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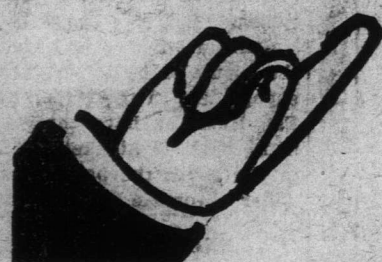
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THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE DESCRIBED BY GEN. FRENCH.

The British Troops Constantly Engaged With the Enemy Along the Great Battle Line--Vigorous Attacks of the Germans Repulsed With Heavy Loss--British Troops Fought With Great Gallantry.

London Oct. 18.—(7.17 p.m.)—Two long reports by Field Marshal Sir John French, covering the operations of the British army from August 28 to October 8, were issued to-night. The first report, dated September 17, calls special attention to the fact that "from Sunday, August 23, up to the present date, from Mons back almost to the Seine, and from the Seine to the Aisne, the army, under my command has been ceaselessly engaged, without one single day's halt, or rest of any kind."

Further along Field Marshal French says: "In spite of very determined resistance on the part of the enemy, who is holding in strength and with great tenacity a position peculiarly favorable to defence, the battle which commenced on the evening of the 12th instant (September), has so far forced the enemy back from his first position, secured passage of the river and inflicted great loss upon him, including the capture of over 2,000 prisoners and several guns."

The despatches give details of the retreat on August 28 and 29, Generals Gough and Chetwode, with the Third and Fifth cavalry brigades, covered the retreat, repulsing the Germans with great loss.

PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY.

"The pursuit by the enemy," continued the report, "was very vigorous. Some five or six German corps were on the Somme, facing the Fifth Army; on the Oise at least two corps were advancing toward my front and were crossing the Somme, east and west of Ham; three or four more German corps were opposing the Sixth French Army on my left."

"This was the situation when at one o'clock I received a visit from General Joffre at my headquarters, strongly represented my position to the French commander-in-chief, who was most kind, cordial and sympathetic, as he always has been. He told me he had directed the Fifth French Army on the Oise to move forward and attack the Germans on the Somme, with a view to checking the pursuit."

THREATENED BRITISH LINES.

"I finally arranged with General Joffre to effect a further short retirement towards the line between Compeign and Soissons, promising him however, to do my utmost to keep always within a day's march of him."

The Germans were threatening the British line of communication, and

continues the report: "While closely adhering to his strategic conception to draw the enemy on all points until a favorable situation was created from which to assume the offensive, General Joffre found it necessary from day to day to modify the methods by which he sought to attain this object, owing to the development of the enemy's plans and a change in the general situation."

On September 5, General Joffre decided to take the offensive, as he considered conditions very favorable to success. Field Marshal French believes that about noon on the sixth the enemy realized that a powerful move was being made against the flank of his columns moving south and east, and began the great retreat which opened the battle.

This battle, so far as the Sixth French Army, the British Army, and the Fifth and Ninth French armies were concerned, was concluded on the evening of September 10, when the Germans were driven to the Soissons-Rheims line, with the loss of thousands of prisoners, many guns and enormous masses of transport.

GERMAN LOSSES HEAVY.

The change in the German plans from a direct advance on Paris appears to have been made on September 3. Describing the various stages of the advance against the Germans, Field Marshal French praises the cavalry, especially General de Lisle's brigade with the Ninth Lancers and Eighteenth Hussars.

On the 8th, both the first and second army corps made large captures and took some guns. On the 9th, after forcing the passage of the Marne, they inflicted a heavy loss in killed and wounded on the Germans, while the second division took some hundreds of prisoners and a battery of eight machine guns. On the 10th, thirteen guns, seven machine guns, 2000 prisoners and quantities of transport fell into British hands, and the enemy left many dead on the field.

In conclusion the report says: "Although I deeply regret to have to report heavy losses in killed and wounded throughout these operations I do not think they have been excessive, in view of the magnitude of the great fight, and the demoralization and loss in killed and wounded which are known to have been caused the enemy by the vigor and severity of our pursuit."

DROVE ENEMY BACK.

Field Marshal French's second report, dated October 8, concerns the operations of the British forces since the evening of September 10.

"Early in the morning of the 11th," says the report, "three corps crossed the Ourcq, further pursuit of the enemy practically unopposed—the cavalry reaching the line of the Aisne, two brigades south of Soissons, and three brigades at Couvillers and Corseuil on the afternoon of September 12th."

"From the opposition encountered by the Sixth French Army to the west of Soissons and two of our army corps south of Missy, and certain other indications along the line, I formed the opinion that the enemy had, for the moment, at any rate, arrested his retreat and was preparing to contest the passage of Aisne with some vigor south of Soissons, where the Germans were holding Mont de Waris against attack. With the assistance of artillery the Third Corps of French drove them back across the river at Soissons, where they destroy-

ed the bridges. However, heavy artillery fire showed the Sixth French army was meeting with heavy opposition all along the line.

BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

"On this day the cavalry under General Allenby reached the neighborhood of Braine, and did good work in clearing the town and the high ground beyond it of strong hostile detachments. The Queen's Bays are particularly mentioned by the General as having assisted greatly in the success of this operation. They were well supported by the Third Division, which on this night camped at Brenelle, south of the river."

"The Fifth Division approached Missy, but were unable to make headway. The First Army Corps reached the neighborhood of Vauxcelles without much opposition. In this manner the battle of the Aisne commenced."

"The Aisne valley runs generally east and west, and consists of a flat-bottomed depression varying from a half to two miles wide, down which the river follows a winding course. To the west is high ground. Both sides of the river are approximately four hundred feet above the valley, broken into spurs. The most prominent slopes and plateaus overlooking the Aisne of varying steepness, are covered with patches of wood which extend on to the high ground. Several small villages and towns are dotted about, chief of which is Soissons."

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Refuse anything offered you in place of Dr. Hamilton's Pills, which are sure to cure. Sold in 25c. boxes, five for \$1.00, at all druggists and storekeepers, or postpaid from the Catarrhzone Co., Buffalo, N.Y., and Kingston, Canada.

began close to the road bridge at Venizel.

THE ENEMY RETIRED.

"At 2 p.m. an infantry attack in the direction of Chivres and Vregny had made good progress, but at 5.30 p.m. the enemy's artillery and machine gun fire from the direction of Vregny became so severe that no further progress could be made. The positions reached were held until dark. The Third Corps made an attempt to throw a heavy pontoon across the river late in the afternoon but gave up because of the heavy howitzer fire of the enemy."

"In the evening the enemy retired at all points, and entrenched himself on high ground about two miles north of the river, along which runs the Chemin des Dames. Detachments of infantry, however, strongly entrenched in commanding positions down the slopes and on various spurs, were left in front of all three army corps with powerful artillery in support of them."

"During the night of the 13th, and on the 14th and following days, field companies incessantly worked night and day, throwing eight pontoons and one foot bridge across the river under a generally heavy artillery fire, which was incessantly kept up on most of the crossings after their completion. The other wagon and railway bridges were temporarily repaired to take foot passengers; one would take weight up to six tons. The operations of field companies during this trying time were worthy of the best traditions of the Royal Engineers."

"On that morning I ordered the British forces to advance and make good the Aisne. The first corps and cavalry advanced on the river. The first division was directed on Chanoille, via the Canal Bridge at Bourg. On the right, the cavalry and first division met with little opposition and found passage by means of the canal aqueduct which crosses the river. This division therefore was able to press on, supported by the cavalry on the outer flank, driving the enemy before it."

"On the left the leading troops of the second division reached the river by 9 o'clock. The Fifth Infantry Brigade only was able to cross the river in single file, under considerable shell fire, by means of a broken girder of a bridge which was not entirely submerged in the river. A pontoon bridge was constructed by five o'clock in the afternoon."

"The Fourth Guards Brigade met with severe opposition, at Chavonne and were only late in the afternoon able to establish a footing on the northern bank of the river."

SWEEP BY ARTILLERY.

"By daylight the First Division occupied the area around Moulins, Palsy and Geny. The Second Division bivouacked on the southern bank of the river, leaving only the Fifth Brigade on the north bank to establish a bridge head. The Second Corps found all the bridges destroyed, except that at Comde, which was in possession of the enemy and remained so until the end of the battle."

"In the approach to Missy, where the Fifth Division eventually crossed, there is some open ground, which was swept by artillery fire from the opposite bank. The Thirteenth Brigade therefore was unable to advance, but the Fourteenth, directed to a less expected point, was rafted over and at night established itself on the left of St. Marguerite, where, later with the Fifteenth Brigade, supported by the Fourth Division on their left, it succeeded in repelling heavy counter-attacks on the Third Corps."

"On the morning of the thirteenth the Third Corps found the enemy established in strength on Vregny Plateau. The Twelfth Infantry Brigade crossed at Venizel, but the bridge was so damaged that the artillery could only be man-handled across it. Meanwhile the construction of a bridge

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other indications tended to show that his resistance was decreasing, and a general advance was ordered by the army corps commander. Although meeting with considerable opposition and coming under very heavy artillery and rifle fire, the position of the corps at the end of the day's operations extended from the Chemin des Dames on the right, through Chivy to Lescour de Soupir, with the First cavalry brigade extending to the Chavonne-Soissons road. On the right the corps was in close touch with the French Moroccan troops of the Eighteenth corps, which were entrenched in Echelon to its right rear. During the night they entrenched this position."

"Throughout the battle of the Aisne this advanced and commanding position was maintained, and I cannot speak too highly of the valuable services rendered by Sir Douglas Haig, and the army corps under his command. Day after day, night after night, the enemy's infantry has been hurled against him in a violent counter-attack, which has never on any one occasion succeeded, while the trenches all over his position have been under continuous fire."

CAPTURED MANY PRISONERS.

"The operations of the First Corps on this day resulted in the capture of several hundred prisoners and some field and machine guns. The casualties were very severe, one brigade alone losing three of its four colonels."

"The Third Division commenced a

(Continued on 7th page.)

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