

Gravelotte, 18th August, 1870, was made in lines of company columns (in two lines), with skirmishers in front. In ten minutes the Prussian Guard lost 6,000 men, and the attack was broken off. It was only when the French ammunition was exhausted and the Saxon Corps turned the flank by Rancourt, and, in concert with the re-formed Guard, advanced concentrically upon the position, that St. Privat was taken.

"The experience gained by the Prussians convinced them that 'the attack in open order, joined to the attack of skirmishers, was adopted as the only efficacious one, and it was strictly forbidden to lead close bodies of troops within a nearer distance of the enemy's fire than 2,000 paces.'"

"Up to a late date, the column was the formation used by continental armies in attack."

"Against this it has been our privilege and pride to employ the line formation, and further than this, we are the only nation who received the charge of cavalry in that attitude. We have, therefore, some claim to having taken the initiative in adopting a thin formation."

"The English may turn with justifiable pride to the glowing pages of Napier to see the manner in which British soldiers, *less exposed* in their thin formation, but firm because of their training and national qualities were enabled to develop their fire to its fullest effect, and then drive back the shaken enemy."

"If, then, the qualities of our soldiers were such that they could in those days outvie other nations in their comparatively extended formation, which with the weapons of those times gave the maximum amount of exposure, can we not hope that we may still preserve our superiority by adhering to the spirit, though not to the letter, of these infantry tactics which have so often commanded the admiration of our bitterest foes? The change is inevitable. If ever we again engage a European foe, we shall not be able to sacrifice human life unnecessarily, as the Prussians did in the war of 1870-71, and yet reap the fruits of victory. Time and men will be wanting, and the sacrifice to Moloch will only forerun our own disaster and destruction. Peace is the breathing time in the race for national existence."

"We cling to the line formation, as that in which British soldiers have fought and conquered; but if we do not in time of peace deeply ponder whether the changes of later years and the cruel experience of other nations have not made it imperative to modify the form while we adhere to the spirit, we shall have studied to no purpose, or have thrown away those lessons which the bitterness of defeat may recall sharply, but too tardily, to our minds."

"Let us take the company at its war strength, and apply to that unit the principles of the Prussian company column. It would be far handier for a column formation, when cover permitted concentration, and when its extended order would be more under the control and direction of its officers than the Prussian company, 250 strong. But if it be considered that this would make our unit too small, we might take the mean between two. So long as an unwieldy unit is not adopted, the exact number is not important; all that we have to provide for is, that our organization in time of peace shall correspond with that we intend to adopt in time of war, both in tactics and in administration."

"Trial under officers of tactical ability

would soon teach us in our peace manoeuvres exactly what strength of company was adapted to our power of obtaining cover, and the necessary cohesion which must subsist between the companies of a battalion. British soldiers have hitherto advanced to attack in line, "shoulder to shoulder;" let them now be taught to manoeuvre for attack in extended order in line; let the companies be instructed to form columns when cover permitted; again to open out for advance and fire development at intervals between each file corresponding to twice the ordinary length of a man's arm, concentrating at the last moment for those attacks to gain certain points on a field of battle, which must now be mastered by a concentric fire and attack converging and uniting at the point to be mastered, though not before."

"It is not pretended to lay down how the exact formation of the company column should be effected. Indeed, the word column would almost be a misnomer. What we desire to show is, that in the future the British soldier should be taught to use the *close* line formation when the ground covers it, or even a species of column, if that be more applicable to the ground; that he should be instructed to open out for advance in extended order, alternately closing and opening out according to the requirements of ground and fire."

"With the battalion, the instruction would tend to preserve the cohesion of movement required, so that we may govern the direction of our attack."

"We have not touched on the formation of a first skirmishing line. The value of skirmishers is well recognized in our Service. Let those who are inclined to wonder that our tactics have made no great strides since the days of our Peninsular victories, and to give unqualified admiration to everything wearing a Prussian aspect, turn to their drillbooks prior to 1861. There they will find that the value of skirmishing fire was systematically under-estimated, and that Prussian officers were taught to employ *as few skirmishers as possible*.

"Our system of musketry instruction is excellent, but in this, as in other things, we seek too much to bring all to one level, rather than to develop the aptitude of the few. The formation in each battalion of companies of marksmen is greatly to be desired, and we cannot doubt that the employment of these as skirmishers, within musketry range of the enemy's artillery, would be productive of important military results."

"In wood-fighting, also, should our troops, Regular and Auxiliary, be constantly practised. Such a species of combat has developed itself to an extraordinary extent, and we should try and prepare by practice in our own land, so that, however so remote we may regard the possibility of its application in our island country, we may be ready for what the future day may bring forth."

"In defensive fighting we should teach the value of a less deep formation, and the extension of men to ground."

"Our flanks covered by natural protection or by fieldworks, our shelter trenches not continuous, but like the bastions of a fortification, and our men disposed, in those trenches, in the proportion of one man per yard."

"Our reserve drawn up, not in solid masses, but varying in formation to suit the ground, and ready to support any portion of the line; our artillery protected by gun pits

in positions favourable for concentration of fire; and our cavalry disposed so that they may be ready to undertake offensive action against shaken infantry; with these conditions, may we not believe that in fighting a defensive action our military history will report itself, and that our soldiers, tenaciously holding to the spirit of our old line formation, would repulse the attack of the audacious foe, soizing victory when the shattering effect of their fire had overwhelmed the enemy, and advancing as of yore, in lines which fulfilled the qualities of the old formation, while in their more extended order they partook of the change which years have brought about in the new order of things."

REVIEWS.

We have to acknowledge the receipt of a beautifully steel engraved portrait of the late General R. E. LEE, the famous leader of the Confederate armies, from W. W. Boswick & Co., general agent, 177 and 179, West Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. As our notices of the purpose for which this splendid engraving has been got up, and in the recollection of our readers, we will only say it does the promoters of the Lee Monument credit.

NEW DOMINION MONTHLY.—The *New Dominion Monthly* for the month of October, 1873, has been received. An engraving of Hiram Powers, the famous American sculptor, is presented as a frontispiece. The opening article is entitled "Primitive Education in Ontario;" and traces the progress of Educational establishments in this Province from the period of its first settlement to the year 1842. The "Nile Letters" are continued and contain much and interesting information on the scenery and ruins of the great valley and its no longer mysterious river. On the whole, the number before us is, in point of ability, on a par with its predecessors. There is room for improvement in the literary management of this monthly magazine. The articles are generally dry and insipid—milk-and-waterish, as it were; and its contents are rarely worthy of its august title. JOHN DOWELL & SON, publishers, Montreal. Terms:—\$1.50 per annum.

Marshal MacMahon has approved of the plan for the fortification of Paris presented by the Committee of Engineers and the Superior Council of War without one dissentient voice. M. Thiers had refused to accept this plan, which consists in the establishment of a series of forts outside the lines occupied by the German investing army. The circumference will be about 120 miles; investment will be rendered impossible; and the city of Paris will not be exposed, as it was, to projectiles sent over the forts and up to the walls of the Tuileries. The new forts, which will not cost much, will be commenced in the spring of the year.