

soon quell the fire, even of superior numbers of those who have no such qualities. The fire of the latter (if they do not run away) will probably become more rapid, but the muzzle of their rifles will rise as their heads sink gradually behind their cover, and the bullets will fly harmlessly over those for whom they were intended.

Firing obliquely with the Line.—Every one acquainted with the use of fire arms knows that fire is delivered to the left front of the individual; in fact, that to fire to this front a man makes a right half turn or brings up his left shoulder. The front rank of a closed body can fire to its left front as easily, as rapidly, as correctly as to its front, and the fire thus delivered is, in proportion to the acuteness of the angle, more intense than direct fire. This is worth remembering, both on account of the important aid which, without disturbing the front, can be rendered by one body of men to another on its left which is either attacking or receiving an attack as well as that, when there is the choice, it is always better to attack the right front or flank of your enemy than the left.

Oblique Fire against the Enemy.—On the same principle as with artillery fire, firing obliquely, when it can be adopted against an enemy, will be much more effective than direct fire, particularly against troops in loose order. If a handful of stones be thrown at a line of open railings, where, according to the space between the railings (the size of the stones being the same in each case), only one in four perhaps, or less, would hit when the throwing was direct all would hit if thrown at an angle of 30 deg. with the line (supposing it to be of sufficient length).

FORMATIONS.—Reverting to the remarks at p. 16 on 'aimed fire, it may be observed that it would be a difficult thing to inveigle an enemy into delivering a divergent fire, but it would be very easy to draw from him a convergent one. The best course, therefore, for the troops immediately engaged with him is to strive for a general average, or "medium," by offering no inducement for a convergent fire; preserving a formation so uniform that no part of it shall attract his eye more than another. Skirmishers therefore should be drilled as heretofore into maintaining this even line to avoid getting into knots and clumps, which inevitable attract a convergent fire. Cover, that is in their road, should be made the best of; but, as it (as well as fire) is only to be employed as it may aid towards attaining the main object gaining ground, any resort to it which would break the line or check the advance must be avoided. This is generally the commencement of getting into knots; it is very easy to get into these clumps, and very difficult to get out of them. And if the enemy cannot hit these groups while under cover, he can at least watch for them as they break.

The most efficient skirmishing line, therefore, is that which allows every individual composing it to combine ease and rapidity of movement with the best use of his weapon. It should never be so thick as to risk more men than can find honest employment, nor so thin as to draw the enemy's attention to individuals; single rank, therefore, and the extension, whatever it may be, well maintained; or the formation least resembling a swarm.

Of the formations of those who back up the Skirmishers.—Supports in single rank.—As being nearest the skirmishers, support should move in single rank. Extended over the large front, they would be as well or better able to reinforce the skirmishers, and

if they happened to come under the aimed fire of the enemy, the more extended front would be preferable. The rear rank might be used either to extend the front echeloned in rear of one or both flanks.

Line two deep.—Line two deep is suitable to the greater fire power, deliberation, determination, and order required of the body prepared to take the enemy in hand at the "critical" point. Until then it should not come under the aimed fire of the enemy's infantry.

Four deep.—A third formation is four deep which, with two front ranks kneeling, represents the greatest intensity of infantry fire. It is suitable principally for defensive purposes and for second lines. The four deep formation was used on a memorable occasion in our military history, viz., by the late Duke of Wellington to meet the last great efforts of the French at Waterloo.

"The Duke had perceived the concentration of heavy columns to the right of La Belle Alliance, and to oppose a more solid resistance to the evidently approaching attack, had ordered all the infantry corps between the two great roads to be formed from two deep into four deep lines." (*Crises of Waterloo*, p. 13.) With what result is known.

One regiment had the left wing doubled in rear of the right; another formed the four deep line by wheeling up from half column by half companies to the left. The double line of companies would probably be the better formation, six paces being preserved between the lines. If the whole fire were required, the rear companies would close up and the front companies would kneel, their supernumerary ranks turning outwards and moving to the rear as in a four deep square. The advantages of this formation compared with the two deep line are:—

1. Greater mobility, with the whole fire available if required.
 2. Fire more concentrated. The same amount being available in half the space.
 3. Readiness to thwart a flank attack without diminishing the front by wheeling up a rear company.
 4. Formed in half the time from column. Compared with the Jomini column the advantages are:—
1. An extent of front (for British regiment) equally manageable. The front of the columns used by the French in Italy (100 men), it would only exceed by one half, battalions 600 strong.
 2. No fire sacrificed, and therefore no delay necessary for deployment.
 3. One third less depth offered to the enemy's projectiles.

It may of course, at any time, be partially or wholly deployed into two deep line to fill gaps or for other purposes.

These closed formations are orderly bodies upon whom the skirmishers can depend, and whose presence infuses a moral force into the whole, and ensures an orderly and steady advance.

They should be kept as much as possible out of the aimed fire, and if the skirmishers work well and avoid as much as possible everything which would draw a convergent fire (which makes the "unaimed fire" hot also), they have no unusual risks to run. In any case, however, their extended front, uniform slight depth, and pliability, provide them with the best general chances against sudden or unforeseen risk from aimed or unaimed fire.

ATTITUDE.—In crossing open ground under fire the attitude of the soldier is of very great importance. A man of 5 ft. 8 in. may, be

stooping, take nearly 2 feet off the top of the target which he would otherwise offer to the enemy, and be able to move without inconvenience. What lover of wild sports has not compressed himself into the smallest possible compass, walking and running for a length of time till every muscle has ached? The men should be drilled to this, and, when under fire, all dashes across exposed places should be made in this attitude.

SPEED.—On this subject, and the general method of getting over the ground, the following appeared in an English military work as early as 1852, on the first introduction of the Minie rifle. "All movements of skirmishers, under fire of a well posted enemy, must be at the double-quick to avoid ruinous destruction. If the distance cannot be surmounted in one effort at such speed, it must be traversed by successive dashes to intervening cover;" also, exposed to the long range it would appear that supports will be often obliged to loosen into extended order." (*Essentials of Good Skirmishing*, 2nd Ed., pp. 21-31.) This was the essence of the plan adopted by the Prussians at Le Bourget.

THE ADVANCE TO THE ATTACK.

Skirmishers.—In the "advance to the attack," i.e., at the long ranges, the skirmishers should be comparatively few. Very little of the enemy is visible, and to produce any appreciable effect, physical or moral, firing at such distances requires deliberation and judgment. The temptation to the skirmishers to throw away fire is much greater now than formerly. It is better to get over the ground to the borders of the "attack proper," than to waste time and ammunition, increase noise and smoke. They may be reinforced, however, if circumstances demand it, and should be doubled at point-blank range.

Bodies in support.—The ground most favourable to the defenders i.e., the clear open front, would—if the enemy were kept well occupied, be most favourable to the advance in line. If the front were not clear and open so much the better for the assailant.

Officers commanding divisions, brigades, regiments, and companies, each within the limit of their command, possess the power of altering their formation, and increasing or diminishing their front to suit the conditions of ground, and they must exercise their judgment in the same way in regard to the enemy's fire. Our own military history is fertile in instances exhibiting the readiness and pliability of our troops, and that there is nothing stiff in our system, or opposed to the exercise of intelligence.

The following is an instance of a regiment crossing open ground and a daffie swept by fire. At the Nivelle on the 10th November, 1813, "the line of the French main position was in front of the regiment with an intervening rocky water-course, which it would seem was deemed impossible by our enemies. The 52 moved by threes the small open ravine and wood in their front under a smart fire of artillery from the ridge which was next to be assailed. In front of this wood, the water-course was crossed by a small and narrow stone bridge, on the opposite side of which was a road running parallel to the water-course, with a sheltered bank towards the enemy. The officers and men of the 52nd crept by twos and threes to the edge of the wood, and then dashing over 100 yards of open ground, passed the bridge, and formed behind the bank, which was no more than eighty yards from the enemy's entrenchments. The signal was then