

the dislocation of the Allied line from Arras to the sea and the surrender of Dunkirk to the foe.

The third great German offensive fell upon the French guarding the Heights of the Aisne, which had been captured at so great a cost by the French in the preceding year. On May 27th forty divisions fell upon the French line and broke through it completely. By nightfall the Germans had advanced twelve miles, driving the French across the Aisne and back to the Vesle River. By the 30th the Germans had advanced thirty miles to the Marne River. The following week was spent in trying to enlarge the cramped salient in which they were held by pushing back the French on the western side. Finding the French defence impregnable there, the Germans attacked from Soissons to Montdidier, but did not succeed in making an appreciable advance. A similar effort at Rheims met with no better fate. By June 18th the German forces, exhausted by their three great offensives, were compelled to rest and reorganize for the final effort, which they believed would win the war.

The battle in the Marne salient was renewed on July 15th. Ludendorff believed that he was still strong enough to break out of the Marne salient and cut the Paris-Nancy railway. At the same time another army was to strike east of Rheims. The road to Paris down the Marne valley would then lie open, and, when all the Allied reserves were engaged in defending this route to the capital, a fresh assault on Amiens would complete the disruption of the Allied armies. To accomplish these aims thirty fresh divisions were massed on the two fronts to be attacked.

At dawn the German infantry swept over their parapets. But this time the French were ready for them. On the twenty-five mile front of Gouraud's army east of Rheims they could not advance an inch beyond the French outpost lines. Neither could they force back the French on the