

killed and wounded, and had taken from him over 34,000 prisoners and 270 guns. For the remarkable success of the battle of Bapaume, the greatest credit is due to the excellence of the staff arrangements of all formations, and to the most able conduct of the operations of the Third Army by its Commander, General Byng.

In the obstinate fighting of the past few days the enemy had been pressed back to the line of the Somme River and the high ground about Rocquigny and Beugny, where he had shown an intention to stand for a time. Thereafter, his probable plan was to retire slowly, when forced to do so, from one intermediary position to another; until he could shelter his battered divisions behind the Hindenburg defences. The line of the Tortille River and the high Nurlu Plateau offered opportunities for an ordered withdrawal of this nature; which would allow him to secure his artillery as well as much of the material in his forward dumps.

On the other hand, the disorganisation which had been caused by our attacks on the 8th and 21st August had increased under the pressure of our advance, and had been accompanied by a steady deterioration in the moral of his troops. Garrisons left as rearguards to hold up our advance at important points had surrendered as soon as they found themselves threatened with isolation. The urgent needs of the moment, the wide extent of front attacked, and consequent uncertainty as to where the next blow would fall, and the extent of his losses had forced the enemy to throw in his reserve piecemeal as they arrived on the battle front. On many occasions in the course of the fighting elements of the same German division had been identified on widely separated parts of the battle front.

In such circumstances, a sudden and successful blow, of weight sufficient to break through the northern hinge of the defences to which it was his design to fall back, might produce results of great importance. At this date, as will be seen from the events described in para. 27, our troops were already in position to deliver such a stroke.

(26) *The Withdrawal from the Lys Salient.*

Meanwhile, during the process of the great events briefly recorded above and in immediate consequence of them, other events of different but scarcely less importance were taking place on the northern portion of our front.

The exhaustion of the enemy's reserves resulting from the Allied attacks made the shortening of the German line imperative. The obvious sector in which to effect such a shortening was the Lys front. The enemy had only maintained himself in the Lys salient under the constant fire of our guns at the expense of heavy casualties, not only to his infantry in line, but to his artillery and troops in back areas. With the abandonment of his projected offensive against the Channel Ports all reason had gone for remaining in so costly a salient, while the threat, carefully maintained by us, of a British attack provided an additional reason for withdrawing.

Accordingly, from about the 26th July the enemy had been actively employed in removing the ammunition and stores accumulated for his offensive, and as early as the 5th August he had begun to effect local withdrawals on the southern flank of the salient.

The development of our own and the French offensives hastened this movement, although

immense quantities of ammunition still remained untouched. On the 18th August our patrols, whose activity had been constant, were able to make a considerable advance opposite Merville. Next day Merville itself was taken, and our line advanced on the whole front from the Lawe River to the Plate Becque.

During the following days, various other small gains of ground were made by us on the southern and western faces of the salient, but on the northern face the enemy as yet showed no signs of withdrawal, the various local operations carried out by us meeting with strong resistance. On the night of the 29th/30th August, however, impelled alike by the pressure exerted without remission by our troops on the spot and by the urgency of events elsewhere, the enemy commenced an extensive retirement on the whole of the Lys front.

In the early morning of the 30th August our troops found Bailleul unoccupied, and by the evening of that day our advanced detachments had reached the general line Lacouture, Lestrem, Noote Boom, East of Bailleul.

Thereafter, the enemy's withdrawal continued rapidly. At certain points, indeed, his rearguards offered vigorous resistance, notably about Neuve Eglise and Hill 63, captured with a number of prisoners by the 36th and 29th Divisions; but by the evening of the 6th September the Lys salient had disappeared. Kemmel Hill was once more in our hands, and our troops had reached the general line Givenchy, Neuve Chapelle, Nieppe, Ploegsteert, Voormezele.

THE BATTLE OF THE SCARPE.

(26th August—3rd September.)

(27) *The Retaking of Monchy-le-Preux.*

By the 25th August our advance had formed a salient of the German positions opposite Arras, and the proper moment had therefore come for the third stage of our operations, in which the First Army should extend the flank of our attack to the North. By driving Eastwards from Arras, covered on the left by the Rivers Scarpe and Sensee, the First Army would endeavour to turn the enemy's positions on the Somme battlefield, and cut his system of railway communications which ran south-westwards across their front.

At 3 a.m. on the 26th August, the Canadian Corps, Lieutenant-General Sir A. W. Currie commanding, on the right of General Horne's First Army, attacked the German positions astride the Scarpe River with the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions (commanded by Major-Generals Sir H. E. Burstall and L. J. Lipsett) and the 51st Division. This attack, delivered on a front of about 5½ miles and closely supported by the left of the Third Army, was completely successful. By noon we had taken Wancourt and Guemappe, and had stormed the hill and village of Monchy-le-Preux. This latter position was one of great natural strength, well organised for defence, and commanded observation of much importance. Many prisoners were taken, and later in the day substantial progress was made to the East of these three villages, a strong counter-attack East of Monchy being successfully repulsed. North of the Scarpe the 51st Division pushed forward their line towards Roeux, so as to secure an easily defensible base of departure for this advance, and by a successful attack during the evening captured Greenland Hill.