

attack seems to have arrived, the impetus is thus given from the rear.

- a. The second line receives the order to advance.
- b. When it comes to within 150 paces of the battalions of the first line, these advance by alternate wings, dashing forward 50 paces (in the attitude prescribed for skirmishers) and lying down.
- c. When the battalions of the first line arrive within 100 paces of the support (now consisting of two companies per battalion, one on each flank, (these advance alternately in like manner, throwing forward a half company each to reinforce the skirmishers (not simultaneously, but by wings as they approach.) (The skirmishers now consist of three companies per battalion, and there are two half companies in support.)
- d. The moment they are reinforced, and as the right wing of each battalion lies down, its right skirmishers spring forward 25 paces, and cover the forward rush of the left skirmishers which is made as the left wing of the battalion lies down. The movement is then continued in alternate dashes of 50 paces, the battalion and its skirmishers coinciding as nearly as possible.
- e. When the battalions of the second line reach the position lately occupied by the first line, their advance is conducted in the same manner, *i.e.*, by alternate wings doubling 50 paces and lying down.

If the enemy remains firm, lying close and firing steadily, the skirmishers will probably flag in about 150 paces (*i.e.*, 200 yards from the enemy). They should be at once reinforced by the two half companies in support which may carry them on another 50 yards. They will then probably shorten their dashes allowing the battalions rather to gain on them, and they may be urged on another 50 yards, when it would seem that the enemy must rise, or at any rate he will probably be visible. Should he, however, having good cover, still lie close and maintain his fire, the skirmishers must be immediately reinforced with a company from each flank of the battalion, and more ground saved.

Should he rise and fire kneeling or standing from a well ordered line, the battalion must close on the skirmishers, open quick fire for a short time, still working forward, and charge the moment the enemy's fire slackens. But the fire of battalions must on no account be resorted to unless the enemy is firm and distinct, and the distance charging distance, or almost.

Should the enemy give way, the skirmishers must be at once relieved, and he must be pressed as closely as possible, and hurried over any supports he may have prepared in rear, which will be the best means of disarranging them.

Business of the Second Line.—When fire was less powerful it was important, as the assailant's first line approached charging point, that the second line should be close at hand, either to follow up with its fresh, unshaken, muscular force, the vibration of the shock of the front lines, or to sustain muscularly the shock of the counter-attack. There was a crisis which rapidly passed away.

Now "fire power" is so increased that the employment of it must not be relinquished, and the charge resorted to, until not only is the distance very practicable, but the enemy's fire very weak. The same applies to the defenders and the chances of success

of a direct counter-attack. If they were to attempt a charge even at 100 yards while the enemy's fire was strong, they would throw away much of the advantages of the defence, and would probably be mowed down.

The second line is therefore required.—
1. By its moral force to enable the first line to continue to gain ground.

2. To be at hand to take up the fire (relieving the first line) if it should appear to be slackening.

Advancing by alternate wings, the second line will maintain its distance of 150 yards, while the work of the skirmishers and first line is easy; but the dashes of these will shorten as the work becomes hotter, and the second line will then gradually gain on them. This will give ample time for the "fire fight" and it will be time enough if the second line is at hand when the first line is within 50 yards of the position. Victory cannot in these days be snatched in a moment by a direct charge of the defenders. The battalions of the first line, with their pouches full, will be able to take good care of themselves for some minutes and the crisis can always be staved off by holding on the defensive the ground that has been won.

The foregoing plan is based upon our own old and tried principles, with such modifications as the increased power of fire and the recent experience of our neighbours seem to demand.

1. The skirmishers and supports are furnished from the battalions in rear of them, so that they may be reinforced until the whole of what was the first line is expended without mixing corps.

2. The intensity of fire is maintained (exclusive of reinforcements) during the attack, notwithstanding casualties, causing the skirmishers to close in a given direction; the battalions doing the same by the diagonal march the extent of front would be maintained by moving up troops from those supporting the flanks of the attack.

3. In the advance to the attack proper, not only is the mark for the enemy constantly changing its distance, but his attention is attracted (if at all) right and left by the alternate advances. The movements of the battalion suit this. When the enemy's attention would naturally be drawn in a greater degree towards the advanced position and fire on the left, the right half-battalion makes its rush to the front, and when much of his attention would probably be diverted to the right, the left half-battalion dashed forward.

Positions of the Officers.—A captain cannot in a serious affair, command his company from the position assigned to him in the present Drill book. In these movements the position of officers commanding companies must be the old one, *viz.*, on the inner flank of the front rank. In action men can readily execute simple movements to which they have been drilled, and only want the signal; but, with an enemy in front, they ought not to be required to turn their ears back, still less to look behind them to discover amid the din if their captain wants anything done. From the captain's old place they can be commanded well. A glance of the eye to a flank catches his posture, and the things is done. The "guides" are no substitute; they will be cheerfully obeyed when they fall into the command, but in danger the soldier likes to see his captain. It may be said that

the commanding officer is in the rear—that is theory, he is not always there; out if he were, it would be an additional reason why the captain should not be there also. The latter can catch the commanding officer's word or gesture by a half turn, but it would never do for all the men to be turning to catch the word and gesture of their captain. What there is to be done in rear can be better supervised by two subalterns, who have nothing else to do, than by the captain, who has the burden of the command besides.

It may be urged that the foregoing is an impossible fight. That may be true, but most British officers will admit that if an enemy could be found to hold out as the defenders have been supposed to do, there would be no difficulty in getting British soldiers to carry out the part that has been assigned to the assailants. And, *vice versa*, if such assailants could be found, it would be nothing new for British soldiers to stick stolidly to their posts. But it would be absurd, when striving to point out the perfection of duty, to cut short an imaginary battle at any point with the remark, "At this period the enemy will decamp." Napoleon I. made such a miscalculation in his last battle.

CONVERGING ATTACK.

The converging attacks practised by the Prussians are most deserving of attention. The principle is sound; a superior fire converges from the arc upon a part of the enemy's position which forms the chord. The different attacks incline or converge towards a named one, so that the greatest number of men that the space will allow reach the enemy at the critical moment. Briefly, it might be arranged thus:—

I. The whole of the attack is deployed on one line forming a base double the extend of the portion of the enemy's position to be attacked. For convenience' sake say five brigades, which are told-off alternately from the right for first and second lines.

II. a. The flank brigades (1 and 5) of the first line advance in the manner prescribed for the simple attack, their skirmishers taking up a position as near to the enemy as possible, say within 200 yards, strongly reinforced, and directing their fire diagonally inwards against the enemy.

b. The centre brigade (3) advances at the same time and in the same manner until its skirmishers are about on a level with the battalions of the outer brigades—*i.e.* about 500 or 600 yards from the enemy.

III. Artillery can be massed either on the place vacated by the outer brigades, and a battery or two, if practicable, may be further in advance, in the intervals between the brigades.

IV. Infantry, artillery, and if the ground permit, cavalry are in echelon in rear of the outer flanks of the attack, to support and feed the attack and guard against a counter-attack.

V. a. The two brigades of the second line now advance, and the same thing follows as in the simple attack; the battalions of the third brigade moving off when the second line is within 200 paces from them.

b. When the centre skirmishers spring forward, the battalions of the flank brigades (who were on a level with them) advance, including inwards.

c. The supports and skirmishers of the outer brigades follow suit at the proper moment, inclining inwards.