

line, the result is that the company is once more complete, the men of each fours reunited, and the company a good line for an advance if that be thought expedient. May it not be that this is a better mode of making an advance than to bring a new line up to walk over the skirmishers? I am glad to know that in urging this I am following so high an authority as Sir Garnet Wolseley, who thinks that those who are up in the front must be kept to the front to the end. If this be sound, then I submit, that in no better way could an advance in line, or even a charge, be prepared for, than by pushing forward men in such a way as to complete the unit to which the men in the line of skirmishers belong, supplementing, if necessary, from the regimental reserve. Is not this better than the German idea of making a section which is skirmishing close in when support is sent forward? Is it not better to prevent the need for any such awkward and dangerous proceeding to restore the original tactical form, by arranging that reinforcement shall of itself be tactical restoration? The German plan is like cutting a log into lengths, and afterwards trying again to join them end to end, while that I propose is more like sawing it lengthways into planks, and afterwards laying them one to the other like a laminated beam. And here may be noticed in speaking of detail what was mentioned before; that there is need to be careful how anything is adopted from the Prussian tactics that has not been tested under adverse circumstances. Tactics which will only avail to win victories, and will not help to prevent disaster from becoming destruction, are essentially faulty. Now, nothing can be more certain than this that if retention and recovery of tactical unity are needful when troops are forced to fall back. If in falling back they can fall into their own places in the tactical unit from which they were sent out, they may soon rally and recover their lost ground; or even supposing that this be not possible, they are much more likely to make a comparatively safe and orderly retreat. One can hardly imagine a device more unsuited to the position of a force overweighted and obliged to retire, than this Prussian mode of recovering original tactical form. And if it be answered that, in retiring it would not be attempted, then the counter answer is plain, that the retreat will be worse organized than the advance, when the very opposite should be the case. It is possible that men pushing on to victory may not fail though being somewhat out of shape, whereas men retiring beaten must suffer more or less from being thrown adrift from their true position in the tactical body they belong to.

The skirmishers should be directly commanded by the captain, and he ought to have with him a large proportion of the supernumeraries. An officer should command the support. Each major should exercise a general supervision over one half of the companies which are in skirmishing order, the colonel supervising the whole, and making use of the regimental reserves as occasion may require.

In this way, only a fourth of each captain's command being extended, he would be able to attend to them efficiently, to work them forward by personal direction, and with little risk of blundering or of his being unable to prevent wavering, which is most contagious unless instantly checked. He would, in short, possess in the highest degree all those advantages of a concentrated command, instead of a long and attenuated one, which have been already noticed in speaking of the principles. Each rank captain,

major and colonel, would command a rectangular force, so to speak, as shown in the diagram, which represents a battalion of six companies, with four fighting companies and two in regimental reserve. The distances are not given with any exactitude, the sole object being to show how a captain commands a rectangle, each major a larger rectangle, and the colonel with a reserve in hand commands the entire force. Thus there is a regular and convenient division of command from front to rear.

As regards the support, I doubt very much whether it is advisable to keep it all at one distance from the fighting line. It would probably be better to work it in what may be called a short echelon of men. They would thus be at varying ranges as regards the enemy, and the leading men of the echelon being not very far from the skirmishers, orders could be easily conveyed. This however is a matter of detail of such importance that one would like to see experiments tried before expressing a decided opinion upon it. Therefore in the diagram the supports are represented in a straight line, as at present, only in extended order.

*A Battalion of six companies of One Hundred Men each—Four companies extended, Two in Regimental Reserve.*

SKIRMISHERS.

(Being first row of four deep extended.)

SUPPORTS.

(Being second row of four deep extended.)

FIRST RESERVE.

(Being the third and fourth rows of four deep)

REGIMENTAL RESERVE.

I might proceed now to argue at length in favour of my proposal giving elaborate and varied illustrations, but to do this fully would swell my essay far beyond a reasonable size, and probably put it outside the bounds of the reader's patience, while to do it only partially would be unsatisfactory. I prefer therefore to leave what I have said without elaboration, feeling sure that if I have succeeded in presenting the matter in such a form as to command the attention of those who are better informed and have professional experience in military matters, the question whether there is any value in the suggestions made will soon be satisfactorily settled.

Before concluding, however, there are one or two matters, not directly connected with the subject I have been treating of, but which still, it is hoped I may be excused for bringing under notice, having this opportunity. One of these is the question how the regimental supply of spare ammunition should be carried, I think it was demonstrated by what happened during the late Autumn Manœuvres that the present ammunition cart plan is totally unworkable. The fighting has to be carried on in ground where nothing on wheels can go, and it is just where the broken and fenced character of the ground makes cart traffic impossible that there is likely to be most need of an

extra supply of ammunition. (a) Besides this there seems to be no organization whatever to keep up a communication between the ammunition reserve and those who may require to use it; and the ammunition cart itself is arranged in such a way, that if it is disabled, or its driver or one of its horses killed, it would be very difficult to bring forward its contents at all. I would humbly suggest that the spare ammunition should be distributed on pack horses, the number being proportioned to the strength of the regiment (say one to every 100 or 200 men), and that three men should be attached to each pack horse, the ammunition being so arranged that it could be easily and rapidly carried forward when required. In this way, it could be kept in rear of the first reserve of the reserve of the companies that were engaged, and nothing less destructive than a stone wall or precipice need turn it off the straight line. (b)

The other matter I would like to notice is the way in which the soldier is loaded. Under the new system, where there must be rapid rushes from one cover to another, it is absolutely necessary that the soldier should be freed of all unnecessary weight, not merely to enable him to run well, but also to prevent the excessive exertion destroying his other qualities, lessening his shooting powers, wearing him out too soon, and also unfitting him for intelligently taking up and obeying orders. It was noticed often during the Manœuvres that men with full packs, after running some distance, had such fullness of blood in the head, and consequent rushing in the ears, that they were incapable of taking in orders at all, and quite unfit to aim or fire steadily. It cannot be doubted that every ounce of weight taken off will diminish the risk of such defects, and is well worthy of consideration whether many things now ordered to be carried by the soldier might not be put in the baggage waggons. The risk of waggons and men not meeting at night is a considerable risk, which can hardly be set against disadvantages resulting from permanently loading men so as to injure their working powers. At all events, let everything that can be dispensed with for a day or two be withdrawn from the kit—hacking, soap, pipeclay, combs, brushes, razors, and every other thing that may for campaigning purposes be considered as *de luxe*. Even as regards other and more necessary articles, if most of them were with the baggage, the men would be in no different position from that of officers now, who in the event of there being any hitch preventing the meeting of the corps and its waggons at night, have no change of clothing of any kind.

I now close this essay, thanking the reader who has got to the end of it for his patience, and in the hope that, at least here and there he has found something which has interested him on the great question to which it relates.

(a) This was very forcibly illustrated at the Battle of Witte, on September 9th, when the ammunition cart attached to the 3rd Provisional Battalion, owing to the nature of the ground, could not have been available to three-fourths of the battalion from the moment the fighting began.

(b) I was not aware when I wrote the above, that a plan similar to this had been tried in some parts of India, and found to work well.

Two ice boats from Ogdensburg have been cruising around a good deal of late, and they have made some very fast time. Mr. Wells left Brockville the other day in one, and made the distance between that town and Ogdensburg—some twelve miles—in ten minutes.