

CHAPTER II

THE CANADIAN CORPS READY FOR BATTLE

IT is the purpose of this book to trace the leading part the Canadian Corps played in the Battle of Amiens and in the subsequent great offensives that carried it from Arras through the Drocourt-Queant Line, across the Canal du Nord, over the stricken field of Cambrai, and thence to Valenciennes and Mons. In those proud days of victory, no less than in the long stern years of trench warfare, it lived up to its great reputation. Its deeds speak for themselves. As that tried soldier, the King of the Belgians, remarked in Mons, there is no corps in Europe of higher renown. In the words of its commander Sir Arthur Currie: "In the last two years of strenuous fighting the Canadian Corps never lost a gun, never failed to take its objective, and has never been driven from a foot of ground it has once consolidated."

What was the Canadian Corps doing in the spring and summer of 1918? Little was heard of it during the great spring drive, nor through May, June and July. People at home were asking what was the matter. Had it not yet got over its bloody wounds of Passchendaele? Was it not to be thrown in to stiffen the weakening line? On Aug. 8 it was to burst again upon their consciousness almost with the force of a blow.

After the hard-won victory of Passchendaele in October, 1917, the Canadian Corps returned to its old line before Lens and on Vimy Ridge, where an offensive had been planned just before it had been moved north. Corps Headquarters returned to Comblain l'Abbe and remained there throughout the winter and spring months, the time being employed in holding and strengthening the Vimy front and in assimilating reinforcements to make good the wastage. When the March offensive