

The Story of the Week

The War in the West

AS THE PRESBYTERIAN AND WESTMINSTER goes to press this week word comes of a great new offensive undertaken by the British on the Western line. It had been anticipated for some time that the operations along the line of the German retreat would be supplemented by a heavy blow struck in some other quarter. On Monday morning the steady bombardment of the German trenches in the Arras section was increased to an avalanche of shell fire, and when this preparation had been completed an infantry attack was launched along a 15-mile front extending from Lens to a point southeast of Arras. The attack was everywhere successful. The German defences were penetrated and at the time of writing not less than 6,000 prisoners have been captured. Canadian troops took an important part in the great achievement. To them was assigned the attack upon a dominating position known as the Vimy Ridge. Their onset was irresistible and the position was taken along with some 2,000 prisoners. The great battle continues with good hope of further success.

Every day last week brought tidings of progress, either by the French or the British or by both, in the movements which have for their end the envelopment and capture of St. Quentin. The British are working from the west and north, the French from the south. The immediate British objective is the high road which runs from Cambrai to St. Quentin. Their purpose is to drive a salient into the German lines between these two important points, thus out-flanking both.

In order to relieve the pressure in this region the Germans on Thursday last launched a powerful attack against the French in the neighborhood of Rheims. A large force of special troops was assembled for the purpose and the fighting was heavy. The French were driven from a portion of their trenches with considerable loss, but in counter attacks subsequently recovered most of the line.