

be much more extended than formerly. It is from front to rear, rather than along the front that the actual spreading out takes place. In the new mode of battle it is very much the extent of line that advances on the enemy, only it advances by dribblots instead of all at once. Formerly, a whole line was taken forward at once, because it was possible to do so without that amount of loss which would make it inefficient to complete the engagement successfully. The risk of destruction was not so great as to counterbalance the advantages of having the force in the first line of attack in a compact formation. But now, this is no longer the case and so it becomes necessary to push it forward bit by bit. And this being so, I think it cannot be denied that as the *bills* first exposed are sure in the first instance to suffer loss from which the *bills* kept back escape it is necessary to keep a very ample reserve, so as, in spite of loss, to be able to concentrate and accumulate strength, and strike harder as an engagement proceeds. Besides, it will always be impossible to prevent risk of a long fighting line opening out and leaving gaps. Men cannot creep through broken ground as straight as a "left guide" can march on two points, and even if they could the features of the ground itself may often make opening out inevitable. If part of a line of skirmishers has to leave level ground and fight over a hill or along a valley, it is evident that in doing so they must be more spread out than before, just in proportion as a horizontal line through the base of the hill, or across the top of the valley, is shorter than a line measured along the ground. Therefore it is indispensable, if there is to be any protracted fighting in skirmishing order, that independently of the general reserves, the reserves available to those in immediate charge of the fighting line should be ample; and this is all the more so, as it is just where there are great changes of level that there is the greatest need to secure that the fighting line is too thin, and the reinforcement brought up to it does not exhaust its reserve. It is against men crossing a hill or moving down a valley that the enemy's fire will generally conyerge.

Further, by having an ample company reserve, as distinguished from general reserves, it would be much more easy to overcome a difficulty arising at one point in a line than it is at present. The present system is rather too regimental in the matters of reserve. It is skirmishing with a reserve rather than with *reserves*. The reserve is a large body, kept together at one place, more for a general relief than to meet temporary and local exigencies. But under the "swarm of skirmishers" system, where it must inevitably be the case that captains will often have to fight long upon their own responsibility, and bring up supports as needed, they must not be embarrassed by the knowledge that after they have brought up their support there is no help for them but a regimental reserve, which they cannot see, and which might be quite unable to find or get to them without great loss of time, owing to the conformation of the ground. The captain must have a reserve whose duty it is to stick to him, an integral part of his own unit of command, a reserve having a fixed relation to his part of the fighting line, and his part only.

Another principle which it is necessary most carefully to keep in view is, that just in proportion as the deadliness of modern fire-arms makes it necessary to practise fighting in a less compact form than used to be the case, so is it essential to make the detail of the system or manœuvring such, that a

tactical unit which is disarranged and separated into fragments by the necessity of the case, shall be so separated, that when it comes together again it may be as nearly as possible the same tactical unit as at the beginning. By this I mean that the company should, if possible, be so worked, that skirmishers' supports and first reserve, may, when brought together by supports or first reserve getting into the fighting line, be as nearly as possible in the same order as that in which they originally were. If the final decisive engagement is ever to be in line again, the line will very probably be formed by support and first reserve pushing to the front when the enemy's fire is weakened, and, by filling up the spaces between skirmishers making a line for the final advance. Now, if by the previous detail arrangement this could be done in such a way as that each company which had been divided into skirmishers, support and reserve, should again find itself complete, and pretty nearly in its old form, there can be no doubt that this would be much better than if the line was made up, like an *olla podrida*, of men of different companies, or even of men of the same company but out of all order and with no tactical restoration of unity at all. I do not say that any system that could be devised would ensure this tactical restoration being always complete. I only urge that anything which tends towards securing it ought not to be despised. The Prussians seem to have recognized the importance of this principle, as, rather than depart from it, they adopt theoretically (!) an extraordinary, and highly dangerous expedient to secure it. As under their system a section, or rather fraction is sent out from a company in the first instance to skirmish, their proposal is, that in order to preserve the original tactical form of the company unit, when more men are sent up to the fighting line, the section that is in the front should close in sufficiently to allow the fresh men to come up in their proper company place, instead of mixing with the old company skirmishers. This device is one so unpractical in itself, and would in so many cases be positively impracticable, that its only value consists in its being a strong indication how much importance is attached to a restoration of tactical unity, when the thin skirmishing line is being thickened by reinforcement. (m) The Germans are very giants as regards the settlement of principles, but sometimes display the giant's clumsiness in their devices for working out principles in practical detail. (o) But the device proposed is worse than clumsy and unpractical. It is positively dangerous, and is not usually a reinforcement of the old line. It could not be carried out in many cases without unnecessary exposure of both skirmishers and reinforcement. It would slacken the fire of the old line while they were closing in, and would often result in the new line being composed of alternate rows of fatigued men and rows of fresh men, a most unsatisfactory state of things, as the new men must either conform to the old, or the "Zusammehang" (as our German friends would say) of the

(l) I say "theoretically," for though it is set forth as a mode of action, insisting adherence to the principle, it is scarcely possible to believe that it could ever have been tried, or that if tried, it could have been found satisfactory. Some of their own best authorities condemn it as impracticable.

(m) It also affords a practical illustration of what I have already said, viz. that the Prussian system is, as regards tactical detail, essentially crude.

(o) In proof of this see the diagrams in Tellenbach's excellent "Preussische Ballions' Exercizien."

whole line would be destroyed. Whereas a true reinforcement bringing fresh men up to the front, commingling with them, tends to give new life to the whole line. A reinforcement is not merely fresh strength to the line physically, it is also fresh strength morally. A tired hammormann feels inspired for a new effort if he can get another to take stroke and stroke about with him. So a soldier will be cheered into renewed energy by getting a fresh man on either side of him, and this particularly if the new man on either side of him, particularly if the new man on either side replaces a dead or wounded comrade. Moreover the old line has the range already ascertained, and therefore can be most useful in helping the new men who come up, with information. And last, not least, a reinforcement brought up into the old line of skirmishers is practically a fresh supply of ammunition to the *whole line*. All these advantages are set aside by the Prussian proposal that "the reinforcing party must be kept together, the old skirmishers reducing their intervals so as to leave a sufficient space for it." And they are set aside in order not to depart from the principle which demands the restoration of each tactical unit to its original form when reconsolidation of the skirmishing battalion begins by reinforcement. In acting thus I do not think they over estimate the importance of the principle. If no better way can be devised of carrying it out, they are probably right in sacrificing many advantages of detail in order to secure it. But I trust to be able to show, when the detail part of the matter comes to be considered, that by the adoption of a very simple expedient, all the advantages of adhering to the principle can be obtained without any of the disadvantages in detail which have been referred to above.

(To be continued.)

Despatches from India announce a terrible disaster at Lahore, in the territory of Scinde, the capital of Punjab. An earthquake overtook the city so suddenly that no escape was possible. On the first alarm says the report, the people rushed into the streets from their houses, where they met their deaths. The narrow and crowded, and ever filthy streets, would afford but little refuge to the terrified inhabitants, while the high brick houses in their fall must have wrought frightful destruction. A great part of the city is in ruins, and it is estimated that five hundred lives have been lost. The earthquake extended over a large tract of country, having been felt in towns many miles distant from Lahore. Lahore, a city of about 50,000 inhabitants, is situated on the banks of the Ravee. It is a walled city, enclosed in a double line of defences, the outer being about seven miles in circuit. It has many large and splendid mosques, but the streets are narrow and filthy, and excessively crowded. The houses were high and built of brick. Around the city were extensive Mahomedan ruins, with the fine tomb of the Emperor Jehanguire, and the garden of Shah Jehan. Here were also many Hindoo temples, and a citadel containing the palace of the Sikh sovereigns.

THE REPRESENTATION OF FIFESHIRE.—It is rumoured that Sir Robert Anstruther, Bart., intends shortly to retire from the representation of Fifeshire in Parliament.