

Punch indulges in a little good-natured humor in the following lines entitled "The Knight of Belgravia," and which depict the perils of citizen soldiery.

THE KNIGHT OF BELGRAVIE.

"Say Maiden, wilt thou wed with me?
Wilt be a soldier's bride?
And bind thy husband's full-dress sash
Upon his manly side."
"Alas! art thou a soldier too?"
"The Maiden soft," sighed.

"And art thou found in battles front—
O horrid sight! to see!
Waving a broken sword about,
And shouting 'Victory'?"
"Well not exactly that," replied
The Knight of Belgravia.

"Then dost thou teach the poor to know
His left foot from his right;
To march with footstep in-erme?
Ah me! a gruesome sight."
"Well no; not quite so bad as that,"
Exclaimed the gallant Knight.

"Come tell me thou, Sir Knight; if thou
Art neither of these two,
What sort of men dost thou command,
And what is it they do?"
"In truth," the Knight replied, "they are
A somewhat motley crew."

"Some are hard-handed sons of toll;
Some are ineipient fops;
Some walk about in broadcloth coats,
And some in canvas slops,
Some come from factories, and some
From linendrapers' shops,

"But in a natty dress of grey
We meet upon parade;
Mine to denote superior rank,
Bound round with silver braid."
"O, what a lovely uniform!"
Exclaimed th' enraptured Maid.

"Platoon and manual I rehearse,
As oft before I've done,
Out of a little red bound book;
They seem to think it fun;
Some recollect a slight amount,
But most remember none.

"Anon I march them out of town,
To sound of fife and drum,
They bravely march and only halt
When to a 'pub,' they come;
And then they hint they'd like some beer,
And I provide them some.

"That's all sweet Maiden; for my life
Thou'lt ne'er have cause to fear—
The danger's small or none at all;
The duties not severe.
Indeed I seldom go to drill
A dozen times a year.

"My love, if this indeed be true,
That thou has told to me,
I will consent to be thy bride."
So spake the fair Ladye.
'Thou showest common sense' remarked
The Knight of Belgravia.

THE BRITISH LINE IN ATTACK, PAST AND FUTURE.

The following is the text of a pamphlet on this interesting subject, by Colonel Gawler, late 52nd Light Infantry, just published by Messrs. Mitchell:—

FUNCTIONS OF INFANTRY.—Infantry possesses two descriptions of force which it may exert against any enemy—viz. *fire force*, and what may be called its *charging force*.

Fire.—The ready development and effective exercise of the former should be the main object of all battle formations. It opens the way to a resort to the latter should the enemy live and wait for it.

The Charge.—The employment, by infantry, of the charge, which is intended to bring its muscular force and weight in contact with an enemy, will now probably be seldom required. It would be absurd, however, to assert that circumstances could never occur to call for its employment. Bodies of determined troops might find themselves within a short distance of each other; failing am-

munition on both sides, surprise, accident, or neglect might bring it about. Firing alone can never settle a battle, and though as a means to an end it should be used to the utmost, the temptation is now so much greater than formerly to spend precious time at long distances, and to blow away ammunition whilst objects are still very indistinct, that it must be impressed upon the soldiers as strongly as ever, that, whenever battle is offered and accepted, close quarters with the enemy is the great desideratum, whether the enemy elects to come to him or he has to go to the enemy. It would manifestly be absurd to sanction the doctrine that if the defender won't quit his position the assailant must not go on, or that if the assailant persists in coming on the defender is bound to leave.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ASSAULT.

Direct Attack—The Important Problem.—The simultaneous turning of both flanks of a position, is "compared to the action of a pair of tongs," or, indeed the turning of one flank, should be as hazardous as ever, unless consummate strategy or good fortune has provided the assailant with enormous odds. The flanks, moreover, might be inaccessible; so that, in considering the offensive, the direct attack is still the important problem in tactics.

What the Assailant may have to encounter.—To discuss fairly and practically the probabilities of success of a proposed formation for the attack upon an enemy in position, the defenders should be accorded credit for the best of everything. What falls short of this will be a gain to the assailant. There will be, therefore, only under consideration the attack upon a formidable enemy, whose position with a clear open front would allow him freely to assume the offensive—an important condition for the complete success of a defensive fight.

"Good troops are not to be driven from their ground by appearances. Superiority of fire, pliability of movement, undisturbed steadiness, and persevering courage are the great grounds for probability of success," whether for attack or defence.

Business of the Assailant.—The business of the assailant may be divided into two parts. The serious part of the attack, or "attack proper," which should extend across a space of, say, 300 or 400 yards in front of the enemy's position, but which must be measured from the time the assailant first comes under fire at any distance under 400 yards; and the "advance to the attack," over ground which the assailant must cross, more or less exposed to fire, before reaching the borders of the space above named.

OLD AND NEW FORMATIONS DISCUSSED.

Heavy Column.—Albuera, Waterloo, and the Alma furnish instances of the fate of heavy columns, whether on the offensive or defensive, when opposed to the fire and charge, or fire only, of steady troops in line, before the days of breech-loaders; the bill of Solferino indeed was carried by deep French columns, but at immense loss. Their fire, not their weight and repeated reinforcements of course prevailed over limited numbers, for the post was advanced and difficult to support, and was moreover turned before it was taken. (See Hamly, 1st Ed., pp. 343.)

Jomini's proposal adopted by the French.—Since the introduction of arms of precision, Jomini, recognizing the importance of a good front of fire, and to diminish to what he considered the utmost the losses which would be inflicted by the enemy's artillery recommended, and the French adopted in

the Italian Campaign of 1859, battalion columns of three divisions each (i.e., a depth of six ranks) at deploying interval, the advance to be covered by skirmishers Hamley, 392.

Von Moltke's Views.—So late as 1865 (i.e., since the adoption of breech loaders by the Prussians) Von Moltke, having described with much force the marked success which attended the employment of the Line by the English at the Alma against the Russian columns, concludes that "the column formation affords the best means of handling troops both in an attack and in an actual fight!" *Arms of Precision* pp. 13 15.

Had the Russians received the English in line well supported, the relative losses, as mentioned by Von Moltke much to our advantage, would not have been so disproportioned. And in that case also we should scarcely have improved our chances by attacking in column.

In the account quoted, Von Moltke certainly describes the superior advantages of the line, but by the inference which he draws he would seem to doubt its practicability with German troops.

German Experiences.—The introduction of breech-loaders since the Crimea (but not since Von Moltke wrote in 1865), is nothing of the mitrailleuse, has still further added to the importance of fire. Breech-loaders being in use on both sides; for the assault of St. Privat, "across open and gently ascending ground," the Prussians formed two lines of columns, covered by skirmishers. "The front of the attack included little more than 2,000 paces, so that there were about ten men to the pace" (i.e., 20,000 men eight ranks deep), deeper therefore than the columns recommended by Jomini before the introduction of breech-loaders.

Having lost nearly 6,000 men in ten minutes, when about 1,500 paces from the enemy, the advance had to be discontinued. This was a sufficient lesson: "the attack in line of columns over open ground was, in spite of the final success (?) of this one marked out as an impossibility, and a useless loss of men and definitely rejected."—*System of Attack* P. I., pp. 17 18.

Recent English Views.—Hamley, though with a seeming affection for the British line, hesitated to oppose the opinions of the French and Jomini as to its impracticability, and finally backed the column with this assertion—"Wellington's battles throw no light upon the question, for his method was to await the attack, and then in turn to attack the repulsed enemy so that his line advanced over a narrow space against a broken enemy," which is tantamount to saying that the Duke of Wellington never fought an offensive battle.

MORAL EFFECT OF REALITY.—The construction of the column, being a head diminished in width in order to lengthen its tail, is a vast reduction of the fire power of a given number of men, which has its fullest development in line.

Physical Power.—Apart from its fire power, the line has a physical superiority over the pent-up forces, even of superior numbers, of the more imposing looking column.

The momentum of a battering ram (the velocity being the same in each case) would be the same, whether used 'broadside on' or endways, only in the one case the blow would be distributed over a large surface, and in the other it would be concentrated on one point. Front for front therefore, in a mere pushing match, the long tail would have the best of it, but though the narrowed space admits of increased weight being directed towards a particular point, the reduction of front renders particularly vulner-