

Light Brigade are just as much the duties of Dragoon Guards and Household Cavalry. To treat the latter as only to be used in grand charges would be to place them in a position of inferiority to their comrades of the light horse; for charges in battle must be comparatively few, while covering and intelligence work is constant and of the highest importance.

INFANTRY LESSONS OF THE MANŒUVRES.

(From the Times.)

If an intelligent soldier from a far off country, such a Japan, were to pass through Europe studying the military systems of each country as shown at the autumn manœuvres, he would arrive at the curious opinion that the English Army, more than any other, believes in an infantry advance in column under fire of an enemy. It would be in vain to assure him that England adopted (not invented) the line formation for battle, and holds to it as specially characteristic of British infantry tactics. He would reply—"I see that you always deploy, sometime or other, before you are quite close to the enemy, but that when under fire, is, of course, a manœuvre quite impossible in war, and I see whole brigades marching in column within easy range of artillery, or even rifle fire of picked marksmen." No soldier at once honest and intelligent could contradict the statement. Brigades did so advance in column under fire on Salisbury Plain, and, what is more, supposing the country unfit for an advance in line, there is no other recognised formation. We trust that the days are over when English officers would answer that the present system served our purpose in the Peninsula, and must therefore be good for all time. That argument came consistently from the lips of those who opposed, first, the introduction of rifled muskets and then of rifled artillery. Their objections to improved armaments have been answered by the inexorable logic of facts, which cannot be disputed. There are facts too, against the old system of tactics, only they are not yet so widely accepted and understood. Much has already been published on this subject, and among all writings, both English and foreign; nowhere is it better worked out than in the Wellington Prize Essay, by Lieutenant Maunice, R.A., upon whom a portion, at least of his father's mantle seems to have fallen. But, as yet, no definite effect has been produced upon our old system, and there has been no official adoption of a new one. Supposing that the public opinion of the army is not yet ripe, we shall endeavour to put forward with what amount of clearness we can the reason why a change is imperatively necessary, the direction in which the movement must be made, and the result to be expected from it. Only, one previous remark may, to a certain extent, disarm prejudice. It is this. All the changes which we advocate tend, not to a reversal of the ideas of the Duke of Wellington, but to a development of them, not required in his time, but now called for to meet the conditions of modern warfare with its roads, railroads and its telegraphs, its increased range, accuracy, and rapidity of fire.

All conditions of modern civilization, the rapid diffusion of information and consequent decisions of popular opinion, the immense numbers of men now easily put in the field or moved from one part of the theatre of war to another, the enormous

consumption of food by these masses of men and their expenditure of ammunition, the drain upon the country's resources—all these taken together, with the fact that every new invention is a fresh weapon in the hands of genius, contrive to render wars shorter and sharper, campaigns spent in manœuvres and attempts to outwit an enemy being no longer possible. Decisive battles will occur soon after the armies take the field, which is as much as to say that an army to be successful even against an invader must be prepared to make and receive vigorous attacks. For, as Von Moltke says, "The defender, if he wish to bring about a decisive result, must eventually himself become assailant." It follows, then that however peaceably inclined a nation may be, or however determined to make war only in self defence, it must train its army in peace to a style of tactics suited as much to attack as defence.

But the attack is not to be with the bayonet. Few as real bayonet attack used to be they are still fewer now. The bayonet or the bat may be used in street fights or on sudden surprises, but since a man can now easily load his rifle when in the act of walking or even running forward, and as it is far simpler to pull a trigger at close range than to get a bayonet inside the enemy's guard, it is almost inconceivable that a soldier should prefer cold steel to hot lead. In fact, a long experience since the days of breechloading rifles tells the same tale, that the work of death and demoralisation is now almost entirely performed by fire.

Take, as an example, the battle of the Alma, as described by Von Moltke, remembering that it occurred before the introduction of breechloaders, and that the Russian small arms were of a very different character:—"Owing to want of practice, they (the English) found great difficulty in simply making a forward march of about a mile, and then required several hours to deploy into two lines, the necessary space the first extends two miles, and it was two deep. In this formation they had to cross a river with steep banks, and to ascend a rocky slope in close proximity to a burning village, and among enclosed vineyards. Opposed to the village, stood at least two thirds of the Russian force. As soon as the first line had ascended the opposite bank, the 2d and Light Divisions formed an irregular chain of skirmishers, in which the men of not only different companies, but even of different regiments, got so mixed up together, that it became no longer possible to fire volleys, or to make any regular movements. The Russians felt confident of breaking the thin red line at any point with their massive and powerful columns. But here the same thing occurred as later on; in the advance of the 1st Division, and the same results were obtained everywhere. The Russian Army, formed in several battalions columns, one behind the other, advanced with a resolute imposing bearing, without firing, and the thin, weak-looking line of the English held its ground, and directed its fire on the dense mass, at a range at which every bullet could not fail to take effect. Before they could come to close quarters or deploy so as to deliver their own fire, the attacking columns halted, and a few badly aimed shots were fired from the centre of the leading battalion, which, of course, was the only one that could be employed. Most of the officers, some of whom were of the highest rank had fallen, but still for a short time the column stood firm; soon, however, it lost its wall-like appearance, and, becoming more in the form of an irregular cloud, at length

gave way, slowly and unwillingly, and with a proportionally great loss. On this occasion, according to the account of Anitschoff the Vladimir regiment lost forty nine officers and 1600 men, but this is probably an exaggerated estimate. In these ever-recurring encounters of the column against line the Russians lost, in barely three hours; 5700 men—i.e., nearly one-fourth of their whole strength. The English, advancing in line and keeping up their fire, twice broke into the principal entrenchment of the Russians, which was defended by sixteen guns: Their total loss did not amount to more than 2000 men; of the engagement cost the Russians, at least, twice as much as it did their opponents, and mainly decided the battle."

Here we see the line advancing with great difficulty, yet triumphing over the heavy column by developing a great front of fire. Had the Russians been as well armed as the English, and had they shown a wide front, either by forming in line or swarms of skirmishers, would it have been possible for the English to have formed their thin line so as to advance with any steadiness at all? As it was, we find them requiring hours to deploy, under estimating the space to be occupied, and at last skirmishing in confusion with different regiments mixed so that no regular movements were possible. Yet the wide front conquered the narrow one, as it had done half a century before. The solid heavy column is now obsolete. Instead of it an English army would meet swarms of skirmishers, which would be perpetually streaming outwards and enveloping the flanks of the stiff British line. Which army, then, would present the widest front of fire? Concerning the question of the policy of attack or defence, it is sufficient for our purpose to say that all writers, even those most in favour of a defensive system of tactics, agree that attacks must be made at some period of a battle, and troops must therefore be trained to attack with vigour and resolution. Now, there is no formation for advance so cramping to the energies of individuals as a long line which can only move in an orderly manner upon flat, smooth ground. On the ordinary surface of a country where battles are likely to be fought no line could advance without frequent stoppages to preserve order.

Again, no formation is so difficult to bring forward under cover as the line. Even heavy columns, may often be concealed till near the enemy; small columns, such as can be formed with 100 to 250 men, are easily brought forward under cover to within a few hundred yards. Individual men or small groups of skirmishers can generally conceal themselves from all but chance shooting until they are close to their work. There are, it is true, still existing in the English Army officers who reject the idea of cover and would, in theory, send their men across the open. But as they are becoming rare day by day, and are not likely to have much influence over the final decision of the question, we need spend but little time over the difficulties thrown in the way, by men who would sacrifice regiments uselessly rather than adopt a revival, not a new principle, and who would abandon a field of battle rather than a crotchet. But there are now by reason of the Volunteer movement, large numbers of the public sufficiently conversant with military affairs to understand a simple explanation, although they do not pretend to be military students, and to whom we would address a few remarks concerning the changes which make the utilisation of