance made at dawn by the rest of the division. When their first retirement was completed they had to fall back further, so as to come into line with the most forward of their comrades. The inference seems clear. Just as the 32nd Brigade in their advance met with markedly less opposition than the troops who attacked an hour and a half later, so, had they themselves started earlier, they would probably have experienced less opposition. Further, it seems reasonable to suppose that had the complete division started at 4 a.m. on the 9th, or, better still, at 10 p.m. on the 8th, they would have made good the whole of the heights in front of them.

That night I stayed at Suvla, preferring to drop direct cable contact with my operations as a whole to losing touch with a corps battle which seemed to be going wrong.

At dawn on the 9th I watched General Hammersley's attack, and very soon realized, by the well-sustained artillery fire of the enemy (so silent the previous day) and by the volume of the musketry, that Turkish reinforcements had arrived; that with the renewed confidence caused by our long delay the guns had been brought back; and that, after all, we were

forestalled. This was a bad moment. Our attack failed; our losses were very serious. The enemy's enfilading shrapnel fire seemed to be especially destructive and demoralizing, the shell bursting low and all along our line. Time after time it threw back our attack just as it seemed upon the point of making good. The 33rd Brigade at first made most hopeful progress in its attempt to seize Ismail Oglu Tepe. Some of the leading troops gained the summit, and were able to look over on to the other side. Many Turks were killed here. Then the centre seemed to give way.

Whether this was the result of the shrapnel fire or whether, as some say, an order to retire came up from the rear, the result was equally fatal to success. As the centre fell back the steady, gallant behaviour of the 6th Battalion, Border Regiment, and the 6th Battalion, Lincoln Regiment, on either flank was especially noteworthy. Scrub fires on Hill 70 did much to harass and hamper our troops. When the 32nd Brigade fell back before attacks from the slopes of the hill north of Anafarta Sagir and from the direction of Abrijka they took up the line north and south through Sulajik. Here their left was protected by two battalions of the 34th Brigade, which came up to their support. The line was later on prolonged by the remainder of the 34th Brigade and two battalions of the 159th Brigade of the 53rd Division. Their right was connected with the Chocolate Hills by the 33rd Brigade on the position to which they had returned after their repulse from the upper slopes of Ismail Oglu Tepe.

Some of the units which took part in this engagement acquitted themselves very bravely. I regret I have not had sufficient detail given me to enable me to mention them by name. The Divisional Commander speaks with appreciation of one freshly-landed battalion of the 53rd Division, a Hereford battalion, presumably the 1/1st Herefordshire, which attacked with impetuosity and courage between Hetman Chair and Kaslar Chair, about Azmak Dere, on the extreme right of his line.

During the night of the 8th-9th and early morning of the 9th the whole of the 53rd (Territorial) Division (my general reserve) had arrived and disembarked. I had ordered it up to Suvla, hoping that by adding its strength to the 9th Corps General Stopford might still be enabled to secure the commanding ground round the bay. The infantry brigades of the 53rd Division (no artillery had accompanied it from England) reinforced the 11th Division.

On August 10th the Corps Commander decided to make another attempt to take the Anafarta ridge. The 11th Division were not sufficiently rested to play a prominent part in the operation, but the 53rd Division, under General Lindley, was to attack, supported by General Hammersley. On the 10th there were one brigade of Royal Field Artillery ashore, with two mountain batteries, and all the ships' guns were available to co-operate. But the attack failed, though the Corps Commander considers that seasoned troops would have succeeded, especially as the enemy were showing signs of being shaken by our artillery fire. General Stopford points out, however, and rightly so, that the attack was delivered over very difficult country, and that it was a high trial for troops who had never been in action before, and with no regulars to set a standard.

Many of the battalions fought with great gallantry, and were led forward with much devotion by their officers. At a moment when things were looking dangerous two battalions of the 11th Division (not specified by the Corps Commander) rendered very good service on the left of the Territorials. At the end of the day our troops occupied the line Hill east of Chocolate Hill—Sulajik, whilst the enemy—who had been ably commanded throughout—were still receiving reinforcements, and, apart from their artillery, were three times as strong as they had been on the 7th August.

Orders were issued to the General Officer Commanding 9th Corps to take up and entrench a line across the whole front from near the Azmak Dere, through the knoll east of the Chocolate Hill, to the ground held by the 10th Division about Kiretch Tepe Sirt. General Stopford took advantage of this opportunity to reorganize the divisions, and, as there was a gap in the line between the left of the 53rd Division and the right of the 10th Division, gave orders for the preparation of certain strong points to enable it to be held.

THE CHANCE VANISHES.

The 54th Division (infantry only) arrived, and were disembarked on August 11th and placed in reserve. On the following day—August 12th—I proposed that the 54th Division should make a night march in order to attack, at dawn on the 13th, the heights Kavak Tepe—Teke Tepe. The Corps Commander having reason to believe that the enclosed country about Kuchuk Anafarta Ova and the north of it was held by the enemy, ordered one brigade to move forward in advance, and make good Kuchuk Anafarta Ova, so as to ensure an unopposed march for the remainder of the division as far as that place. So that afternoon the 163rd Brigade moved off, and, in

spite of serious opposition, established itself about the A of Anafarta (118m. 4 and 7), in difficult and enclosed country.

In the course of the fight, creditable in all respects to the 163rd Brigade, there happened a very mysterious thing. The 1/5th Norfolks were on the right of the line, and found themselves for a moment less strongly opposed than the rest of the brigade. Against the yielding forces of the enemy Colonel Sir H. Beauchamp, a bold, self-confident officer, eagerly pressed forward, followed by the best part of the battalion. The fighting grew hotter, and the ground became more wooded and broken. At this stage many men were wounded or grew exhausted with thirst. These found their way back to camp during the night. But the Colonel, with 16 officers and 250 men, still kept pushing on, driving the enemy before him. Amongst these ardent souls was part of a fine company enlisted from the King's Sandringham estates. Nothing more was ever seen or heard of any of them. They charged into the forest, and were lost to sight or sound. Not one of them ever came back.

The night march and projected attack were now abandoned, owing to the Corps Commander's representations as to the difficulties of keeping the division supplied with food, water, etc., even should they gain the height. General Birdwood had hoped he would soon be able to make a fresh attack on Sari Bair, provided that he might reckon on a corresponding vigorous advance to be made by the 11th and 54th Divisions on Ismail Oglu Tepe. On August 13th I so informed General Stopford. But when it came to business, General Birdwood found he could not yet carry out his new attack on Sari Bair—and, indeed, could only help the 9th Corps with one brigade from Damakjelik Bair. I was obliged, therefore, to abandon this project for the nonce, and directed General Stopford to confine his attention to strengthening his line across his present front. To straighten out the left of this line General Stopford ordered the General Officer Commanding the 10th Division to advance on the following day (15th August), so as to gain possession of the crest of the Kiretch Tepe Sirt, the 54th Division to co-operate.

The 30th and 31st Infantry Brigades of the 10th Irish Division were to attack frontally along the high ridge. The 162nd Infantry Brigade of the 54th Division were to support on the right. The infantry were to be seconded by a machine-gun detachment of the Royal Naval Air Service, by the guns of H.M.S. *Grampus*, and H.M.S. *Foxhound* from the Gulf of Saros, by the Argyll Mountain Battery, the 15th Heavy Battery, and the 58th Field Battery. After several hours of indecisive artillery and musketry fighting, the 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers charged forward with loud cheers, and captured the

whole ridge, together with eighteen prisoners. The vigorous support rendered by the naval guns was a feature of this operation. Unfortunately, the point of the ridge was hard to hold, and means for maintaining the forward trenches had not been well thought out. Casualties became very heavy, the 5th Royal Irish Fusiliers having only one officer left, and the 5th Inniskilling Fusiliers also losing heavily in officers. Reinforcements were promised, but before they could arrive the officer left in command decided to evacuate the front trenches. The strength of the Turks opposed to us was steadily rising, and had now reached 20,000.

NEW COMMANDER AT SUVLA BAY.

On the evening of the 15th August General Stopford handed over command of the 9th Corps.

The units of the 10th and 11th Divisions had shown their mettle when they leaped into the water to get more quickly to close quarters, or when they stormed Lala Baba in the darkness. They had shown their resolution later when they tackled the Chocolate Hills and drove the enemy from Hill 10 right back out of rifle range from the beaches.

Then had come hesitation. The advantage had not been pressed. The senior Commanders at Suvla had had no personal experience of the new trench warfare; of the Turkish methods; of the paramount importance of time. Strong, clear leadership had not been promptly enough applied. These were the reasons which induced me, with your Lordship's approval, to appoint Major-General H. de B. De Lisle to take over temporary command.

I had already seen General De Lisle on his way from Cape Helles, and my formal instructions—full copy in Appendix—were handed to him by my Chief of the General Staff. Under these he was to make it his most pressing business to get the Corps into fighting trim again, so that as big a proportion of it as possible might be told off for a fresh attack upon Ismail Oglu Tepe and the Anafarta spur. At his disposal were placed the 10th Division (less one brigade), the 11th Division, the 53rd and 54th Divisions—a force imposing enough on paper, but totalling, owing to casualties, under 30,000 rifles.

The fighting strength of ourselves and of our adversaries stood at this time at about the following figures:—Lieutenant-General Birdwood commanded 25,000 rifles, at Anzac; Lieutenant-General Davies, in the southern zone, commanded 23,000 rifles; whilst the French corps alongside of him consisted of some 17,000 rifles. The Turks had been very active in

the south, doubtless to prevent us reinforcing Anzac or Suvla; but it is doubtful if there were more than 35,000 of them in that region. The bulk of the enemy were engaged against Anzac or were in reserve in the valleys east and north of Sari Bair. Their strength was estimated at 75,000 rifles.

AN APPEAL FOR REINFORCEMENTS.

The Turks then, I reckoned, had 110,000 rifles to our 95,000, and held all the vantages of ground; they had plenty of ammunition, also drafts wherewith to refill ranks depleted in action within two or three days. My hopes that these drafts would be of poor quality had been every time disappointed. After weighing all these points, I sent your Lordship a long cable. In it I urged that if the campaign was to be brought to a quick, victorious decision, large reinforcements must at once be sent out. Autumn, I pointed out, was already upon us, and there was not a moment to be lost. At that time (16th August) my British divisions alone were 45,000 under establishment, and some of my fine battalions had dwindled down so far that I had to withdraw them from the fighting line. Our most vital need was the replenishment of these sadly depleted ranks. When that was done I wanted 50,000 fresh rifles. From what I knew of the Turkish situation, both in its local and general aspects, it seemed humanly speaking a certainty that if this help could be sent to me *at once* we could still clear a passage for our fleet to Constantinople.

It may be judged, then, how deep was my disappointment when I learnt that the essential drafts, reinforcements, and munitions could not be sent to me, the reason given being one which prevented me from any further insistence. So I resolved to do my very best with the means at my disposal, and forthwith reinforced the northern wing with the 2nd Mounted Division (organized as dismounted troops) from Egypt and the 29th Division from the southern area. These movements, and the work of getting the 9th Corps and attached divisions into battle array took time, and it was not until the 21st that I was ready to renew the attack—an attack to be carried out under very different conditions from those of the 7th and 8th August.

The enemy's positions were now being rapidly entrenched, and, as I could not depend on receiving reinforcing drafts, I was faced with the danger that if I could not drive the Turks back I might lose so many men that I would find myself unable to hold the very extensive new area of ground which had been gained. I therefore decided to mass every available man against Ismail Oglu Tepe, a *sine qua non* to my plans whether as a first step

towards clearing the valley, or, if this proved impossible, towards securing Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove from shell fire.

THE ATTACK OF 21ST AUGUST.

The scheme for this attack was well planned by General De Lisle. The 53rd and 54th Divisions were to hold the enemy from Sulajik to Kiretch Tepe Sirt while the 29th Division and 11th Division stormed Ismail Oglu Tepe. Two brigades, 10th Division, and the 2nd Mounted Division were retained in Corps Reserve. I arranged that General Birdwood should co-operate by swinging forward his left flank to Susuk Kuyu and Kaiajik Aghala. Naturally I should have liked still further to extend the scope of my attack by ordering an advance of the 9th Corps all along their line, but many of the battalions had been too highly tried, and I felt it was unwise to call upon them for another effort so soon. The attack would only be partial, but it was an essential attack if any real progress was to be made. Also, once the Anafarta ridge was in my hands the enemy would be unable to reinforce through the gap between the two Anafartas, and then, so I believed, my left would find no difficulty in getting on.

My special objective was the hill which forms the south-west corner of the Anafarta Sagir spur. Ismail Oglu Tepe, as it is called, forms a strong natural barrier against an invader from the Ægean who might wish to march direct against the Anafartas. The hill rises 350 feet from the plain, with steep spurs jutting out to the west and south-west, the whole of it covered with dense holly oak scrub, so nearly impenetrable that it breaks up an attack and forces troops to move in single file along goat tracks between the bushes. The comparatively small number of guns landed up to date was a weakness, seeing we had now to storm trenches, but the battleships were there to back us, and as the bombardment was limited to a narrow front of a mile it was hoped the troops would find themselves able to carry the trenches and that the impetus of the charge would carry them up to the top of the crest. Our chief difficulty lay in the open nature and shallow depth of the ground available for the concentration for attack. The only cover we possessed was the hill Lala Baba, 200 yards from the sea, and Yilghin Burnu, half a mile from the Turkish front, the ground between these two being an exposed plain. The 29th Division, which was to make the attack on the left, occupied the front trenches during the preceding night; the 11th Division, which was to attack on the right, occupied the front trenches on the right of Yilghin Burnu.

By some freak of nature Suvla Bay and plain were wrapped in a strange mist on the afternoon of the 21st of August. This was sheer bad luck, as we had reckoned on the enemy's gunners being blinded by the declining sun and upon the Turkish trenches being shown up by the evening light with singular clearness, as would have been the case on ninety-nine days out of a hundred. Actually we could hardly see the enemy lines this afternoon, whereas out to the westward targets stood out in strong relief against the luminous mist. I wished to postpone the attack, but for various reasons this was not possible, and so from 2.30 p.m. to 3 p.m. a heavy but none too accurate artillery bombardment from land and sea was directed against the Turkish first line of trenches, whilst 24 machine-guns in position on Yilghin Burnu did what they could to lend a hand.

At 3 p.m. an advance was begun by the infantry on the right of the line. The 34th Brigade of the 11th Division rushed the Turkish trenches between Hetman Chair and Aire Kavak, practically without loss, but the 32nd Brigade, directed against Hetman Chair and the communication trench connecting that point with the south-west corner of the Ismail Oglu Tepe spur, failed to make good its point. The brigade had lost direction in the first instance, moving north-east instead of east, and though it attempted to carry the communication trench from the north-east with great bravery and great disregard of life, it never succeeded in rectifying the original mistake. The 33rd Brigade, sent up in haste with orders to capture this communication trench at all costs, fell into precisely the same error, part of it marching north-east and part south-east to Susuk Kuyu.

Meanwhile the 29th Division, whose attack had been planned for 3.30 p.m., had attacked Scimitar Hill (Hill 70) with great dash. The 87th Brigade, on the left, carried the trenches on Scimitar Hill, but the 86th Brigade were checked and upset by a raging forest fire across their front. Eventually pressing on, they found themselves unable to advance up the valley between the two spurs owing to the failure of the 32nd Brigade of the 11th Division on their right. The brigade then tried to attack eastwards, but were decimated by a cross fire of shell and musketry from the north and south-east. The leading troops were simply swept off the top of the spur, and had to fall back to a ledge south-west of Scimitar Hill, where they found a little cover. Whilst this fighting was in progress the 2nd Mounted Division moved out from Lala Baba in open formation to take up a position of readiness behind Yilghin Burnu. During this march they came under a remarkably steady and accurate artillery fire.

The advance of these English Yeomen was a sight calculated to send a thrill of pride through anyone with a drop of English blood running in their veins. Such superb martial spectacles are rare in modern war. Ordinarily it should always be possible to bring up reserves under some sort of cover from shrapnel fire. Here, for a mile and a half, there was nothing to conceal a mouse, much less some of the most stalwart soldiers England has ever sent from her shores. Despite the critical events in other parts of the field, I could hardly take my glasses from the Yeomen; they moved like men marching on parade. Here and there a shell would take toll of a cluster; there they lay; there was no straggling; the others moved steadily on; not a man was there who hung back or hurried. But such an ordeal must consume some of the battle-winning fighting energy of those subjected to it, and it is lucky indeed for the Turks that the terrain, as well as the lack of trenches, forbade us from letting the 2nd Mounted Division loose at close quarters to the enemy without undergoing this previous too heavy baptism of fire.

Now that the 11th Division had made their effort, and failed, the 2nd South Midland Brigade (commanded by Brigadier-General Earl of Longford) was sent forward from its position of readiness behind Yilghin Burnu, in the hope that they might yet restore the fortunes of the day. This brigade, in action for the first time, encountered both bush fires and musketry without flinching, but the advance had in places to be almost by inches, and the actual close attack by the Yeomen did not take place until night was fast falling. On the left they reached the foremost line of the 29th Division, and on the right also they got as far as the leading battalions. But, as soon as it was dark, one regiment pushed up the valley between Scimitar Hill and Hill 100 (or Ismail Oglu Tepe), and carried the trenches on a small knoll near the centre of this horseshoe. The regiment imagined it had captured Hill 100, which would have been a very notable success, enabling as it would the whole of our line to hang on and dig in. But when the report came in some doubt was felt as to its accuracy, and a reconnaissance by staff officers showed that the knoll was a good way from Hill 100, and that a strongly-held semicircle of Turkish trenches (the enemy having been heavily reinforced) still denied us access to the top of the hill. As the men were too done, and had lost too heavily to admit of a second immediate assault, and as the knoll actually held would have been swept by fire at daybreak, there was nothing for it but to fall back under cover of darkness to our original line. The losses in this attack fell most heavily on the 29th Division. They were just under 5,000.

I am sorry not to be able to give more detail as to the conduct of individuals and units during this battle. But the 2nd South Midland Brigade

has been brought to my notice, and it consisted of the Bucks Yeomanry, the Berks Yeomanry, and the Dorset Yeomanry. The Yeomanry fought very bravely, and on personal, as well as public grounds, I specially deplore the loss of Brigadier-General Earl of Longford, K.P., M.V.O., and Brigadier-General P. A. Kenna, V.C., D.S.O., A.D.C.

The same day, as pre-arranged with General Birdwood, a force consisting of two battalions of New Zealand Mounted Rifles, two Battalions of the 29th Irish Brigade, the 4th South Wales Borderers, and 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, the whole under the command of Major-General H. V. Cox, was working independently to support the main attack.

MOVEMENTS ON ANZAC LEFT.

General Cox divided his force into three sections: the left section to press forward and establish a permanent hold on the existing lightly-held outpost line covering the junction of the 11th Division with the Anzac front; the centre section to seize the well at Kabak Kuyu, an asset of utmost value, whether to ourselves or the enemy; the right section to attack and capture the Turkish trenches on the north-east side of the Kaiajik Aghala.

The advance of the left section was a success; after a brisk engagement the well at Kabak Kuyu was seized by the Indian Brigade, and, by 4.30, the right column, under Brigadier-General Russell, under heavy fire, effected a lodgment on the Kaiajik Aghala, where our men entrenched, and began to dig communications across the Kaiajik Dere towards the lines of the 4th Australian Brigade south of the Dere. A pretty stiff bomb fight ensued, in which General Russell's troops held their own through the night against superior force. At 6 a.m. on the morning of the 22nd August, General Russell, reinforced by the newly-arrived 18th Australian Battalion, attacked the summit of the Kaiajik Aghala. The Australians carried 150 yards of the trenches, losing heavily in so doing, and were then forced to fall back again owing to enfilade fire, though in the meantime the New Zealand Mounted Rifles managed, in spite of constant counter-attacks, to make good another 80 yards.

A counter-attack in strength launched by the Turks at 10 a.m., was repulsed; the new line from the Kaiajik Aghala to Susuk Kuyu was gradually strengthened, and eventually joined on to the right of the 9th Army Corps, thereby materially improving the whole situation. During this action the 4th Australian Brigade, which remained facing the Turks on the upper part of the Kaiajik Aghala, was able to inflict several hundred casualties on the enemy as they retreated or endeavoured to reinforce.

On the 21st of August we had carried the Turkish entrenchments at several points, but had been unable to hold what we had gained except along the section where Major-General Cox had made a good advance with Anzac and Indian troops. To be repulsed is not to be defeated, as long as the commander and his troops are game to renew the attack. All were eager for such a renewal of the offensive; but clearly we would have for some time to possess our souls in patience, seeing that reinforcements and munitions were short, that we were already outnumbered by the enemy, and that a serious outbreak of sickness showed how it had become imperative to give a spell of rest to the men who had been fighting so magnificently and so continuously. To calculate on rest, it may be suggested, was to calculate without the enemy. Such an idea has no true bearing on the feelings of the garrison of the peninsula. That the Turks should attack had always been the earnest prayer of all of us, just as much after the 21st August as before it. And now that we had to suspend progress for a bit, work was put in hand upon the line from Suvla to Anzac, a minor offensive routine of sniping and bombing was organized, and, in a word, trench warfare set in on both sides.

On 24th August Lieutenant-General the Hon. J. H. G. Byng, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.V.O., assumed command of the 9th Army Corps.

The last days of the month were illumined by a brilliant affair carried through by the troops under General Birdwood's command. Our object was to complete the capture of Hill 60 north of the Kaiajik Aghala, commenced by Major-General Cox on the 21st August. Hill 60 overlooked the Biyuk Anafarta valley, and was therefore tactically a very important feature.

The conduct of the attack was again entrusted to Major-General Cox, at whose disposal were placed detachments from the 4th and 5th Australian Brigades, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade, and the 5th Connaught Rangers. The advance was timed to take place at 5 p.m. on the 27th of August, after the heaviest artillery bombardment we could afford. This bombardment seemed effective; but the moment the assailants broke cover they were greeted by an exceeding hot fire from the enemy field guns, rifles, and machine-guns, followed after a brief interval by a shower of heavy shell, some of which, most happily, pitched into the trenches of the Turks. On the right the detachment from the 4th and 5th Australian Brigades could make no headway against a battery of machine-guns which confronted them. In the centre the New Zealanders made a most determined onslaught, and carried one side of the topmost knoll. Hand-to-hand fighting continued here till 9.30 p.m., when it was reported that nine-tenths of the summit had been gained.

On the left the 250 men of the 5th Connaught Rangers excited the admiration of all beholders by the swiftness and cohesion of their charge. In five minutes they had carried their objective, the northern Turkish communications, when they at once set to and began a lively bomb-fight along the trenches against strong parties which came hurrying up from the enemy supports and afterwards from their reserves. At midnight fresh troops were to have strengthened our grip upon the hill, but before that hour the Irishmen had been out-bombed, and the 9th Australian Light Horse, who had made a most plucky attempt to recapture the lost communication trench, had been repulsed. Luckily, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles refused to recognize that they were worsted. Nothing would shift them. All that night and all next day, through bombing, bayonet charges, musketry, shrapnel, and heavy shell, they hung on to their 150 yards of trench. At 1 a.m. on August 29th the 10th Light Horse made another attack on the lost communication trenches to the left, carried them, and finally held them. This gave us complete command of the underfeature, an outlook over the Anafarta Sagir valley, and safer lateral communications between Anzac and Suvla Bay.

Our casualties in this hotly-contested affair amounted to 1,000. The Turks lost out of all proportion more. Their line of retreat was commanded from our Kaiajik Dere trenches, whence our observers were able to direct artillery fire equally upon their fugitives and their reinforcements. The same observers estimated the Turkish casualties as no less than 5,000. Three Turkish machine-guns and forty-six prisoners were taken, as well as three trench mortars, 300 Turkish rifles, 60,000 rounds of ammunition, and 500 bombs. Four hundred acres were added to the territories of Anzac. Major-General Cox showed his usual forethought and wisdom. Brigadier-General Russell fought his men splendidly.

My narrative of battle incidents must end here. From this date onwards up to the date of my departure on October 17th the flow of munitions and drafts fell away. Sickness, the legacy of a desperately trying summer, took heavy toll of the survivors of so many arduous conflicts. No longer was there any question of operations on the grand scale, but with such troops it was difficult to be downhearted. All ranks were cheerful; all remained confident that, so long as they stuck to their guns, their country would stick to them, and see them victoriously through the last and greatest of the crusades.

On the 11th October your Lordship cabled asking me for an estimate of the losses which would be involved in an evacuation of the peninsula. On the 12th October I replied in terms showing that such a step was to me unthinkable. On the 16th October I received a cable recalling me to London for the reason, as I was informed by your Lordship on my arrival, that His Majesty's Government desired a fresh, unbiased opinion, from a responsible Commander, upon the question of early evacuation.

In bringing this dispatch to a close I wish to refer gratefully to the services rendered by certain formations, whose work has so far only been recognized by a sprinkling of individual rewards.

PRAISE FOR VARIOUS SERVICES.

Much might be written on the exploits of the Royal Naval Air Service, but these bold flyers are laconic, and their feats will mostly pass unrecorded. Yet let me here thank them, with their Commander, Colonel F. H. Sykes, of the Royal Marines, for the nonchalance with which they appear to affront danger and death, when and where they can. So doing, they quicken the hearts of their friends on land and sea—an asset of greater military value even than their bombs or aerial reconnaissances, admirable in all respects as these were.

With them I also couple the Service de l'Aviation of the Corps Expeditionnaire d'Orient, who daily wing their way in and out of the shrapnel under the distinguished leadership of M. le Capitaine Césari.

The Armoured Car Division (Royal Naval Air Service) have never failed to respond to any call which might be made upon them. Their organization was broken up; their work had to be carried out under strange conditions—from the bows of the *River Clyde*, as independent batteries attached to infantry divisions, etc.—and yet they were always cheerful, always ready to lend a hand in any sort of fighting that might give them a chance of settling old scores with the enemy.

Next I come to the Royal Artillery. By their constant vigilance, by their quick grasp of the key to every emergency, by their thundering good shooting, by hundreds of deeds of daring, they have earned the unstinted admiration of all their comrade services. Where all fought so remarkably, the junior officers deserve a little niche of their own in the Dardanelles record of fame. Their audacity in reconnaissance, their insouciance under the hottest of fires, stand as a fine example not only to the Army, but to the nation at large.

A feature of every report, narrative, or diary I have read has been a tribute to the stretcher-bearers. All ranks, from Generals in command to wounded men in hospitals, are unanimous in their praise. I have watched a party from the moment when the telephone summoned them from their dug-out to the time when they returned with their wounded. To see them run lightheartedly across fire-swept slopes is to be privileged to witness a superb example of the hero in man. No braver corps exists, and I believe the reason to be that all thought of self is instinctively flung aside when the saving of others is the motive.

The services rendered by Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) E. A. Altham, C.B., C.M.G., Inspector-General of Communications, and all the Departments and Services of the Lines of Communications assured us a life-giving flow of drafts, munitions, and supplies. The work was carried out under unprecedented conditions, and is deserving, I submit, of handsome recognition.

With General Altham were associated Brigadier-General (temporary Major-General) C. R. R. McGrigor, C.B., at first Commandant of the Base at Alexandria and later Deputy Inspector-General of Communications, and Colonel T. E. O'Leary, Deputy Adjutant-General, 3rd Echelon. Both of these officers carried out their difficult duties to my entire satisfaction.

My Military Secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel S. H. Pollen, has displayed first-class ability in the conduct of his delicate and responsible duties.

Also I take the opportunity of my last dispatch to mention two of my Aides-de-Camp—Major F. L. Makgill-Crichton-Maitland, Gordon Highlanders, Lieutenant Hon. G. St. J. Brodrick, Surrey Yeomanry.

A FAREWELL TRIBUTE.

I have many other names to bring to notice for distinguished and gallant service during the operations under review, and these will form the subject of a separate communication.

And now, before affixing to this dispatch my final signature as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, let me first pay tribute to the everlasting memory of my dear comrades who will return no more. Next, let me thank each and all, Generals, Staff, Regimental Leaders, and rank and file, for their wonderful loyalty, patience, and self-sacrifice. Our progress was constant, and if it was painfully slow—they know the truth.

So I bid them all farewell with a special God-speed to the campaigners who have served with me right through from the terrible yet most glorious earlier days—the incomparable 29th Division; the young veterans of the Naval Division; the ever-victorious Australians and New Zealanders; the stout East Lancs, and my own brave fellow-countrymen of the Lowland Division of Scotland.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
IAN HAMILTON,
General, Commander-in-Chief
Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

APPENDIX II.

THE BATTLE OF CHAMPAGNE.[1]

The Official Account of the French Headquarters Staff.

I

The Preparation for the Offensive.

After the battles of May and June in Artois, activity on the Western front became concentrated in the Vosges, where, by a series of successful engagements, we managed to secure possession of more favourable positions and to retain them in spite of incessant counter-attacks. The superiority established over the adversary, the wearing down of the latter through vain and costly counter-offensives, which absorbed in that sector his local resources; the state of uncertainty in which the Germans found themselves in view of the menace of a French diversion in Alsace—such were the immediate results of these engagements. From the number of the effectives engaged, and the limited front along which the attacks took place, those attacks nevertheless were no more than local and secondary operations.

While those operations were developing, the higher command was carefully preparing for a great offensive. The situation of the Russian armies imposed on us, as their Allies, obligations the accomplishment of which had been made possible by the results of a long course of preparation no less than by the aid of circumstances.

The inaction of the adversary, engaged on the Eastern front in a series of operations of which he had not foreseen the difficulties, and thus reduced to the defensive on our front, left the initiative of the operations in our hands. The landing in France of fresh British troops enabled Marshal French to take upon himself the defence of a portion of the lines hitherto held by French troops. The improvement of our defensive organizations, which made possible certain economies in the effectives, the regrouping of units and the creation of new units, also had the effect of placing a larger number of men at the disposal of the Generalissimo. The increased output of war *matériel* ensured him the necessary means for a complete artillery preparation.

Among all the elements of success which were thus united at the end of the summer of 1915, not the least was the incomparable individual worth of the French soldier. It was to the traditional warlike qualities of the race that the Generalissimo appealed when, on September 23, 1915, he addressed to the troops the following general order, which was read to the regiments by their officers:

> "SOLDIERS OF THE REPUBLIC!
>
> "After months of waiting, which have enabled us to increase our forces and our resources, while the adversary has been using up his own, the hour has come to attack and conquer and to add fresh glorious pages to those of the Marne and Flanders, the Vosges and Arras.
>
> "Behind the whirlwind of iron and fire let loose, thanks to the factories of France, where your brothers have, night and day, worked for us, you will proceed to the attack, all together, on the whole front, in close union with the armies of our Allies.
>
> "Your *élan* will be irresistible. It will carry you at a bound up to the batteries of the adversary, beyond the fortified lines which he has placed before you.
>
> "You will give him neither pause nor rest until victory has been achieved.
>
> "Set to with all your might for the deliverance of the soil of la Patrie, for the triumph of justice and liberty.
>
> "J. JOFFRE."

The description of the operations in Champagne will show under what conditions our troops acquitted themselves of the task assigned to them, and also the value and significance of this success, without precedent in the war of positions in which we are at present engaged.

[1] Printed by permission of the proprietor of the National Review.

II

Terrain of the Attacks in Champagne.

The German line that was broken in Champagne is the same that was fortified by our adversaries after the victory of the Marne. It rests on the western side on the Massif de Moronvillers; to the east it stretches as far as the Argonne. It was intended to cover the railway line from Challerange to Bazancourt, a line indispensable for the concentration movements of the German troops. The offensive front, which extended from Auberive to the east of Ville-sur-Tourbe, presents a varied aspect. From west to east may be seen:

(1) A glacis about eight kilometres in width, the gentle slopes of which are covered by numerous little woods. The road from Saint-Hilaire to Saint-Souplet, with the Baraque de l'Epine de Vedegrange, marks approximately its axis.

(2) The hollow, at the bottom of which is the village of Souain and of which the first German line followed the further edge. The road from Souain to Somme-Py describes the radius of this semicircle. The farm of Navarin, at a distance of three and a half kilometres to the north of Souain, stands on the top of the hills.

(3) To the north of Perthes a comparatively tranquil region of uniform aspect, forming between the wooded hills of the Trou Bricot and those of the Butte du Mesnil a passage three kilometres wide, barred by several lines of trenches and ending at a series of heights, the Butte de Souain, Hills 195 and 201, and the Butte de Tahure, surmounted by the second German line.

(4) To the north of Le Mesnil, a very strong position, bastioned on the west by two twin heights (Mamelle Nord and Trapèze), on the east by the Butte du Mesnil. The German trenches formed between these two bastions a powerful curtain, behind which extended as far as Tahure a thickly wooded, undulating region.

(5) To the north of Beauséjour a bare terrain easily practicable, with a gentle rise in the direction of Ripont as far as the farm of Maisons de Champagne.

(6) To the north of Massiges, Hills numbered 191 and 199, describing on the map the figure of a hand, very strongly constructed and constituting the eastern flank of the whole German line. This tableland slopes down gently in the direction of Ville-sur-Tourbe.

The achievements of our troops from September 25 to October 3 in this region may be thus summarized: They scaled the whole of the glacis of l'Epine de Vedegrange; they occupied the ridge of the hollow at Souain; debouched in the opening to the north of Perthes to the slopes of Hill 195 and as far as the Butte de Tahure; carried the western bastions of the curtain of Le Mesnil; advanced as far as Maisons de Champagne and took by assault the "hand" of Massiges. That is to say that they captured an area about forty square kilometres in extent.

The importance of that figure is shown when one examines on the map the position of the German trenches, with a view to understanding the system of defence adopted by our adversaries. Two positions, distant from three to four kilometres from each other, stand out clearly. The first is the more dense; the trenches with their alleys of communication present at certain points the appearance of a wirework chessboard. Everywhere, to a depth of from 300 to 400 metres, there are at least three parallel lines, sometimes five. The trenches are separated from each other as a rule by wire entanglements varying in width from 15 to 60 metres.

The second position comprises only one trench, reinforced at certain points by a supporting trench. It is everywhere constructed, as is the wire network in front of it, in the form of a slope. On top there are merely observation stations with machine-gun shelters connected with the trench by an alley of communication. Between the two positions the terrain was also specially prepared, being cut up by transverse or diagonal trenches. The alleys of communication constructed to facilitate the firing, which were in many cases protected by wirework, made possible, according to the German method, a splitting up of the terrain by lateral fire and the maintenance, even after the tide of the assailants had flooded the trenches, of centres of resistance, veritable strongholds that could only be reduced after a siege. The positions of the artillery were established, as were also the camps and provision depôts, behind the first position, the principal line of defence.

The whole German organization was known to us. It was shown on our maps, and every defensive work, trench, alley of communication, and clump of trees was given a special name or a number preceded by a certain letter, according to the sector of attack wherein it was situated. This minute precision in the details of the preparation is worthy of being pointed out; it

constitutes one of the peculiarities of the present war, a veritable siege war, in which the objective has to be realized beforehand and clearly determined, every piece of ground having to be captured by heavy fighting, as was formerly every redan and every curtain.

III

The Artillery Preparation.

The bombardment of the German positions began on September 22 and was pursued night and day according to a time scheme and a division of labour previously determined upon. The results expected were:

(1) The destruction of the wire entanglements.

(2) The burial of the defenders in their dug-outs.

(3) The razing of the trenches and the demolition of the embrasures.

(4) The stopping-up of the alleys of communication.

The gun-fire covered not only the first trench but also the supporting trench and even the second position, although the distance at which the last was situated and the outline of its wire entanglements made it difficult to make field observations in that direction. At the same time the heavy long-range guns bombarded the headquarters, the cantonments, and the railway stations; they cut the railway lines, causing a suspension of the work of revictualling. The best witnesses to the effectiveness of our bombardment are to be found in unfinished letters found upon prisoners.

"September 23.

"The French artillery fired without intermission from the morning of the 21st to the evening of the 23rd, and we all took refuge in our dug-outs. On the evening of the 22nd we were to have gone to get some food, and the French continued to fire on our trenches. In the evening we had heavy losses, and we had nothing to eat."

"September 25.

"I have received no news, and probably I shall not receive any for some days. The whole postal service has been stopped; all places have been bombarded to such an extent that no human being could stand against it.

"The railway line is so seriously damaged that the train service for some time has been completely stopped.

"We have been for three days in the first line; during those three days the French have fired so heavily that our trenches are no longer visible."

"September 24.

"For the last two days the French have been firing like mad. To-day, for instance, a dug-out has been destroyed. There were sixteen men in it. Not

one of them managed to save his skin. They are all dead. Besides that, a number of individual men have been killed, and there are a great mass of wounded.

"The artillery fires almost as rapidly as the infantry. A mist of smoke hangs over the whole battle-front, so that it is impossible to see anything. Men are dropping like flies.

"The trenches are no longer anything but a mound of ruins."

"September 24.

"A rain of shells is pouring down upon us. The kitchen and everything that is sent to us is bombarded at night. The field-kitchens no longer come to us. Oh, if only the end were near! That is the cry every one is repeating. Peace! Peace!"

Extract from the notebook of a man of the 103rd Regiment:

"From the trench nothing much can now be seen; it will soon be on a level with the ground."

Letter of an artilleryman of the 100th Regiment of Field Artillery:

"September 25.

"We have passed through some terrible hours. It was as though the whole world was in a state of collapse. We have had heavy losses. One company of two hundred and fifty men had sixty killed last night. A neighbouring battery had sixteen killed yesterday.

"The following instance will show you the frightful destructiveness of the French shells. A dug-out five metres deep, surmounted by 2 metres 50 centimetres of earth and two thicknesses of heavy timber, was broken like a match."

Report made on September 24 in the morning, by the captain commanding the 3rd company of the 135th Regiment of Reserve:

"The French are firing on us with great bombs and machine-guns. We must have reinforcements at once. Many men are no longer fit for anything. It is not that they are wounded, but they are Landsturmers. Moreover the wastage is greater than the losses announced.

“Send rations immediately; no food has reached us to-day. Urgently want illuminating cartridges and hand grenades. Is the hospital corps never coming to fetch the wounded?”

“September 25, 11.45.

“I urgently beg for reinforcements; the men are dying from fatigue and want of sleep. I have no news of the battalion.”

IV

The Attacks.

The time fixed for all the attacks on the Champagne front was a quarter-past nine in the morning. There was no hesitation. At the time mentioned the troops came out of the trenches with the aid of steps or scaling-ladders and drew up in line before making a rush at the German trenches.

The operation was rapidly effected. The objective was at an average distance of two hundred metres; this was covered without serious losses. The Germans were nearly everywhere surprised, and their defensive fire was not opened until after the invading tide of the attackers had passed by.

Over the whole attacking front our troops penetrated into the first German trench. But subsequently the progress was no longer uniform. While certain units continued their forward movement with extreme rapidity, others came up against machine-guns still in action and either stopped or advanced only with difficulty. Some centres of the German resistance maintained their positions for several hours and even for several days.

A line showing the different stages of our advance in Champagne would assume a curiously winding outline, and would reveal on the one hand the defensive power of an adversary resolved to stick to the ground at all costs and on the other the victorious continuity of the efforts of our troops in this hand-to-hand struggle. The battle of Champagne must be considered in the light of a series of assaults, executed at the same moment, in parallel or convergent directions, and having for their object either the capture or the hemming in of the first German position, the units being instructed to re-form in a continuous line before the second position.

In order to understand the development, the terrain must be divided into several sectors, in each of which the operations, although closely co-ordinated, assumed, as a consequence either of the nature of the ground or of the peculiarities of the enemy defences, a different character. The unity of the action was nevertheless ensured by the simultaneity of the rush, which carried all the troops beyond the first position, past the batteries, to the defences established by the enemy on the heights to the south of Py.

At the two extremities of our attacking front, subjected to converging fires and to counter-attacks on the flanks, our offensive made no progress. The fighting which took place in Auberive and round about Servon was distinguished by more than one trait of heroism, but was destined to have no other result than that of containing the forces of the enemy and of

immobilizing him at the wings while the attack was progressing in the centre.

(1) *Sector of l'Epine de Vedegrange.* The first German line was established at the base of a wide glacis covered with clumps of trees, and formed a series of salients running into each other. At certain points it ran along the edge of the woods where the supplementary defences were completed by abattis. The position, as a whole, between Auberive and Souain described a vast triangle. To the west of the road, from Saint-Hilaire to Saint-Souplet, the troops traversed the first enemy lines and rushed forward for a distance of about a kilometre as far as a supporting trench, in front of which they were stopped by the wirework. A counter-attack debouching from the west and supported by the artillery of Moronvillers caused a slight retirement of our left. The troops of the right, on the contrary, maintained their gains and succeeded on the following days in enlarging and extending them, remaining in touch with the units which were attacking on the east of the road. The latter had succeeded in a particularly brilliant manner in overcoming the difficulties with which they were confronted.

The German position which they captured, with its triple and quadruple lines of trenches, its small forts armed with machine-guns, its woods adapted for the purpose in view, constituted one of the most complete schemes of defence on the Champagne front and afforded cover to a numerous artillery concealed in the woods of the glacis. On this front, which was about three and a half kilometres wide, the attack on September 25 achieved a varying success. The troops on the left, after having penetrated into the first trench, had their progress arrested by machine-guns. On the right, however, in spite of the obstacle presented by four successive trenches, each of which was covered by a network of wire entanglements and was concealed in the woods, where our artillery had difficulty in reaching them, the attacking troops gained nearly two kilometres, capturing seven hundred prisoners, of whom seventeen were officers, and seizing two guns of 77 and five guns of 105.

The advance recommenced on the 27th. The left took possession of the woods lining the road from Saint-Hilaire to Saint-Souplet as far as the Epine de Vedegrange. Along the whole extent of the wooded heights as far as the western side of the hollow at Souain the success was identical. Notwithstanding the losses they sustained, notwithstanding the fatigue involved in the incessant fighting, the troops pushed forward, leaving behind them only a sufficient force to clear the woods of isolated groups of the

enemy who still remained there. Between 4 and 6 p.m. we arrived immediately in front of the second German position.

On the 27th we penetrated into this position at two points. We took possession of a trench about a kilometre wide, called the "parallel of the Epine de Vedegrange," which is duplicated almost throughout by another trench (the parallel of the wood of Chevron), and the wirework entanglements of which were intact and precluded an assault. Further east our soldiers also continued, thanks to the conformation of the terrain, to penetrate into the enemy trench to a depth of about four hundred metres. But it was impossible to take advantage of this breach owing to a concentration of the German heavy artillery, a rapidly continued defence of the surrounding woods, and the fire of machine-guns which it was not possible to capture and which were directed from the trenches on the right and left of the entry and exit to the breach. The results attained in this attacking sector alone may be stated thus: fifteen square miles of territory organized for defence throughout nearly the whole of its extent; on September 28, forty-four cannon, seven of 105 and six of 150, and more than three thousand prisoners.

(2) *Sector of Souain.* The enemy lines round about Souain described a wide curve. In the immediate vicinity of our trenches, to the west at the Mill and to the east at the wood of Sabot, they swerved to the extent of over a kilometre to the north of the village and of the source of the Ain.

When the offensive was decided upon it was necessary, in order to extend our lines forward to striking distance, to undertake sapping operations in parallel lines, and at times to make dashes by night over the intervening ground. The men working underground got into communication with the trenches by digging alleys of communication. This difficult undertaking was effected with very slight losses, under the eyes and under the fire of the enemy. Our parallel lines approached to within a distance of two hundred metres of the German trenches. The assault was made in three different directions: on the west in the direction of Hills 167 and 174; in the centre along a line running parallel with the road from Souain to Somme-Py, in the direction of the farm of Navarin; on the east in the direction of the woods intersected by the road from Souain to Tahure, and in the direction of the Butte de Souain.

The advance was extremely rapid—on the left two kilometres in less than one hour, in the centre three kilometres in forty-five minutes. At 10 a.m. we had reached the farm of Navarin. Towards the east the forward march was more difficult. Some German machine-guns stood their ground in

the wood of Sabot and contributed to the resistance of the enemy. This defence was destined to be overcome by surrounding them. Arriving at the wooded region in that part where it is intersected by the road from Souain to Tahure, the assailants joined up on the 27th with those of our troops who were attacking to the north of Perthes. They left behind them only what was barely necessary in the way of troops to clear the woods of stragglers.

Parlementaires were sent to the Germans, who received them with a volley of rifle shots and endeavoured to escape during the night. The majority were killed and the survivors surrendered. Several batteries and a large quantity of *matériel* (supplies of shells and provisions, grenades, telephones, wire, light railways) remained in our hands. On the 28th, along the entire length of the sector, we were immediately in front of the second German position. The troops had shown an unparalleled ardour and energy. They had been trained by officers whose courage and spirit of self-sacrifice are indicated by this casualty list: a general of division and four colonels wounded; two colonels killed.

(3) *Sector of Perthes.* Between Souain and Perthes stretches a wooded region in which already, in February and March, heavy fighting had taken place. At that period we had contrived to take possession on the eastern extremity of this region of the German defences of the wood of Sabot. We had also made progress to the north-west of Perthes, on the summit of Hill 200. But between these two positions the Germans had retained a strong system of trenches forming a salient almost triangular in shape, to which we gave the name of the Pocket (*la Poche*). During the whole year a war of mining had been going on, and the region, which was broken up by concave constructions and intersected in all directions by trenches and alleys of communication, constituted an attacking ground all the more difficult because to the north of la Poche the somewhat thickly wooded Trou Bricot, the edges of which were in a state of defence, obstructed a rapid advance. This wooded region extends over a width of a kilometre and a half and a depth of four kilometres. The arrangements made for the attack contemplated, after the capture of la Poche, the surrounding of the wood of the Trou Bricot. The junction was to be made at the road from Souain to Tahure, with the troops assigned for the attack on the eastern border of the hollow at Souain.

The ground to the east of the Trou Bricot was less difficult. Open and comparatively flat, it was defended on the north of Perthes by a triple line of trenches distant 100 metres from each other. At a distance of 1,000 metres to 1,200 metres a supporting trench, called the “York trench,” was almost

unique in its entire construction. The open country beyond stretched for a distance of three kilometres up to the second German position (Hill 195, Butte de Tahure). The principal effort was directed against this passage, the left flank of the attack being secured by a subsidiary action confined to the capture of la Poche.

At 9 a.m. our artillery directed its fire successively against the first-line trenches and the supporting trenches. The attack took place in the most perfect order. The assailants were already swarming in the German lines when the enemy artillery opened its defensive fire. Our counter-batteries hampered the German pieces and our reserves in the rear suffered little from their fire.

At 9.45 a.m. the two columns which were attacking the extremities of the salient of la Poche joined hands. The position was surrounded. Those Germans who remained alive inside it surrendered. At the same time a battalion was setting foot in the defences of the southern edges of the wood of Trou Bricot. The battalions that followed, marching to the outside of the eastern edges, executed with perfect regularity a “left turn” and came and formed up alongside the alleys of communication as far as the supporting trench. At the same, moment, in the open country to the north of Perthes, the troops surmounted the three first-line trenches and, preceded by our artillery, made a quick march towards the York trench and occupied it almost without striking a blow.

Further to the east, along the road from Perthes to Tahure, their advance encountered greater difficulties. Some centres of the German resistance could not be overcome. A sheltered machine-gun continued its fire. An infantry officer, with a quartermaster of artillery, succeeded in getting into action a gun at a distance of three hundred metres from the machine-gun and in firing at it at close quarters. Of the troops which were advancing to the north of Perthes, some made for the eastern border of the wood of Bricot, where they penetrated into the camps, ousting the defenders and surprising several officers in bed. Late in the afternoon one of our regiments had reached the road from Souain to Tahure. Other units were marching straight towards the north, clearing out the little woods on the way. They there captured batteries of which the artillerymen were riveted to their guns by means of bayonets (notably ten pieces of 105 and five of 150).

The same work was being performed in the woods extending east of the road from Perthes to Souain and Tahure, where batteries were charged and captured while in action. At this spot a regiment covered four kilometres in two hours and captured ten guns, three of 105 and seven of 77. But, from

twelve o'clock midday onwards, the rate of progress decreased, the bad weather making it impossible for our artillery to see what was going on, and rendering the joining up of the different corps extremely difficult. From the Buttes de Souain and Tahure the enemy directed converging fires on our men, who were advancing along very open ground. Nevertheless they continued their advance as far as the slopes of Hill 193 and the Butte de Tahure, and there dug themselves in.

The night passed without any counter-attack by the enemy. Our artillery, including several field batteries, which had arrived immediately after the attack beyond the York trench, also brought forward its heavy pieces. At dawn the reconstituted regiments made another forward rush which enabled them to establish themselves in immediate contact with the second German position from the Butte de Souain to the Butte de Tahure, and even to seize several advanced posts in that neighbourhood.

But on the lower slopes some of the wire entanglements remained intact; a successful assault on them would have been possible only after a fresh preparation. Up to October 6 the troops remained where they were, digging trenches and organizing a defensive system which had to be constructed all over again on ground devastated by the enemy fire.

(4) *Sector of Le Mesnil.* It was to the north of Le Mesnil that we encountered the greatest resistance on the part of the adversary. In the course of the engagements of the preceding winter we had succeeded in securing a foothold on top of the hill numbered 196. The Germans remained a little to the east, in a ravine which we continued to call by its designation of the "Ravine of the Kitchens" (Ravin des Cuisines). Our assault rendered us masters of it, but we could make no further progress.

The German trenches are constructed on the northern slopes of Hill 196, and are concealed from field observation so that it is difficult for the artillery to play upon them. Moreover, they are flanked on one side by the twin heights of the Mamelles, on the other by the Butte du Mesnil. To the eastward some of our units contrived on the 25th to penetrate into the trenches of the *butte* (knoll), but failed to maintain their ground, in consequence of a counter-attack supported by flank fires. Westward, it was not until the night of the 1st to the 2nd of October that we captured the northern Mamelle, thus surrounding the works of the Trapèze which surmount the southern Mamelle.

(5) *Sector of Beauséjour.* The attacks launched north of Beauséjour met with a more rapid and more brilliant success. The swarm of invaders

throwing themselves on the first German lines captured one after the other the enemy works in the very sparsely timbered woods called the Fer de Lance wood and the Demi-Lune wood, and afterwards all the works known as the Bastion. In one rush certain units gained the top of Maisons de Champagne, past several batteries, killing the artillerymen as they served their pieces. The same movement took the assailants across the intricate region of the mine "funnels" of Beauséjour up to the extended wood intersected by the road to Maisons de Champagne. Our soldiers then came across German artillerymen engaged in unlimbering their guns. They killed the drivers and horses; the survivors surrendered.

Further westward the left wing of the attacking troops advanced with greater difficulty, being hampered by small forts and covered works with which the trenches were everywhere protected. It was at this moment that the cavalry came unexpectedly to the support of the infantry. Two squadrons of hussars having crossed our old trenches in face of a heavy defensive artillery fire prepared to gallop against the German batteries north of Maisons de Champagne, when they reached that part of the lines where the Germans still maintained their position. The latter immediately directed the fire of their machine-guns against the cavalrymen, several of whose horses were hit. The hussars dismounted and, with drawn sabres, made for the trenches, while, favoured by this diversion, the infantrymen resumed their forward movement. The resistance of the enemy broke down; more than six hundred Germans were captured in this way. In the course of the afternoon and during the day of the 25th some enemy counter-attacks were made from the direction of Ripont, but were unsuccessful in ousting us from the summit of Maisons de Champagne.

On the following days a fierce struggle took place north of the summit in the region of a defensive work known as the "Ouvrage de la Défaite," which was captured by us, lost, then recaptured, and finally evacuated in consequence of an extremely violent bombardment.

(6) *Sector of Massiges.* The safety of our troops which had advanced as far as the extended wood and Maisons de Champagne was assured by the capture of the summits of the heights of Massiges. This sharply undulating upland, numbered 199 on the north and 191 on the south, constituted in the hands of the Germans a fortress which they believed to be impregnable and from the top of which they commanded our positions in several directions. At 9.15 a.m. the two first attacking parties marched out in columns. The men went forth gaily and deliberately, preceded by the firing of the field

artillery. By 9.30 a.m. our infantry, before the enemy had had time to recover themselves, had reached the summit.

From this moment, subjected to machine-gun and musketry fire, the men could only proceed slowly along the summits by the alleys of communication, with hand grenades, supported by the artillery, with whom they remained in constant touch by flag signalling. As the advance of our grenadiers continued, the Germans surrendered in large numbers. An uninterrupted chain of grenade-bearers, like the chains of bucket-holders at a fire in former times, was established in the alleys of communication from Massiges forward, and each fresh arrival of grenades was accompanied by a fresh advance.

From September 25 to October 3 the fight continued in this way and was carried on by our soldiers with fierce persistency. The Germans hurled upon the spot constant reinforcements and offered an obstinate resistance that has rarely been equalled. They stood up to be shot down—the machine-gun men at their guns, the grenadiers on their grenade chests. All attempts at a counter-attack remained equally unproductive. The possession of the heights of Massiges enabled us to extend our gains towards Ville-sur-Tourbe, while taking in flank the trenches which we had failed to secure by a frontal attack.

The loss of the heights of Massiges appears to have particularly upset the German General Staff, which, after having denied the fact, represented that the ground which it had lost as a consequence of grenade fighting had been abandoned owing to artillery fire.

V

The Attitude of the Enemy.

The attitude of the enemy was characterized by: (1) Surprise; (2) disorganization; (3) a sudden and almost disorderly engagement of the reserves; (4) the exhaustion and demoralization of the soldiers.

(1) It is beyond doubt that the Germans were surprised by the extent and violence of our attacks. They were expecting a French offensive. The orders of the day of Generals von Fleck and Von Ditfurth prove this. ("The possibility of a great French offensive must be considered": Von Ditfurth, August 15. "The French Higher Command appears to be disposed to make another desperate effort": Von Fleck, September 26.) But the Germans foresaw neither the strength nor the success of the effort. During our artillery preparation twenty-nine battalions only were brought back to Champagne (the 183rd Brigade, the 5th Division of the 3rd Corps, and one-half of the 43rd Division of Reserve). In thus limiting before the attack the reinforcements of its effectives the German General Staff showed that they did not suspect the vigour of the blow that was about to be delivered.

The same thing happened with regard to the subordinate forces. Inside the shelters in the second line officers were captured while lying down; they had an unwarranted confidence in the strength of their first line, and the interruption of telephonic communications had prevented their being informed of the rapid progress of our offensive.

(2) This rapidity of our attack explains the disorganization of the adversary on the morning of September 25. At some points certain officers and non-commissioned officers were able to continue the resistance until the investment, followed by capitulation. But elsewhere there were prompt surrenders. Men were also seen flying before our attacking troops and being killed while making for their second position.

(3) In order to make up for the insufficiency of the local reserves the German military authorities had to put in line not only the important units which they held at their disposal behind the front (10th Corps brought back from Russia), but the local reserves from other sectors (Soissonnais, Argonne, Woëvre, Alsace), which were dispatched to Champagne one battalion after another, and even in groups of double companies.

Nothing better indicates the disorganization of the German command and the significance of the check suffered than the conditions under which these reserves were engaged.

The units were dispatched to the fight completely disassociated. Among the regiments of the 5th Division (3rd Corps), one, the 81st, was identified near Massiges, while a battalion of the 12th was at Tahure and a battalion of the 32nd at the Trou Bricot. It was the same as regards the 56th Division, of which the 88th and 35th Regiments were dispatched to Massiges and the 91st to Souain, while a battalion of the 79th took up a position to the west of the Butte de Tahure.

Ill provided with food and munitions, the reinforcements were thrown into the engagement on an unknown terrain without indication as to the direction they had to take and without their junction with neighbouring units having been arranged. Through the haste with which they threw their reserves under the fire of our artillery and of our infantry, already in possession of the positions, the German General Staff considerably increased the number of their losses.

A letter taken from a soldier of the 118th Regiment furnishes us with proof of this: "We were put in a motor-car and proceeded at a headlong pace to Tahure, by way of Vouziers. Two hours' rest in the open air, with rain falling, and then we had a six hours' march to take up our positions. On our way we were greeted by the fire of the enemy shells, so that, for instance, out of 280 men of the second company, only 224 arrived safe and sound inside the trenches. These trenches, freshly dug, were barely from 35 to 50 centimetres deep. Continually surrounded by mines and bursting shells, we had to remain in them and do the best we could with them for 118 hours without getting anything hot to eat.

"Hell itself could not be more terrible. To-day, at about twelve o'clock noon, 600 men, fresh troops, joined the regiment. In five days we have lost as many and more."

The disorder amid which the reinforcements were engaged appears clearly from this fact, that on the only part of the front included between Maisons de Champagne and Hill 189 there were on October 2 thirty-two battalions belonging to twenty-one different regiments.

(4) The violence of the shock sustained, and the necessity of replacing in the fighting line units which had almost entirely disappeared, hampered the German military authorities. On the first day they were unable to respond effectively even with their artillery, the fire of which along the whole front was badly directed and as a rule poorly sustained. The loss of numerous batteries obviously deprived them of a portion of their resources.

The following days the enemy seemed to have but one idea, to strengthen their second line to stem our advance. The counter-attacks were concentrated on a comparatively unimportant part of the battle-front in certain places, the loss of which appeared to them to be particularly dangerous. Therefore on the heights of Massiges the German military authorities threw in succession isolated battalions of the 123rd, 124th, and 120th regiments, of the 30th regular regiment and of the 2nd regiment of Ersatz Reserve (16th Corps), which were each in turn decimated, for these counter-attacks, hastily and crudely prepared, all resulted in sanguinary failures. Generally speaking, the offensive capacity of the Germans appeared to be broken. The following order of the day of General von Ditfurth bears witness to this:

"It seemed to me that the infantry at certain points was confining its action to a mere defensive. . . . I cannot protest too strongly against such an idea, which necessarily results in destroying the spirit of offensive in our own troops and in arousing and strengthening in the mind of the enemy a feeling of his superiority.

"The enemy is left full liberty of action and our own action is subjected to the will of the enemy."

(5) In an engagement in the open the number of prisoners is an indication of the spirit of the enemy. In Champagne the Germans surrendered in constituted units (sections or companies), and even in groups of several hundred men. They confessed that they were worn out. They had been, for the most part, without supplies for several days and had suffered more particularly from thirst. They all showed that they had been greatly impressed by our uninterrupted artillery fire, the feeble response of their own guns, and the extent of their losses.

Here by way of specimen is what was set down by a reserve lieutenant of the 90th Regiment of infantry (10th Corps):

"Yesterday I had sixteen men killed by high explosive bombs. The trench was nearly filled up. Extreme activity of the French howitzers. Our artillery fires shrapnel, but unfortunately does not get the range.

"B . . . was also killed. The second battalion, too, has had heavy losses. It is frightful. Those confounded high explosive shells!

"The weather is becoming fine again. If only it would rain again, or fog would come. As it is, the aviators will arrive and we shall have more high

explosive bombs and flank firing on the trenches. Abominable fine weather! Fog, fog, come to our assistance."

It is difficult to estimate precisely the German losses. Certain indications, however, serve to indicate their extent. A *vizefeldwebel* declares that he is the only man remaining out of his company. A soldier of the third battalion of the 123rd Regiment engaged on the 26th, states that his regiment was withdrawn from the front after only two days' fighting because its losses were too great. The 118th Regiment relieved in the trenches the 158th Regiment after it had been reduced to fifteen or twenty men per company. Certain units disappeared completely, as for instance the 27th Reserve Regiment and the 52nd Regular Regiment, which, by the evening of the 25th, had left in our hands, the first thirteen officers and 933 men, the second twenty-one officers and 927 men. In order to arrive at the total of the losses certain figures may serve as an indication.

At the beginning of September the Germans had on the Champagne front seventy battalions. In anticipation of our attack they brought there, before September 25, twenty-nine battalions. This makes ninety-nine battalions, representing, if account be taken of the corresponding artillery and pioneer formations, 115,000 men directly engaged. The losses due to the artillery preparation and the first attacks were such that, from September 25 to October 15, the German General Staff was compelled to renew its effectives almost in their entirety by sending ninety-three fresh battalions.

It may be assumed that the units engaged on September 25 and 26 suffered losses amounting to from 60 to 80 per cent. (even more for certain corps, which have entirely disappeared). The new units brought into line for the counter-attacks, and subjected in connection with these to an incessant bombardment, lost 50 per cent. of their effectives, if not more. We think we shall be understating the case if we set down 140,000 men as the sum of the German losses in Champagne. Account must be taken of the fact that of this number the proportion of slightly wounded men able to recuperate rapidly and return to the front is, in the case of the Germans, very much below the average proportion in connection with other engagements by reason of the fact that they were unable to gather up their wounded, and thus left in our hands nearly the whole of the troops entrusted with the defence of the first position.

VI

The Results.

All those who lived through the engagements of the battle of Champagne experienced the sensation of victory. The aspect of the battlefield, the long columns of prisoners, the look in the eyes of our soldiers, their animation and their enthusiasm, all this gave expression to the importance of a success which the Generalissimo recognized in these terms:

"Grand Headquarters, October 5.

"The Commander-In-Chief addresses to the troops under his orders the expression of his profound satisfaction at the results obtained up to the present day by the attacks.

"Twenty-five thousand prisoners, three hundred and fifty officers, a hundred and fifty guns, a quantity of material which it has not yet been possible to gauge, are the trophies of a victory the echo of which throughout Europe indicates its importance.

"The sacrifices willingly made have not been in vain. All have been able to take part in the common task. The present is a sure guarantee to us of the future.

"The Commander-in-Chief is proud to command the finest troops France has ever known.

"J. Joffre."

The time has not yet come to define and appreciate to the full the results of our offensive. The Germans, who during the first days experienced the grievous fear of an irremediable collapse of their strategic position, hastened to conclude, when they thought the danger averted, that our action had not accomplished its purpose. The future will show whether the profound material and moral blow which they have sustained is not one of those which contribute to destroy the power of an army, the one complete and ultimate object of war, and whether such a shock will not hasten the coming of the time for decisive efforts. Is it not permissible, however, to point out even now that an army compelled by force to abandon along a front of twenty-five kilometres, three or four kilometres deep, a whole region long since fortified, to give up its entrenchments to the assailant, to fall back definitively, is an army subject to the will of its adversary, that is to say an army that is beaten?

The tactical victory is not to be measured merely by the ground gained; it is shown by the exceptionally large number of prisoners who surrendered, overwhelmed, scattered, reduced to impotence by the force and rapidity of our attack. Another indisputable indication is the *matériel* abandoned on the spot: 121 heavy or field guns, the positions of which were captured by our infantry as required of them, and which, brought to the rear or turned immediately against the enemy, constitute trophies of victory rare in military history.[1]

The material damage, if that alone were in question, would in itself be heavy for the enemy, but to it must be added the killed and wounded, and, taking the total losses into account, they were about 140,000 men placed hors de combat. In this connection it should be pointed out that the resources in men which Germany has drawn upon during the war with so much prodigality are now extremely limited. The reinforcements dispatched to the front while these engagements in Champagne were in progress comprised for the most part men of the 1915 class who had hitherto been kept at the depôts, and even volunteers of the 1916 class. It is not doubtful that the blow struck was severe enough to accelerate appreciably the time, now known, when Germany will be unable to maintain at their present figure the number of effectives engaged.

(1) *Region of the Navarin Farm.* (*a*) Capture of the Epi de la Parallèle du Bois Chevron.

(*b*) On the western side of the road, capture of a part of the Tranchée des Vandales (a fine feat of arms of the Moroccan Regiment, which decimated and captured a regiment of men surprised in their camp).

(*c*) On the eastern side of the road, capture of small woods organized for defence (Tranchée de la Kultur); violent and vain counter-attacks on the 7th, 8th, and 9th. (In the course of these different actions, prisoners of the 10th Corps brought back from Russia in a very sorry state.)

(2) *Region of Tahure.* (*a*) Capture of the Butte de Tahure.

(*b*) Capture of the village of Tahure. (Extension towards the east and north-east on October 10 and 11.)

(*c*) From the Brosse à Dents, Tranchée de Constantinople. Attack completed on the 8th and 11th by fresh gains. (Fierce German counter-attacks around Tahure on October 6 and 9.)

(3) *Region of Le Mesnil.* (*a*) Capture of the Mamelle Nord, night of October 1-2. Counter-attacks repulsed from the 2nd to the 4th.

(*b*) Capture of the Trapèze, October 8.

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[1] A few figures will enable comparisons to be made between the battle of Champagne and the battles of the Empire and of 1870.

At Jena we made 15,000 prisoners, and took 200 guns. The Prussian losses in killed amounted to 12,000 men.

At Austerlitz we made 12,000 prisoners, and took 186 guns. The Imperial troops had 25,000 men hors de combat.

At Freschwiller we lost 5,000 killed, 9,000 prisoners, and 28 guns.

At Saint-Privat we lost 12,000 men; the Germans 10,000.

APPENDIX III.

THE ADVANCE AT LOOS.

Sir John French's Eighth Dispatch.

War Office, 1st November, 1915.

The following dispatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief the British Army in France:—

General Headquarters,
British Army in France,
15th October, 1915.

My Lord,

I have the honour to report the operations of the Forces under my command since the date of those described in my last dispatch dated 15th June, 1915.

1. Those of the greatest importance took place during the last days of the period under report. Nevertheless the Army under my command was constantly engaged throughout the whole time in enterprises which, although not securing the same important results, have yet had considerable influence on the course of events.

2. On 2nd June the enemy made a final offensive in the Ypres salient with the object of gaining our trenches and position at Hooge. The attack was most determined and was preceded by a severe bombardment. A gallant defence was made by troops of the 3rd Cavalry Division and 1st Indian Cavalry Division, and our position was maintained throughout.

During the first weeks of June the front of the Second Army was extended to the north as far as the village of Boesinghe.

3. After the conclusion of the Battle of Festubert the troops of the First Army were engaged in several minor operations.

By an attack delivered on the evening of 15th June, after a prolonged bombardment, the 1st Canadian Brigade obtained possession of the German front-line trenches north-east of Givenchy, but were unable to retain them owing to their flanks being too much exposed.

4. On 16th June an attack was carried out by the 5th Corps on the Bellewaarde Ridge, east of Ypres.

The enemy's front line was captured, many of his dead and wounded being found in the trenches.

The troops, pressing forward, gained ground as far east as the Bellewaarde Lake, but found themselves unable to maintain this advanced position. They were, however, successful in securing and consolidating the ground won during the first part of the attack, on a front of a thousand yards, including the advanced portion of the enemy's salient north of the Ypres-Menin Road.

During this action the fire of the artillery was most effective, the prisoners testifying to its destructiveness and accuracy. It also prevented the delivery of counter-attacks, which were paralysed at the outset.

Over 200 prisoners were taken, besides some machine-guns, trench material, and gas apparatus.

Holding attacks by the neighbouring 2nd and 6th Corps were successful in helping the main attack, whilst the 36th French Corps co-operated very usefully with artillery fire on Pilkem.

Near Hill 60 the 15th Infantry Brigade made four bombing attacks, gaining and occupying about 50 yards of trench.

On 6th July a small attack was made by the 11th Infantry Brigade on a German salient between Boesinghe and Ypres, which resulted in the capture of a frontage of about 500 yards of trench and a number of prisoners.

In the course of this operation it was necessary to move a gun of the 135th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, into the front line to destroy an enemy sap-head. To reach its position the gun had to be taken over a high canal embankment, rafted over the canal under fire, pulled up a bank with a slope of nearly 45 degrees, and then dragged over three trenches and a sky line to its position 70 yards from the German lines. This was carried out without loss.

This incident is of minor importance in itself, but I quote it as an example of the daily difficulties which officers and men in the trenches are constantly called upon to overcome, and of the spirit of initiative and resource which is so marked a feature amongst them.

From the 10th to the 12th July the enemy made attempts, after heavy shelling, to recapture the lost portion of their line; but our artillery, assisted by that of the French on our left, prevented any serious assault from being delivered. Minor attacks were constant, but were easily repulsed by the garrison of our trenches.

On 19th July an enemy's redoubt at the western end of the Hooge defences was successfully mined and destroyed, and a small portion of the enemy's trenches was captured.

THE AFFAIR AT HOOGE.

5. Since my last dispatch a new device has been adopted by the enemy for driving burning liquid into our trenches with a strong jet.

Thus supported, an attack was made on the trenches of the Second Army at Hooge, on the Menin Road, early on 30th July. Most of the infantry occupying these trenches were driven back, but their retirement was due far more to the surprise and temporary confusion caused by the burning liquid than to the actual damage inflicted.

Gallant endeavours were made by repeated counter-attacks to recapture the lost section of trenches. These, however, proving unsuccessful and costly, a new line of trenches was consolidated a short distance farther back.

Attacks made by the enemy at the same time west of Bellewaarde Lake were repulsed.

On 9th August these losses were brilliantly regained, owing to a successful attack carried out by the 6th Division. This attack was very well executed and resulted in the recapture, with small casualties, not only of the whole of the lost trenches, but, in addition, of 400 yards of German trench north of the Menin Road.

At the end of this engagement it was estimated that between four and five hundred German dead were lying on the battlefield.

Valuable help was rendered by two batteries of French artillery lent by General Hely d'Oissel, commanding 36th French Corps.

6. From the conclusion of the above-mentioned operations until the last week in September there was relative quiet along the whole of the British line, except at those points where the normal conditions of existence comprised occasional shelling or constant mine and bomb warfare. In these trying forms of encounter all ranks have constantly shown the greatest enterprise and courage, and have consistently maintained the upper hand.

The close accord and co-operation which has always existed between the Commander-in-Chief of our Allies and myself has been maintained, and I have had constant meetings with General Joffre, who has kept me informed of his views and intentions, and explained the successive methods by which he hopes to attain his ultimate object.

After full discussion of the military situation a decision was arrived at for joint action, in which I acquiesced.

It was arranged that we should make a combined attack from certain points of the Allied line during the last week in September.

The reinforcements I have received enabled me to comply with several requests which General Joffre has made that I should take over additional portions of the French line.

THE SEPTEMBER OFFENSIVE.

7. In fulfilment of the *rôle* assigned to it in these operations, the Army under my command attacked the enemy on the morning of the 25th September.

The main attack was delivered by the 1st and 4th Corps between the La Bassée Canal on the north and a point of the enemy's line opposite the village of Grenay on the south.

At the same time a secondary attack, designed with the object of distracting the enemy's attention and holding his troops to their ground, was made by the 5th Corps on Bellewaarde Farm, situated to the east of Ypres. Subsidiary attacks with similar objects were delivered by the 3rd and Indian Corps north of the La Bassée Canal and along the whole front of the Second Army.

The object of the secondary attack by the 5th Corps was most effectively achieved, for not only was the enemy contained on that front, but we have reason to believe that reserves were hurried toward that point of the line.

The attack was made at daybreak by the 3rd and 14th Divisions, and at first the greater part of the enemy's front line was taken; but, owing to the powerful artillery fire concentrated against them, the troops were unable to retain the ground, and had to return to their original trenches toward nightfall. The 5th Corps succeeded, however, in capturing two officers and 138 other prisoners.

Similar demonstrations with equally good results were made along the whole front of the Second Army.

With the same object in view, those units of the First Army occupying the line north of the Béthune-La Bassée Canal were detailed to carry out some minor operations.

Portions of the 1st Corps assaulted the enemy's trenches at Givenchy. The Indian Corps attacked the Moulin du Piètre, while the 3rd Corps was directed against the trenches at Le Bridoux.

These attacks started at daybreak and were at first successful all along the line. Later in the day the enemy brought up strong reserves, and, after hard fighting and variable fortunes, the troops engaged in this part of the line reoccupied their original trenches at nightfall. They succeeded admirably, however, in fulfilling the *rôle* allotted to them, and in holding large numbers of the enemy away from the main attack.

The 8th Division of the 3rd Corps and the Meerut Division of the Indian Corps were principally engaged in this part of the line.

On the front of the Third Army subsidiary operations of a similar nature were successfully carried out.

The Wing of the Royal Flying Corps attached to this Army performed valuable work by undertaking distant flights behind the enemy's lines and by successfully blowing up railways, wrecking trains, and damaging stations on his line of communication by means of bomb attacks.

Valuable assistance was rendered by Vice-Admiral Bacon and a squadron of His Majesty's ships operating off Zeebrugge and Ostend.

PLAN OF MAIN ATTACK.

8. The general plan of the main attack on the 25th September was as follows:—

In co-operation with an offensive movement by the 10th French Army on our right, the 1st and 4th Corps were to attack the enemy from a point opposite the little mining village of Grenay on the south to the La Bassée Canal on north. The Vermelles-Hulluch Road was to be the dividing line between the two Corps, the 4th Corps delivering the right attack, the 1st Corps the left.

In view of the great length of line along which the British troops were operating, it was necessary to keep a strong reserve in my own hand. The 11th Corps, consisting of the Guards, the 21st and the 24th Divisions, were detailed for this purpose.

This reserve was the more necessary owing to the fact that the 10th French Army had to postpone its attack until one o'clock in the day; and, further, that the Corps operating on the French left had to be directed in a more or less south-easterly direction, involving, in case of our success, a considerable gap in our line.

To ensure, however, the speedy and effective support to the 1st and 4th Corps in the case of their success, the 21st and 24th Divisions passed the night of the 24th-25th on the line Beuvry (to the east of Béthune)-Nœux-les-Mines. The Guards Division was in the neighbourhood of Lillers on the same night.

I also directed the General Officer Commanding Second Army to draw the 28th Division back to Bailleul and to hold it in readiness to meet unexpected eventualities.

The British Cavalry Corps, less 3rd Cavalry Division, under General Fanshawe, was posted in the neighbourhood of St. Pol and Bailleul les Pernes; and the Indian Cavalry Corps, under General Rimington, at Doullens; both in readiness to co-operate with the French Cavalry in exploiting any success which might be attained by the combined French and British Forces. Plans for effective co-operation were fully arranged between the Cavalry Commanders of both Armies.

The 3rd Cavalry Division, less one brigade, was assigned to the General Officer Commanding First Army as a reserve, and moved into the area of the 4th Corps on the 21st and 22nd September.

THE NATURE OF THE FRONT.

9. Opposite the front of the main line of attack the distance between the enemy's trenches and our own varied from about 100 to 500 yards.

The country over which the advance took place is open and overgrown with long grass and self-sown crops.

From the canal southward our trenches and those of the enemy ran, roughly, parallel up an almost imperceptible rise to the south-west.

From the Vermelles-Hulluch Road southward the advantage of height is on the enemy's side as far as the Béthune-Lens Road. There the two lines of trenches cross a spur in which the rise culminates, and thence the command lies on the side of the British trenches.

Due east of the intersection of spur and trenches, and a short mile away, stands Loos. Less than a mile further south-east is Hill 70, which is the

summit of the gentle rise in the ground.

Other notable tactical points in our front were:—

"*Fosse 8*" (a thousand yards south of Auchy), which is a coal mine with a high and strongly defended slag-heap.

"*The Hohenzollern Redoubt.*"—A strong work thrust out nearly 500 yards in front of the German lines and close to our own. It is connected with their front line by three communication trenches abutting into the defences of Fosse 8.

Cité St. Elie.—A strongly defended mining village lying 1,500 yards south of Haisnes.

"*The Quarries.*"—Lying half-way to the German trenches west of Cité St. Elie.

Hulluch.—A village strung out along a small stream, lying less than half a mile south-east of Cité St. Elie and 3,000 yards north-east of Loos.

Half a mile north of Hill 70 is "*Puits* 14 *bis*," another coal mine, possessing great possibilities for defence when taken in conjunction with a strong redoubt situated on the north-east side of Hill 70.

THE FIRST HOURS OF THE BATTLE.

10. The attacks of the 1st and 4th Corps were delivered at 6.30 a.m., and were successful all along the line, except just south of the La Bassée Canal.

The enemy met the advance by wild infantry fire of slight intensity, but his artillery fire was accurate and caused considerable casualties.

The 47th Division on the right of the 4th Corps rapidly swung its left forward and occupied the southern outskirts of Loos and a big double slag-heap opposite Grenay, known as the Double Crassier. Thence it pushed on, and, by taking possession of the cemetery, the enclosures and chalk pits south of Loos, succeeded in forming a strong defensive flank.

This London Territorial Division acquitted itself most creditably. It was skilfully led and the troops carried out their task with great energy and determination. They contributed largely to our success in this part of the field.

On the left of the 47th Division a Scottish Division of the New Armies (15th Division) assaulted Loos, Hill 70, and Fosse 14 bis.

The attack was admirably delivered, and in a little more than an hour parts of the division occupied Loos and its northern outskirts, Puits 14 bis and Hill 70, whilst some units had pushed on as far as Cité St. Auguste, a mile east of Hill 70.

The 15th Division carried out its advance with the greatest vigour, in spite of its left flank being exposed, owing to the 1st Division on its left having been checked.

About 1 p.m. the enemy brought up strong reserves, and the advanced portions of the division at Fosse 14 bis and on the far side of Hill 70 were driven in. We had, however, secured the very substantial gain of Loos and the western portion of Hill 70.

11. At 9.30 a.m. I placed the 21st and 24th Divisions at the disposal of the General Officer commanding the First Army, who at once ordered the General Officer commanding the 11th Corps to move them up in support of the attacking troops.

Between 11 a.m. and 12 noon the central brigades of these divisions filed past me at Béthune and Nœux-les-Mines respectively. At 11.30 a.m. the heads of both divisions were within three miles of our original trench line.

As the success of the 47th Division on the right of the 4th Corps caused me less apprehension of a gap in our line near that point, I ordered the Guards Division up to Nœux-les-Mines, and the 28th Division to move in a southerly direction from Bailleul.

12. The 1st Division, attacking on the left of the 15th, was unable at first to make any headway with its right brigade.

The brigade on its left (the 1st) was, however, able to get forward and penetrated into the outskirts of the village of Hulluch, capturing some gun positions on the way.

The determined advance of this brigade, with its right flank dangerously exposed, was most praiseworthy, and, combined with the action of divisional reserves, was instrumental in causing the surrender of a German detachment some 500 strong which was holding up the advance of the right brigade in the front system of trenches.

The inability of the right of this division to get forward had, however, caused sufficient delay to enable the enemy to collect local reserves behind the strong second line.

The arrangements, the planning and execution of the attack, and the conduct of the troops of the 4th Corps were most efficient and praiseworthy.

THE QUARRIES AND FOSSE 8.

13. In the attack of the 1st Corps the 7th Division was directed on the Quarries. The 9th Division was to capture the Hohenzollern Redoubt and then to push on to Fosse 8.

The assault of the 7th Division succeeded at once, and in a very short time they had reached the western edge of the Quarries, Cité St. Elie, and even the village of Haisnes, the tendency of the action having been to draw the troops northward.

On the right of the 9th Division the 26th Brigade secured Fosse 8 after heavy fighting, and the 28th Brigade captured the front line of the German trenches east of Vermelles railway. At the latter point the fighting was extremely severe; and this brigade, suffering considerable losses, was driven back to its own trenches.

At nightfall, after a heavy day's fighting and numerous German counter-attacks, the line was, roughly, as follows:—

From the Double Crassier, south of Loos, by the western part of Hill 70, to the western exit of Hulluch; thence by the Quarries and western end of Cité St. Elie, east of Fosse 8, back to our original line.

Throughout the length of the line heavy fighting was in progress, and our hold on Fosse 8, backed as it is by the strong defences and guns of Auchy, was distinctly precarious.

Heavy rain fell throughout the day, which was very detrimental to efficient observation of fire and reconnaissance by aircraft.

In the course of the night 25th-26th September the enemy delivered a series of heavy counter-attacks along most of our new front. The majority of these were repulsed with heavy loss; but in parts of the line, notably near the Quarries, our troops were driven back a certain distance.

At 6 p.m. the Guards Division arrived at Nœux-les-Mines, and on the morning of the 26th I placed them at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding First Army.

14. The situation at the Quarries, described above, was readjusted by an attack of the 7th Division on the afternoon of 26th September; and on that

evening very heavy attacks delivered by the enemy were repulsed with severe loss.

On the 4th Corps front attacks on Hulluch and on the redoubt on the east side of Hill 70 were put in operation, but were anticipated by the enemy organizing a very strong offensive from that direction. These attacks drove in the advanced troops of the 21st and 24th Divisions which were then moving forward to attack.

Reports regarding this portion of the action are very conflicting and it is not possible to form an entirely just appreciation of what occurred in this part of the field.

At nightfall there was no change up to Hill 70, except for a small gain of ground south of Loos. From Hill 70 the line bent sharply back to the north-west as far as Loos-La Bassée Road, which it followed for a thousand yards, bearing thence north-eastward to near the west end of Hulluch. Thence northward it was the same as it had been on the previous night.

THE GUARDS' ADVANCE.

The night of 26th-27th September was as disturbed as the previous night, for many further counter-attacks were made and constant pressure was maintained by the enemy.

A dismounted cavalry brigade was thrown into Loos to form a garrison.

On this day I placed the 28th Division at the disposal of the General Officer commanding First Army.

I regret to say that Major-General Sir Thompson Capper, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., commanding 7th Division, was severely wounded on the 26th and died on the morning of the 27th. He was a most distinguished and capable leader, and his loss will be severely felt.

15. Soon after dawn on the 27th it became apparent that the brigade holding Fosse 8 was unable to maintain its position, and eventually it was slowly forced back until at length our front at this point coincided with the eastern portion of the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

I regret to say that during this operation Major-General G. H. Thesiger, C.B., C.M.G., A.D.C., commanding the 9th Division, was killed whilst most gallantly endeavouring to secure the ground which had been won.

In the afternoon of this day the Guards Division, which had taken over part of the line to the north of the 4th Corps, almost restored our former line,

bringing it up parallel to and slightly west of the Lens-La Bassée Road.

This Division made a very brilliant and successful attack on Hill 70 in the afternoon. They drove the Germans off the top of the hill, but could not take the redoubt, which is on the north-east slopes below the crest. They also took the Chalk Pit which lies north of Puits 14, and all the adjacent woods, but were unable to maintain themselves on the Puits itself, which was most effectively commanded by well-posted machine guns.

The 47th Division on the right of the Guards captured a wood farther to the south and repulsed a severe hostile counter-attack.

The 28th was passed in consolidating the ground gained and in making a certain number of internal moves of divisions, in order to give the troops rest and to enable those units whose casualties had been heavy to refill their ranks with reinforcements.

The 47th Division made a little more ground on the south, capturing one field gun and a few machine guns.

On the evening of this day the situation remained practically unchanged.

LOOS TAKEN OVER BY THE FRENCH.

16. The line occupied by the troops of the First Army south of the canal became now very much extended by the salient with which it indented the enemy's line.

The French 10th Army had been very heavily opposed, and I considered that the advance they were able to make did not afford sufficient protection to my right flank.

On representing this to General Joffre he was kind enough to ask the Commander of the northern group of the French Armies to render me assistance.

General Foch met these demands in the same friendly spirit which he has always displayed throughout the course of the whole campaign, and expressed his readiness to give me all the support he could.

On the morning of the 28th we discussed the situation, and the General agreed to send the 9th French Corps to take over the ground occupied by us extending from the French left up to and including that portion of Hill 70 which we were holding, and also the village of Loos.

This relief was commenced on the 30th September, and completed on the two following nights.

17. During the 29th and 30th September, and the first days of October, fighting was almost continuous along the northern part of the new line, particularly about the Hohenzollern Redoubt and neighbouring trenches, to which the enemy evidently attached great value. His attacks, however. Invariably broke down with very heavy loss under the accurate fire of our infantry and artillery.

The Germans succeeded in gaining some ground in and about the Hohenzollern Redoubt, but they paid heavily for it in the losses they suffered.

Our troops all along the front were busily engaged in consolidating and strengthening the ground won, and the efficient and thorough manner in which this work was carried out reflects the greatest credit upon all ranks. Every precaution was made to deal with the counter-attack which was inevitable.

During these operations the weather has been most unfavourable, and the troops have had to fight in rain and mud and often in darkness. Even these adverse circumstances have in no way affected the magnificent spirit continually displayed alike by officers and men. In the Casualty Clearing and Dressing Stations, of which I visited a great number during the course of the action, I found nothing but the most cheery optimism among the wounded.

I have to deplore the loss of a third most valuable and distinguished General of Division during these operations.

On the afternoon of 2nd October Major-General F. D. V. Wing, C.B., commanding the 12th Division, was killed.

THE GERMAN ATTACK OF OCTOBER 8.

18. On the afternoon of 8th October our expectations in regard to a counter-attack were fulfilled. The enemy directed a violent and intense attack all along the line from Fosse 8 on the north to the right of the French 9th Corps on the south. The attack was delivered by some twenty-eight battalions in first line, with larger forces in support, and was prepared by a very heavy bombardment from all parts of the enemy's front.

At all parts of the line except two the Germans were repulsed with tremendous loss, and it is computed on reliable authority that they left some eight to nine thousand dead lying on the battlefield in front of the British and French trenches.

On the right the attack succeeded in making a small and unimportant lodgment on the Double Crassier held by the French; whilst on the left the trench held by troops of the Guards Division to the north-east of the Hohenzollern Redoubt was temporarily captured. The latter was, however, speedily retaken, and at midnight on the 9th October the line held by the First Army was identically the same as that held before the enemy's attack started.

The main enemy attacks on the front held by our troops had been against the 1st Division in the neighbourhood of the Chalk Pit and the Guards Division in the neighbourhood of the Hohenzollern Redoubt. Both attacks were repulsed, and the enemy lost heavily from machine-gun and artillery fire.

From subsequent information it transpired that the German attack was made by about twelve battalions against the line Loos-Chalk Pit, and that a subsidiary attack by six to eight battalions was made from the direction of the Hohenzollern Redoubt against the Guards Division.

Some eight or ten German battalions were directed against the French 9th Corps.

THE BRITISH GAINS.

19. The position assaulted and carried with so much brilliancy and dash by the 1st and 4th Corps on 25th September was an exceptionally strong one. It extended along a distance of some 6,500 yards, consisted of a double line, which included works of considerable strength, and was a network of trenches and bomb-proof shelters. Some of the dug-outs and shelters formed veritable caves thirty feet below the ground, with almost impenetrable head cover. The enemy had expended months of labour upon perfecting these defences.

The total number of prisoners captured during these operations amounted to 57 officers and 3,000 other ranks. Material which fell into our hands included 26 field guns, 40 machine guns, and 3 minenwerfer.

I deeply regret the heavy casualties which were incurred in this battle, but in view of the great strength of the position, the stubborn defence of the enemy, and the powerful artillery by which he was supported, I do not think they were excessive. I am happy to be able to add that the proportion of slightly wounded is relatively very large indeed.

THE WORK OF THE ARTILLERY.

20. Since the date of my last dispatch the Army has received strong reinforcements, and every reinforcement has had its quota of Field Artillery. In addition, numerous batteries of heavy guns and howitzers have been added to the strength of the heavy artillery. The arrival of these reinforcements in the field has tested the capacity of the Artillery as a whole to expand to meet the requirements of the Army, and to maintain the high level of efficiency that has characterized this arm throughout the campaign. Our enemy may have hoped, not perhaps without reason, that it would be impossible for us, starting from such small beginnings, to build up an efficient Artillery to provide for the very large expansion of the Army. If he entertained such hopes, he has now good reason to know that they have not been justified by the result.

The efficiency of the Artillery of the New Armies has exceeded all expectations, and during the period under review excellent services have been rendered by the Territorial Artillery.

The necessity to denude the old batteries of Regular Horse and Field Artillery of officers and non-commissioned officers, in order to provide for the expansion referred to, has not in any way impaired their efficiency, and they continue to set an example to all by their high standard and devotion to duty.

I must give a special word of praise to the officers and rank and file of the Royal Garrison Artillery for the admirable way in which they have accustomed themselves to the conditions of active service in the field, to which for the most part they were unaccustomed, and for the manner in which they have applied their general knowledge of gunnery to the special problems arising in trench warfare. The excellence of their training and the accuracy of their shooting have, I feel sure, made a marked impression on the enemy.

21. The work of the Artillery during the daily life in the trenches calls for increasing vigilance and the maintenance of an intricate system of communications in a thorough state of efficiency, in order that the guns may be ever ready to render assistance to the Infantry when necessity arises. A high standard of initiative is also required in order to maintain the moral ascendancy over the enemy, by impeding his working parties, destroying his works, and keeping his artillery fire under control.

To the many calls upon them the Artillery have responded in a manner that is altogether admirable.

In the severe offensive actions that have taken place it is not too much to say that the first element of success has been the artillery preparation of the attack. Only when this preparation has been thorough have our attacks succeeded. It is impossible to convey in a dispatch an adequate impression of the amount of care and labour involved in the minute and exact preparations that are the necessary preliminaries of a bombardment preparatory to an attack in a modern battle.

The immense number of guns that it is necessary to concentrate, the amount of ammunition to be supplied to them, and the diversity of the tasks to be carried out, demand a very high order of skill in organization and technical professional knowledge.

22. The successful attacks at Hooge on 9th August and of the First Army on 25th September show that our Artillery officers possess the necessary talents and the rank and file the necessary skill and endurance to ensure success in operations of this character.

Moreover, the repulse of the enemy's attack on 8th October in the neighbourhood of Loos and Hulluch with such heavy losses shows the capacity of the Artillery to concentrate its fire promptly and effectively at a moment's notice for the defence of the front.

I cannot close these remarks on the Artillery without expressing my admiration for the work of the observing officers and the men who work with them. Carrying out their duties as they do, in close proximity to the front line in observing stations, that are the special mark of the enemy's guns, they are constantly exposed to fire, and are compelled to carry on their work, involving the use of delicate instruments and the making of nice calculations, in circumstances of the greatest difficulty and danger. That they have never failed in their duties, and that they have suffered very heavy casualties in performing them, are to their lasting credit and honour.

The work of the Artillery in co-operation with the Royal Flying Corps continues to make most satisfactory progress, and has been most highly creditable to all concerned.

The new weapons that have been placed in the field during the period under review have more than fulfilled expectations, and the enemy must be well aware of their accuracy and general efficiency.

23. I have on previous occasions called your Lordship's attention to the admirable work of the Corps of the Royal Engineers.

This work covers a very wide field, demanding a high standard of technical knowledge and skill, as well as unflagging energy; and throughout the supreme test of war these qualities have never been found wanting, thus reflecting the greatest credit on the organization of the Corps as a whole, and on the training of the officers and men individually.

The spirit which is imbued in all ranks from the base ports to the front trenches and beyond is the same.

No matter where or how the *personnel* of the Corps has been employed, devotion to duty and energy have been ever present.

In this dispatch I wish particularly to draw attention to the work of the Field Units and Army Troops Companies, which must almost invariably be performed under the most trying circumstances by night as well as by day. Demanding qualities of whole-hearted courage and self-sacrifice, combined with sound judgment and instant action, the work of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men has been beyond all praise.

The necessity for skilled labour at the front has been so continuous that Royal Engineer units have frequently been forced to forego those periods of rest which at times it has been possible to grant to other troops; but, in spite of this, they have responded loyally to every call on their services.

Notwithstanding the heavy casualties sustained by all ranks, the *esprit de corps* of the Royal Engineers is such that the new material is at once animated by the same ideals, and the same devotion to duty is maintained.

24. I desire to call your Lordship's attention to the splendid work carried out by the Tunnelling Companies. These companies, officered largely by mining engineers, and manned by professional miners, have devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the dangerous work of offensive and defensive mining—a task ever accompanied by great and unseen dangers.

It is impossible within the limits of a dispatch to give any just idea of the work of these units, but it will be found, when their history comes to be written, that it will present a story of danger, of heroism, and of difficulties surmounted worthy of the best traditions of the Royal Engineers, under whose general direction their work is carried out.

25. Owing to the repeated use by the enemy of asphyxiating gases in their attacks on our positions, I have been compelled to resort to similar

methods; and a detachment was organized for this purpose, which took part in the operations commencing on the 25th September for the first time.

Although the enemy was known to have been prepared for such reprisals, our gas attack met with marked success, and produced a demoralizing effect in some of the opposing units, of which ample evidence was forthcoming in the captured trenches.

The men who undertook this work carried out their unfamiliar duties during a heavy bombardment with conspicuous gallantry and coolness; and I feel confident in their ability to more than hold their own should the enemy again resort to this method of warfare.

THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS.

26. I would again call your Lordship's attention to the work of the Royal Flying Corps.

Throughout the summer, notwithstanding much unfavourable weather, the work of co-operating with the Artillery, photographing the positions of the enemy, bombing their communications and reconnoitring far over hostile territory has gone on unceasingly.

The volume of work performed steadily increases; the amount of flying has been more than doubled during this period. There have been more than 240 combats in the air, and in nearly every case our pilots have had to seek the enemy behind his own lines, where he is assisted by the fire of his movable anti-aircraft guns; and in spite of this they have succeeded in bringing down four of the German machines behind our trenches and at least twelve on the enemy's lines, and many more have been seen to dive to earth in a damaged condition or to have retired from the fight. On one occasion an officer of the Royal Flying Corps engaged four enemy machines and drove them off, proceeding on his reconnaissance. On another occasion two officers engaged six hostile machines and disabled at least one of them.

Artillery observation and photography are two of the most trying tasks the Royal Flying Corps is called upon to perform, as our airmen must remain for long periods within easy range of the enemy's anti-aircraft guns.

The work of observation for the guns from aeroplanes has now become an important factor in artillery fire, and the *personnel* of the two arms work in the closest co-operation.

As evidence of the dangers our flying officers are called upon to face I may state that on one occasion a machine was hit in no fewer than 300

places soon after crossing the enemy's lines, and yet the officer successfully carried out his mission.

The Royal Flying Corps has on several occasions carried out a continuous bombing of the enemy's communications, descending to 500 feet and under in order to hit moving trains on the railway. This has in some cases been kept up day after day; and, during the operations at the end of September, in the space of five days nearly six tons of explosives were dropped on moving trains, and are known to have practically wrecked five, some containing troops, and to have damaged the main railway line in many different places.

For the valuable work carried out by the Royal Flying Corps I am greatly indebted to their commander, Brigadier-General H. M. Trenchard, C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C.

27. Throughout the campaign the financial requirements of the Army have been successfully met by the Army Pay Department. The troops have been paid, and all claims against the Army discharged, with unbroken regularity, and the difficulties inseparable from a foreign banking system and a strange currency have been overcome.

The work of the department has been greatly assisted by the Bank of France, the administration of which has spared no effort to help.

28. While the circumstances of this campaign have brought no exceptional strain on horses, great credit is due to all concerned for the excellent arrangements in the Remount Depôts and Veterinary Hospitals.

THE NEW ARMIES.

29. I am pleased to be able once more to report very favourably on the divisions of the New Armies which have arrived in this country since the date of my last report.

It is evident that great trouble and much hard work have been expended on these units during their training at home, and it is found that they have received such sound teaching that a short period of instruction in trench life under fire soon enables them to take their places with credit beside their acclimatized comrades of the older formations.

30. The Territorial Force units have continued to merit the favourable remarks I have made on them in previous dispatches, and have taken a prominent part in many of the active operations in which the Army has been engaged.

31. A new Division has been sent from Canada, and has joined the Army in the field. The material of which it is composed is excellent; and this Division will, I am convinced, acquit itself as well in face of the enemy as the 1st Canadian Division has always done.

32. During the period under report I have been very glad once more to receive the Prime Minister at my Headquarters, as well as the Secretary of State for War.

The Prime Minister of Canada and the Minister of Militia and Defence of Canada also came to France for a few days and visited the troops of the Canadian Contingent.

The Chief Rabbi paid a short visit to the front and interested himself in the members of the large Jewish community now serving with the Army in the Field.

THE FRENCH ACHIEVEMENT.

33. I cannot conclude the account of these operations without expressing the deep admiration felt by all ranks of the Army under my command for the splendid part taken by our French Allies in the battle which opened on 25th September. Fortified positions of immense strength, upon which months of skill and labour had been expended, and which extended for many miles, were stormed and captured by our French comrades with a bravery and determination which went far to instil hope and spirit into the Allied Forces.

The large captures of men and material which fell into their hands testified to the completeness of their victory.

The close co-operation between the two Armies of the Allied Powers, which has been so marked a feature throughout the whole campaign, has been as prominent as ever in the work of the last three weeks.

I have already referred to the cordial and willing help rendered by General Foch in the support of the 9th French Corps, and I have also once again to express my deep indebtedness to General d'Urbal, commanding the 10th French Army, operating on my right; and to General Hely d'Oissel, commanding the French Forces in the North.

34. The part taken by the troops of His Majesty the King of the Belgians was very effective in holding the enemy in front of them to his positions.

35. I have many names to bring to your Lordship's notice for valuable gallant and distinguished service during the period under review, and these will form the subject of a separate report at an early date.

I have the honour to be
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
J. D. P. FRENCH,
Field-Marshal, Commanding-in-Chief
The British Army in France.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Maps have been moved to the nearest paragraph break.

A cover was created for this ebook which is placed in the public domain.

Some regimental names of the form “1/x”. The “1” signifies a first line regiment. “2/x” indicates a second line regiment.

[The end of *Nelson's History of the War Vol. X* by John Buchan]