

On Friday the French routed out the German outposts who guarded that mud-bank, several thousands yards in length, and yesterday made a bigger attack above St.-Jansbeek and Draeibank. Before their gallant infantry advanced through these bogs, for it is all a bog, the French gunners were in full orchestra, and played a terrible symphony on the 75's and 120's. Over 160,000 shells were fired by the "soixante-quinze" batteries at the German positions in the marshes and on the west side of Houthulst Forest. Then under cover of this fury of the fire the French infantry advanced in waves. In spite of the ground they went very fast and very far, and spread out in a fan-shaped phalanx between Merckem and Aschoop. Their field-guns are now able to enfilade Houthulst Forest on the western side, and the German guns north of that must be making their escape. It is an important tactical success, which will make Houthulst Forest less tenable by the enemy.

OCTOBER 30

FOLLOWING up the heroic capture of Bellevue spur, on October 26, the Canadians attacked again this morning on both sides of the Ravelbeek, working up from Bellevue to the top of Meetscheele spur on the left, and gaining Crest Farm on the right, up the main ridge of Passchendaele. If this ground can be held—and the taking is sometimes not so hard as the holding—almost the last heights of the Passchendaele Ridge are within our grasp, and all the desperate fighting of the last three months or more, the great assaults on the ridges by English, Scottish, Irish, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian troops, through bogs and marshes in the low ground, against concrete blockhouses and great numbers of machine-guns, against masses of the finest German troops fighting every yard of the way, and against incredibly bad luck with the weather, even as far back as August, will have given us the dominating ground in Flanders overlooking the plains beyond.

Crest Farm, on a knoll below the village of Passchendaele, is the outer fort of Passchendaele itself, and its capture exposes the greater fortress under the ragged ruins which stick up like fangs on the skyline of the ridge.

Without Crest Farm Passchendaele was unapproachable, and the capture of this hummock is of historical importance. But in order to take or hold it, as the Australians found, it was