

and could be blown up any moment by the pressure of a hand upon a lever. Across the stream the enemy had flung several pontoon bridges.

The first thousand Germans poured across the stone bridge, and other columns pressed forward along the pontoon bridges. So numerous were the attackers that the Franco-Americans in the southern part of the town were very hard pressed. Suddenly, while the bridge was crowded with advancing Germans, a loud roar was heard. The bridge had been blown up, and hundreds of men had been hurried into eternity. By means of the pontoon bridges, however, the enemy got across in great force, and the situation was most perilous. The day, however, was saved by the American machine gunners. In sheltered spots they commanded all the points of passage, and during forty-eight hours of grave anxiety they stopped every attempt to cross, and prevented the enemy from repairing the old bridges and constructing new ones. The Americans fired tens of thousands of cartridges, and the German losses were very severe. A thousand dead bodies were counted by or near the wrecked stone bridge.

The French colonials were full of admiration for the coolness and courage of their American comrades. The work which they had done showed them to be allies worth having. This was the opinion of all who saw the clean, fine, healthy, and cheerful men who had now come into the war from the other side of the Atlantic. "There is not a shadow of a doubt," wrote a correspondent, "that we shall see them do great things."

Now let us move on to 1st June, when once again the Americans covered themselves with glory. If you look at the map on page 284, you will see, about eight miles to the north-east of Château-Thierry, a place called Jaulgonne. At this point the river makes a great bend northward. This bend is about three thousand yards deep by about two thousand five hundred yards across. The southern or defending side is flat, and is overlooked by high hills on the northern bank. Guns placed on these hills can sweep every part of the flat plain within the bend. Across the bend runs the main railway from Paris to the east. In the middle of it stands a railway station. You can easily understand that the enemy had a far better chance of crossing the river at Jaulgonne than at Château-Thierry.