

## HEIDELBERG—ON THE TERRACE.

We stood upon the castle's height,  
So full of old romances,  
The moon above shone clear and bright,  
And silvered all our fancies.

The Neckar murmured in its flow,  
The woods with dew were weeping,  
And, lighting up the depths below,  
The quiet town seemed sleeping.

The battlements rose grim and still  
In majesty before us,  
And floating faintly up the hill,  
We heard a student's chorus.

Inspired by the brimming cup,  
Their words were wildly ringing;  
They sang of love—and I took up  
The burden of their singing.

I spoke to you; in sweet surprise  
A little while you hovered,  
Then in the depths of those gray eyes  
Your answer I discovered.

We vowed that while the Neckar's vow  
(How low the words were spoken!)  
Ran undisturbed these towers below,  
Our truth should rest unbroken.

Again beneath these walls I stand,  
And here my footsteps linger,  
Where once I pressed with loving hand  
This token on your finger.

But now the well-loved view I see,  
Its old enchantment misses;  
The evening breeze sighs back to me  
The shadows of our kisses.

Untired still the Neckar flows  
In the soft summer weather,  
But last year's leaves and last year's vows  
Have flown away together.

W. H. POLLOCK.

## THE NEW PRUSSIAN INFANTRY TACTICS

The *Militar Wochenblatt* has an excellent article on this subject, and as it is one with which the minds of all our thinking officers of the present day are occupied, there being a general feeling of dissatisfaction with regard to the system of drill at present carried on by our infantry soldiers, we need offer no apologies for giving a translation of it to our readers:—

"The experience derived from the war of 1870-71 has plainly shown once more the manifest contradiction which exists between several of the tactical formations which we employ on the *champs de manoeuvres*, and those which are really practised under the enemy's fire. It appears that the authorities have come to the determination to banish from the drillground those formations which are considered to be superannuated, or else at the least to confine their use to a small number of settled occasions. This is the first point of view from which it is necessary to regard the instructions recently published, with the object of introducing, as an experiment, new tactical formations in our infantry. The second point of view has been instigated by the recollection of the enormous losses incurred in certain circumstances during the late war; consequently, one has been induced to search for the proper methods by which an attack, especially on open ground, may be made to succeed without too great sacrifices.

"The first paragraphs of the instructions mentioned above meet our approbation, in fact, every intelligent officer has certainly hailed with joy the laying down of the following principles—Within range of the enemy's fire the first line of a brigade, for example, will only present thick swarms of skirmishers and company columns, the employment of compact battalions deployed in line, or

forming a single mass in column will for the future be given up; for it is no longer possible to handle them in this formation—battalion volleys, attacks in battalion column, rallying skirmishers to a particular bugle sound—a prescription particularly unsuited to war—will no longer take place. If one ought, and with justice, to be sparing of that principle which maintains that not a single extra movement should be made on the *champs de manoeuvres*, which would not be employed when under the enemy's immediate fire, it is however incontestible that the execution on the drill ground of complete manoeuvres in formations generally impracticable, is only fit to give false ideas to the young officers and to the men. It would be out of our province to discuss or analyse the utility of these principles put forward as premises, because in this respect the difference of opinion in our army is very small. We will, consequently, pass to the second point of view, viz., to find other formations which will diminish the losses in an attack, whilst at the same time it loses none of its vigour.

"A great deal has been lately written on this subject. One has endeavoured to establish a sort of system to prevent great losses based on the study of what are, and what are not, *zones dangereuses*. In putting altogether on one side the question of finding out whether these investigations are useful, and if this way of looking at the problem is really the right one, it appears to us, however *à propos*, that to have as an end the avoiding losses is not in itself sufficient, and should never take the first place when it is a question of examining a tactical formation; the consideration which ought to precede everything, and which should never be lost sight of in a discussion of this kind, is the manner of attaining that end which one has in view in a combat.

"It is self evident, that bringing your men right up to the enemy with as little loss as possible contributes, though indirectly, to attaining this end. Every innovation, which has been made more particularly during the last twenty years, as, for example, that of advancing to the attack in scattered order instead of in column, has always had the above result for its object, more or less. Nevertheless, the considerations which have preponderated have been those which have a direct influence upon the victory; that is to say, a formation which is a real preparation for fighting, and which is the most favorable to the best action of the firearm, finally, the moral element. Let us see whether, in the new formations, this is everywhere the case.

"In the first place, it appears to us that in the reasons alleged for their being introduced as an experiment, there has been a good deal of exaggeration in carrying the destructive effect of the rifle up to 2000 paces as this distance appears to us much too great.

"The attack of the Prussian Guards upon St. Privat has been often cited as an example of late.

"Although one cannot dispute that it did suffer great losses at a very considerable distance from the enemy's position, nevertheless, one cannot base a tactical system upon one single example of the effect produced by a mass of bullets at every considerable distance, the less as one could find, in this particular case, other causes which would account for these enormous losses; amongst others, exceptionally advantageous positions occupied by the French was undoubtedly the principal one. The greater part of the observations made upon other occasions when the losses were equal to those of the Guard at St. Privat, would show that the

destructive effect of the Chassoplat distances exceeding 800 to 1000 paces is not really very considerable.

"We do not, therefore, share in the opinion which has served as a base in the motives to which we have alluded above, for transforming the formations in close order into others which are more flexible, although we would make no difficulty in admitting that certain cases have their exception, and that troops marching to the attack would be often inconvenienced by the enemy's fire at beyond 800 to 100 paces. regard must therefore be had not to those exceptional cases, but to the men of those which are most generally common in the practice of war.

"It is with the preconceived idea that one would suffer severe losses at great distances that the proposition has evidently been advocated of advancing in long thin lines, or in breaking up the smallest tactical unit, the company and even sometimes the subdivision, the whole preceded by strong lines of skirmishers, and we have acknowledged above that their employment was absolutely necessary. These formations can certainly only be employed when it is necessary to make a front attack, and upon ground at once flat and uncovered. Let us examine up to what point they answer the conditions cited above, that is, whether they permit of the troops manoeuvring easily, or whether they facilitate their instant readiness for fighting without bringing any injury to the moral element.

"Let us commence with the formation of the line of skirmishers immediately in contact with the enemy. According to one of the propositions, this first line should be followed by a second line of skirmishers.

"In one part of the army no clear idea appears to have been come to as to the significance of the second line.

"It has been allowed that it was impossible to keep the supports close to the skirmishers who are being engaged, when the ground does not offer sufficient shelter. Nevertheless one does not wish to lose a support placed at a short distance behind, and, consequently, it is made to follow in scattered order. It is evident that, under similar conditions, this second chain of skirmishers will suffer less than a subdivision in close order. On the other hand, the commanding officer has no longer his men in hand even before the moment has arrived when they are actually to be employed as skirmishers, an inconvenience which is likely to become the greater nowadays, since the dispersion caused by the phases of the combat is already quite great enough without that. The commanding officer has already dispersed his forces to a certain extent, and it becomes very difficult to make the support—which performs the part of reserve with regard to the line of skirmishers—serve every eventuality which may arise.

"In this manner it can be employed hardly anything else except for directly reinforcing the first line of fire by doubling it. But let us suppose for example that the enemy suddenly makes an attack upon one of the flanks. If the support has remained compact it has only to change front and then deploy to offer a front to the enemy, which it can rapidly carry out; on the contrary, a similar movement would be almost an impossibility if the support formed a second chain of skirmishers. There is no doubt that in introducing the innovation, a view was had to the support of the second line, simply by doubling it. If we were rightly informed, this doubling ought to take place from that moment when the first line of skirmishers