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narrowing salient, he had exposed three flanks to the attacks of the Allies. He now might have to fight battles on three fronts, and if the salient could be pinched sufficiently, might find the greatest difficulty in withdrawing his troops without disaster.

Perhaps you wonder why the German generals took this grave risk. They had been balked at the outset by their inability to issue from Soissons and to drive back their foes in front of Rheims. They had pushed between these two places to the Marne; but they believed they could do so without danger, because they were convinced that General Foch was so weak in numbers that he could not attack the ~~arms~~ of the salient in any great strength. In this, as you will learn later, they were woefully mistaken. Foch had all along met their thrusts without calling upon the bulk of his reserves, and during the month of May he had received large reinforcements of Americans. Probably before the end of the month there were nearly a million Americans in France.

So far, the thrust had been to the south and the south-west. It was now time to enlarge the salient, so as to secure more elbow-room. On Thursday, 30th May, the German forces were regrouped, and during the three following days they struck westward, almost at right angles to their former direction. On that day the boundary of the western arm of the salient was the highroad from Soissons to Château-Thierry. Before the night of Sunday, 2nd June, the enemy stood in a great bow, extending from a point about four miles south of Soissons to the Marne, at Château-Thierry. Along the Ourcq they had pushed westward for nearly ten miles.

Study the little sketch map on page 311, and notice the line along which the fighting now raged. A little more than midway between Soissons and Château-Thierry you observe that the little river Ourcq runs westward, crossing the highroad almost at right angles. North of this river you notice that a large area is occupied by the Forest of Villers-Cotterets. Between the northern end of this wooded region and the Aisne at Soissons extends a high, almost treeless plateau. In front of the Forest to the east there is a long ravine with steep sides. Along the bottom of it runs the brook Savières, which unites with the Ourcq at Troesnes.* Between Soissons and the Ourcq the French had taken up a fairly strong position, but between

* Pron. *trons*.