

CHAPTER II

TURNING BACK THE HUNS AT THE SOMME

A SCENE OF DESOLATION—BRAVERY OF THE ALLIES
—HOW THE BRITISH STORM TRENCHES—SOMME
RIDGES AND MARSHES—MARVELOUS BRETON RE-
SERVISTS—HOW BECQUINCOURT WAS WON—GREAT
GAINS AT SMALL COST—FRENCH ADVANCE IN SINGLE
FILE—PROGRESS OF THE BATTLE.

IT IS probable that the concerted offensive against the German lines in Picardy, begun July 1st after the most terrible bombardment known even in this war of high explosives, will go down into history as the battle of the Somme.

A correspondent who visited the French army in its position near Peronne gives us this glimpse of the country over which the battle had swept:

"As far as the eye can see the view is utterly the same; utterly monotonous, nothing but desolate slopes that once were a thickly populated French countryside. The complete inhumanity of outlook strikes one tremendously. Here two great armies are at death grips, yet apart from the incessant tumult of cannonade and the never-ending rows of little smoke clouds—new ones forming before the preceding ones have time to melt—one might be thousands of miles from civilization. Our maps are of little assist-