Précis of the Regimental History of the 3rd Brandenburg Infantry Regiment (No. 20) During the Campaign of 1870–71

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To cite this article: Colonel H. T. Hildyard A.A.G. (1891) Précis of the Regimental History of the 3rd Brandenburg Infantry Regiment (No. 20) During the Campaign of 1870–71, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 35:163, 972-1027, DOI: [10.1080/03071849109416687](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071849109416687)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071849109416687>

Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

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PRÉCIS OF THE REGIMENTAL HISTORY' OF THE 3RD BRANDENBURG INFANTRY REGIMENT (No. 20) DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1870-71.

Extracted by Colonel H. T. HILDYARD, A.A.G.

[The regimental histories of the German Army vary a good deal in value. Some of them are full of most interesting details, not only instructive, but throwing light on the campaigns in which the regiment has taken part. Of these, that of the 20th Regiment, of which a *précis* has been kindly undertaken by Colonel Hildyard, and is now put before the Members of the Institution, is one of the best. The only fault in the History is a deficiency of detailed maps and plans of the engagements and battles in which the regiment took part. There are in the History incidents well worth noting other than those here described, but only a full translation would admit of all these being recorded. Colonel Hildyard has successfully extracted those of most value, and, in compliance with his wish, I have exercised editorial functions in the shape of adding a few notes and some sketch plans. As regards the latter, it is only in connection with the Battle of Vionville that there are at hand plans on a scale sufficiently large to make the text fully intelligible.]

The 20th Regiment was commanded by Colonel v. Flatow, who, except when acting as Brigadier, served with it throughout the campaign. It belonged to the 11th Brigade, 6th Division, of the IIIrd Army Corps. The 35th Regiment was the sister regiment in the Brigade. Colonel v. Rothmaler, commanding this regiment, was appointed Brigadier with the rank of Major-General; Lieutenant-General v. Buddenbrock was the Divisional Commander. At the outbreak of the war Prince Frederick Charles was in command of the corps, and had brought it to the highest pitch of discipline and training. On his appointment to the command of the IInd Army, of which the corps formed part, Lieutenant-General v. Alvensleben II succeeded him.—L. A. H.]

THE order for mobilization reached the 20th Regiment at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 16th July, 1870, at Wittenberg, on the Elbe. The machinery was at once put in motion, and worked with the greatest regularity.

On the fifth day of the mobilization the Reserve men arrived from Berlin, Potsdam, and Jüterbog, and immediately after their arrival on the drill ground they were allotted to the several companies. It was a pleasure to see the cheerfulness with which these men came to rejoin the colours. No one wished to go to the Ersatz battalion,² and every one endeavoured to be included in the mobile regiment.

After the arrival of this augmentation it was not possible to

¹ "Das 3 Brandenburgische Infanterie-Regiment (Nr. 20) in den Feldzügen 1866 und 1870-71." By Major Kirchhoff and First Lieutenant Brandenburg I. Berlin, 1891. Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn. Price 8s.

² Every regiment on mobilization forms an Ersatz or dépôt battalion, to which are drafted some of the Officers, N.C.O.'s, and privates from the regiment.—Ed.

quarter the whole regiment in Wittenberg; a portion of the surrounding villages were, therefore, occupied.

As early as the seventh mobilization day the regiment was able to report the mobilization completed. The short time that remained, after clothing the men, was utilized by the companies for drill. By regimental order, each company was practised once in field firing with ball cartridge.

On the 22nd July orders were received for the regiment to move on the following day. With the exception of two, commanded by First Lieutenants, all twelve companies of the regiment were commanded by Captains. Every company had, besides three Subaltern Officers¹ and nine² companies, a fourth. The Ersatz battalion was given two Captains and two First Lieutenants as company commanders. A Captain was detached as Adjutant to the 9th Division, and a First Lieutenant as Adjutant to the 8th Infantry Brigade. The Commander of the fusilier battalion was transferred to the command of the Jäger battalion of the corps.³

On the 23rd July the regiment was moved by rail by Magdeburg, Brunswick (here coffee was provided), Hannover, Bielefeld, Hamm (where the men had a warm meal), Dortmund, and Cologne to Bingerbrück, where it arrived on the morning of the 25th, and was placed in cantonments at Planig, Bibelsheim, and Bretzenheim. The rest of the IIIrd Corps was concentrated in cantonments at and about Kreuznach.

So as to facilitate the concentration of the 2nd Army, the IIIrd Corps was now moved further towards the frontier by march. The heat, and the hilly nature of the country, rendered the march very trying. On the 4th August, which was to have been a halt, the alarm was given in the early morning, and the regiment was moved forward again. The infantry had now approached to within some few miles of the cavalry divisions, which had been pushed forward earlier to the frontier.

The IIIrd Army Corps was now so near the enemy that the march was ordered to be carried out in large bodies, and cantonment guards posted.

On the 5th August the regiment went into cantonments at and about St. Wendel, where, on the following day, a telegram was received by the Colonel from Saarbrücken: "Immediately by rail, entrain there whatever portion of the regiment can be conveyed. 5th Division in action."

The 2nd and the fusilier battalions were actually in St. Wendel, and were formed up at the railway station within a quarter of an

¹ In these Subaltern Officers, however, were included six *Portepesführer*. A *Portepesführer* is a young man who has been a cadet, or is serving in the ranks, and having passed a special examination, is serving as a candidate for a commission.—Ed.

² In 1866 none of the mobilized companies had more than three Subaltern Officers.—H. H.

³ Including the regimental and battalion Commanders and their Adjutants, there were 54 Officers with the regiment. The strength of the regiment is not given, but probably each battalion was nearly 1,000 strong, exclusive of Officers.—Ed.

hour. The 1st, which occupied cantonments in a neighbouring village, was not long after them. But the first train, which left at 4 p.m. with the fusilier battalion, found the line blocked, and it was 7.30 before the last battalion left.

Consequently, only the fusilier battalion arrived on the field that evening, and it was too late to take any active part in the action. The other two battalions joined it early on the morning of the 7th August; they had arrived at Saarbrück between 9 and 10 the previous evening, but had, by mistake, been directed to Burbach.

The regiment profited by the capture at Forbach of French transport, inasmuch as company carts were allotted to it, which proved of immense service during the subsequent course of the campaign. Already, in the Palatinate, the pack horses told off for the companies had been found unpractical for the transport work required; but the regulations did not admit of their being used in carts. The value of this was now recognized, and the use of carts encouraged.

The order was now given for the advance of the three armies towards the Moselle. The 2nd Army marched by the St. Avold-Nomény road, moving off on the 9th August; the 20th Regiment formed a part of the advanced guard of the 6th Division. Notwithstanding the excellence of the roads, the intense heat rendered the marches very trying.

On the 13th August the 1st battalion reached Buchy; the 2nd battalion Silly, and were partly cantoned, partly bivouacked, at those villages. The fusilier battalion was on outpost duty, north-west of Buchy. On the 14th August the outposts had been pushed forward, close up to the Moselle.

Marshal Bazaine had now only two alternatives to choose between. Either he must offer battle, supported by the Moselle and by the fortress of Metz, or he must retire by Verdun to Chalons, and effect a junction there with MacMahon's army. As his retreat was already threatened by the wheel to the right of the German Army, he determined to adopt the latter course. But on the afternoon of the 14th August his rear was overtaken by the 1st Army, and attacked at Colombey.

The 3rd Army Corps occupied on that day a position across the Nomény-Metz road, fronting towards that fortress, to cover the flank march of the 2nd Army, in the direction of Pont-à-Mousson. The 6th Division was posted in the vicinity of St. Jure. The fusilier battalion took the outposts at Louvigny. The artillery engagement at Colombey could be distinctly heard in the bivouac.

On the morning of the 15th August there was not a Frenchman left on the right bank of the Moselle. The advanced cavalry patrols reported the French Army in full retreat on Chalons. But delayed by the immense train accompanying it, and by its column being confined to two roads, its more advanced Army Corps had not retired by the evening further than the neighbourhood of Gravelotte and Rezonville, whilst its rearmost corps were still close to Metz. Orders were issued from the headquarters of the German Armies for the

2nd Army to press forward on the 15th, to the roads leading from Metz, by Fresnes and by Etain to Verdun.

The 20th Regiment left its bivouac at St. Jure at 8 o'clock. The order of march of the division was changed; the 12th Brigade formed the advance guard, the 11th Brigade the main body, with the 20th Regiment in rear. The Seille was crossed at Cheminot, and at 2 p.m. the column halted at Longeville-les-Cheminot, north of this place, and dinners were cooked.

The division was to cross the Moselle at Champey by a pontoon bridge, to be constructed by the Pioneers. The construction offered special difficulties on account of the swollen state of the river. While waiting the troops formed a bivouac, the 20th Regiment being situated in a meadow west of the road. Whilst the dinners were cooking Prince Frederick Charles rode up and said, "How are you getting on, my men?" The answer was, "Very well, your Highness, only we should like to see the French soon." "Then," said the Prince, laughing, "you can be satisfied. Only keep your legs well in hand to-day and to-morrow, and you will overtake them, and cut off their retreat on Paris." Shouts of joy resounded through the entire camp at the news.

About 7 p.m. the march was resumed. All fatigue was forgotten at the prospect of getting up with the enemy, and, accompanied by cheerful singing, the column marched by Bouxieres, up and down hill, to the high bank of the Moselle.

Late in the evening the head of the division reached the bridge at Champey. But as it could as yet be crossed only in file, the column following was put to the most irksome and fatiguing delays. At every moment the order was given, "Halt—Order arms." Soon the exhaustion of the men was so great that on the order, "Halt!" all threw themselves down on the road, so as to rest their legs a little. But only for a few minutes. Then followed the order, "Slope, arms! March!" All struggled up and staggered on as if drunk, from sleep. At last the road is left, a fire is seen in the distance, marking the position of the bridge; and soon the turn of the regiment came to cross. It was now midnight. The march was continued until 2 a.m., 16th August, when a bivouac was formed at Pagny.

After hardly two hours' sleep the troops were on foot again. At 4 a.m. the regimental wagons arrived, after crossing the river at Pont-à-Mousson, and coffee was prepared.

In the early dawn the Colonel of the regiment was to be seen moving about the camp fires, encouraging the men, and expressing the expectation that in the event of a fight they would do their duty and maintain the credit of the regiment. From every side he was received with cheerful assurances that they could be depended on.

Shortly after 5 o'clock the order to fall in was given, and the advance resumed. Only the led horses, the medical and ammunition wagons, followed the battalions. The advanced guard was composed of a cavalry regiment, a battery, and a brigade of infantry; the main body of three batteries, and a brigade of infantry. In each case the batteries moved between the two regiments of the brigade.

On reaching Onville, the march was continued in a north-westerly direction through a hilly, wooded country, on the road to Mars-la-Tour. The heat was tropical, and the march most fatiguing. But the old Prussian sense of duty kept the Brandenburgers up, and impelled them forward.

At about nine o'clock a halt was made on the road, in a clearing in a wood. But hardly had arms been piled, and the men stretched out their weary limbs in the shade, when the sound of guns was heard from the north-east.

"Stand to," was the order repeated on all sides, and the advance was resumed towards the sound of firing. Buxieres was reached at a quickened pace, and a position taken behind the advanced guard brigade, which had already formed up.

The Commander of the Division was on a hill in front, awaiting reports from his cavalry, which had been sent forward towards Vionville to reconnoitre. The Army Corps Commander, who was with the 6th Division on this day, had himself ridden forward with two squadrons of dragoons to reconnoitre the enemy, visible about Vionville and Rezonville.

The whole of the French Army of the Rhine was there, in the same strength and composition as on the previous day. Marshal Bazaine had originally intended to continue the retreat on Verdun, at 4 A.M., but difficulties had been experienced, and he had postponed his march until the afternoon.

General v. Alvensleben quickly grasped the situation. But he did not hesitate a moment to lay hold of the superior enemy with his Army Corps. He knew the tenacity of his troops, and could trust in his Brandenburgers to hold the enemy, at least until the neighbouring corps should come up in support, and the enemy had to be held at all events.

In the meantime the thunder of the guns sounded unceasingly in the ears of the regiment waiting behind the heights of Buxieres, inspired by the prospect of being engaged.

The artillery of the division was already hotly engaged in advance. It had joined the batteries of the 5th Cavalry Division, which, by their unexpected appearance, had succeeded in driving back the enemy's cavalry in wild haste on to the infantry, in their camps at Rezonville. Now, however, these bodies of infantry had rapidly got under arms, and advanced to occupy the positions indicated beforehand, and prepared for the defence.

These positions extended from the plateau north of Vionville by Flavigny to the St. Arnould Wood. The 6th Corps (Canrobert) was posted north of the Metz road; the 2nd Corps (Frossard) was south of it.

Here, on the enemy's left flank, the infantry engagement broke out at this moment, for the 5th Division, which had crossed the Moselle at Noveant the previous night, had mounted the plateau from Gorze, and on debouching came upon the 2nd hostile Corps.

As reports soon reached the General Commanding from the 5th Division that pointed to the retirement of the French in a northerly

SKETCH . I.

Scale, about 900 yards to an inch.

direction, the 6th Division was ordered to advance by Mars-la-Tour on Jarny, in order to cut the enemy off from any outlet to the westward.

The advance was continued in rendezvous formation. The din of the battle commenced became louder and louder. With the thunder of the guns was now mixed the rattle of the mitrailleuses, and the crackle of the small-arm fire. At this time nothing was visible of the engaged troops. A halt was made on a level with the village of Tronville. It now appeared that the further advance in a northerly direction on Jarny was no longer required by the circumstances. The attack would have to be made eastwards in the direction of the Metz-Rezonville road. The direction was changed (see Sketch 1).

The Divisional Commander rode forward with his Staff towards Vionville to reconnoitre.

From time to time small clouds of smoke could be seen dancing high in the air. French shrapnel exploded with a crackling noise and struck the ground, but without reaching the flat heights behind which the brigade was situated. As yet the impressions were not sufficiently serious to stop the mouths of the jokers. "Levi, cheer up," said a private of the 2nd company to his front rank man; "we are going to the fair; they are tearing up the calico." There was soon enough to be an end of merriment and wanton wit. The mouth that made the above remark was closed for ever before an hour had passed. "Packs off!" ordered the battalion Commanders. A few minutes later, on the order of the brigade Commander, Fusilier Regiment No. 35, which was in the 1st line, was deployed into fighting formation. The 20th Regiment followed at 2nd line distance, having the fusilier battalion on the right flank.

Hardly had the regiment reached the eastern slope of the broad declining ridge,¹ and thus come within sight of the enemy's batteries posted beyond the village of Vionville, when a shower of projectiles was launched upon it. Shells plunged into the ground in front of and between battalions, shrapnel burst high over the men's heads; it appeared almost to be a miracle that the regiment did not suffer heavy losses.

On the order of the regimental Commander two companies from each battalion were now thrown forward. The objectives given for the advance were: for the 2nd battalion the village of Vionville; for the 1st battalion the battery situated at the south-western corner;² for the fusilier battalion a wall south of the village, which proved to belong to the cemetery.

The battalions advanced against the objectives designated in the quickest time. The companies were on the point of extending their leading half-züge, when an order came from the division Commander to the regiment to keep the two musketeer battalions in close order, to form the general reserve of the division. This was

¹ The regiment passed south of Tronville and close to the village, and at this time was about the point marked "a" on the sketch.—Ed.

² That any French battery was ever at this point is most improbable. So far as I know there is no confirmation anywhere of this statement in the text.—Ed.

carried out in accordance with the orders conveyed by the Adjutants. The companies which had already suffered losses from the artillery fire had in a few minutes assembled again, and were placed in the hollow south-west of the village.¹ The 3rd company alone, which had the shortest line to go to reach the village, and had hurried forward in advance of the other companies, was at the time the order reached it already hotly engaged, so that it could not be withdrawn from the fight.

In the meantime the fusilier battalion had advanced in the direction of the village cemetery. The 11th and 12th companies were in advance; the 9th and 10th companies followed in close order as supports. The battalion Commander was with the 11th company.²

When the losses increased, and besides the shell fire the distant fire of the Chassepôt rifles began to take effect, the leading half-züge were extended. In this formation the battalion went down into the hollow that runs south-east, past the village of Vionville.³

For a few minutes the battalion was here out of sight of the enemy. The losses appeared to diminish; but a moment later, when the battalion had reached the edge of the undulation and entered on the open ground towards Flavigny and Rezonville, a veritable hail of projectiles of every kind poured down on the fusiliers.

In spite of the enormous gaps caused by the enemy's lead, the fusiliers pressed courageously on. The order of the Captains to extend and to reinforce the skirmishing line were carried out quietly and with precision. The two extended half-züge of the 11th company were reinforced by the 5th zug; those of the 12th company by the 7th zug.⁴

In the same manner the leading züge of the 9th and 10th companies were extended.

The 11th company had pressed further forward on the northern slope of the heights, and now observed that it had lost its original direction, for the cemetery lay to the right. In order to correct this mistake, perhaps also moved instinctively by the desire to find on the higher ground some shelter for a moment from the destructive fire, the company brought the left shoulder sharply forward. The next moment the whole company threw themselves down close to the cemetery wall. Only a brief moment of rest was accorded. Then came the order, "Up, double march; down the slope." Detachments of the 35th Regiment, which a short time previous had been driven back behind the cemetery wall by the fearful fire, joined the company. The appearance of this insignificant support sufficed to give the brave 35th the impulse for a fresh advance.

¹ About the point marked "b" on the sketch.—Ed.

² Apparently the 11th company was on the right of the 12th company.—Ed.

³ The map in the official account, 5A, shows that the valley referred to is the one running N.E. between the village of Vionville and the cemetery.—Ed.

⁴ Each of the twelve companies of a regiment is divided into three züge. In each company one of these was called the Schützenzug. The remaining eight were numbered consecutively from right to left through each battalion. The züge of the 1st, 5th, and 9th companies were numbered 1 and 2, those of the 2nd, 6th, and 10th companies 3 and 4, and so on.—Ed.

The furious fire concentrated at this spot from Flavigny, from the copse of poplar trees east of Vionville, and the troops behind, west of Rezonville, was traversed at the double. The company then advanced uninterruptedly up into a gap in the line of the 35th. The right wing of this regiment had its front towards Flavigny; the left wing fronted more to the north to the road.

On the right, near the latter troops, the 11th company now took its place, and with them occupied a meadow, through which flowed a small stream north of Flavigny, with the front towards the copse of poplars.

On the way to its present position the company had lost no less than 50 killed and wounded, of whom 4 were Officers, viz., 1 Captain, 1 First Lieutenant, and 2 Second Lieutenants. The battalion Commander and the company leader had their horses shot under them immediately beyond the cemetery.

The 12th company had advanced at first on the same alignment as the 11th company. Coming out of the hollow, its ranks also were dreadfully thinned in the shortest time. The impression produced by this led to the half right turn of the 11th company not being noticed. Following the principal line of the enemy's fire, the company advanced directly on the bridge between Vionville and the cemetery, in a direction which led to the south-eastern corner of the village. Nothing was now to be seen of the enemy.

The 9th and 10th companies now brought their right shoulder forward on the supposition that the battalion commander was with the 12th company, and had ordered the direction of attack on the village. They pressed forward in the first instance against a farm which lay south of the village, in the immediate vicinity of the church. From there they turned, accompanied by detachments of the 35th Regiment, towards the eastern outlet from the village.

The occurrences described above led to the 11th company fighting alone, separated from the remainder, during the first hours of the battle.

We left the 1st and 2nd battalions at the moment when, in accordance with superior orders, they were assembled as a reserve. After the battalions had been halted a short time in the hollow between Tronville and Vionville, they were pushed forward, by the order of the regiment Commander, on Vionville, in order not to lose their distance from the first line, and were opened out during their advance.

They had arrived at 200 paces from the village, when the Division General Staff Officer brought the order that the 2nd battalion was to move in a northerly direction with a view to its special employment. The General was waiting for the battalion Commander at the tall poplars on the road, west of the village, in order to give him more detailed instructions.

At the same time the 1st battalion was placed at the disposal of the regiment Commander, and received the order to advance between the village and the cemetery. The battalion Commander placed the 2nd and 4th companies in the first line; the 1st company followed as reserve.

Already, during the deployment, the losses became sensible. An Officer of the 2nd company was severely wounded; the regiment Commander and the fifth Field Officer¹ had their horses shot under them. The Colonel remained on foot during the remainder of the fight, and ordered the other Field Officers to dismount.

The battalion soon entered the space swept by the enemy's bullets. Death reaped again here a fearful harvest. A shell tore off the top of the colours. Directly afterwards the battalion Adjutant fell, severely wounded. But the cry was still "*Forward, into the advanced fighting line.*"

At this point, we must recall the participation of the 3rd company in the struggle, in order to specify the situation in which the 1st battalion found itself in its further advance.

We have already seen above, that the 3rd company did not receive the order for the battalion to assemble. While pressing forward in the meadowland, close to the southern border of the village, it had the good fortune to get on with comparatively small losses across the Vionville-Gorze road as far as a strip of meadow, from which the copse in front was fired on for a short time. As the fire from the copse appeared to become weaker, the company leader thought he might gain possession of it by a rapid advance, as the general attack to the left had not progressed yet beyond the border of the village. An attempt was made to gain the wood at the double by means of the extended zug, which was reinforced by the 3rd zug of the company. The company reached the edge with heavy losses.

Immediately afterwards, a company of the 35th Regiment pressed up on the left. Both companies endeavoured to gain ground further forward; but at this moment a whole French brigade (Pouget) advanced against the wood and opened so destructive a fire on it that its maintenance by the two weakened companies was not to be thought of, especially as the wood, being composed of slender poplar stems, did not offer the slightest cover.

The 3rd company was forced to retire, with great losses, in the direction of the village. The company leader still held the Viouville road with a portion of it, while the other portion had to retire to the farm nearest the village. The tactical order of the company was for the moment relaxed. The company had lost seventeen killed and forty-three wounded in the attack of the copse, amongst them three Officers.

In the meantime the attack of the 11th Brigade had led detachments of troops on all sides to points from which the copse and the road lying north of it could be brought under fire. Companies of the 35th Regiment pressed forward concentrically from the village of Vierville, and to the right in the direction of Flavigny, and threw themselves down, where the ground offered a slight cover, for a short fire action.

At this stage of the engagement, our 1st and fusilier battalions came into the fight also.

¹ This Officer is a Field Officer attached to the regiment mainly for administrative purposes.—ED.

The 1st battalion had extended the leading züge of the 2nd and 4th companies, and found itself soon after crossing the Vionville-Gorze road on a level with the advanced fighting line. The 12th company, which had pushed itself up in the meantime, joined the left flank of the 1st battalion.

The advance was continued without interruption in the direction of the copse, from which the enemy delivered their Chassepôt fire with frightful precision into the ranks of the Brandenburgers, whilst shell after shell was thrown into the assaulting troops from the heights beyond the road. The züge which were still in close order reinforced. The first company was already brought up on the right flank of the battalion in the advanced line. The 2nd zug went forward; the other two remained a little longer in close order. A company of the 35th Regiment had been pushed up between the 2nd zug and the 4th company.

On the left the 9th and 10th companies, which came out from the border of the village at the moment of the general advance, joined the 12th company.

The Colonel of the regiment, who directed personally the attack on the heights east of the wood, had, therefore, united six of his companies here.

A general hurrah resounded. The copse and the elevated ground east of it were reached; the enemy gave way before the attack, and retired over the road in a northerly direction.¹

But already fresh masses of French troops were drawn into the fighting line, which covered the ground about the poplar copse with renewed showers of lead.

It is not possible to remain here. Already some of the troops began to waver. A retrograde movement must inevitably lead to destruction, unless a line of cover could be reached. "Forward," therefore, was the cry on all sides, "up to the road."

A new lusty hurrah! and the road also is in the hands of the Brandenburg Regiments. It was just noon. A severe and bloody piece of work had been accomplished. The enemy had been driven out of his advanced positions into the main position on the edge of the plateau (see sketch).

This success had certainly been purchased by the regiment with heavy sacrifices. On their way to the road the six companies had lost in killed and wounded 19 Officers and about 300 men.

On the road all endeavoured to get as far as possible under cover.

¹ The following note in the original seems worth inserting:—

When this elevated ground was taken the shooters threw themselves down. Colonel v. Flatow with his Adjutant, First Lieutenant Wegener, and Major v. Pireh, the Commander of the fusilier battalion, were standing close behind the men. Suddenly Lieutenant Wegener fell and struggled convulsively. "Shot through the heart," remarked the Major to Colonel v. Flatow. After a few minutes Wegener made signs to have his neck loosened. This was done, and a few minutes later he was standing up fresh and unharmed. It appeared that when standing with lips parted to take breath on the summit, a Chassepôt bullet had passed between them, literally taking away his wind. A few days later a thick scar showed itself on each lip.—Ed.

The skirmishers ensconced themselves in the ditch on the south side, and the poplars on the road offered some protection, though little, owing to the small girth of the trees. Supports were no longer at hand.

As the regiment Commander passed along the firing line, he found the colour-bearer of the 1st battalion, with colours, alone 30 paces *behind*. If he had been hit, and the battalion had moved on, the colours would have remained there. He was, therefore, ordered up with the colours into the firing line.

A stationary fire action was developed here, with the superior enemy posted on the brow of the plateau, whose infantry were materially assisted by the fire of batteries posted on the rising ground in rear. The engagement here continued to cause much loss. The masses of the enemy posted on the prolongation of the road in front of Rezonville, enfiladed the road, and no cover was available against this flank fire.

The first care of the Commanders was now directed to re-establishing some order amongst their troops. In the heat of the combat they had frequently become mixed up. Men of the 20th, 35th, and 64th were mixed; whole *züge* were found in companies to which they did not belong.

While the Colonel of the regiment was giving orders regarding this to the fusilier battalion he was slightly wounded, and also the regimental Adjutant.

A complete assembly was naturally out of the question on account of the continued severe fire. It had to suffice to reunite those belonging to the same units, where this could be done without much movement. Especially scattered individuals managed to rejoin their companies, crawling on their stomachs.

The excellent bearing of our men in these trying hours, when they had to remain inactive while death was demanding fresh sacrifices to right and left of them, cannot be sufficiently acknowledged.

We will now turn to another part of the battle-field, and look for our 2nd battalion¹ there. We left it as it was ordered by the Division Commander to the western issue of Vionville. On the arrival of the battalion the Division Commander was no longer there.

The battalion Commander, therefore, sent it behind the large battery posted across the road, so as to get it out of the way of the enemy's heavy shell fire, and to avoid masking its own artillery. In the meantime he went himself to look for the Division Commander. After a long search he met the Division General and Staff Officer, who brought him the order for the battalion to be moved up north of the road into a wide gap that existed between the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 24th Regiment.²

This regiment was engaged on the extreme left flank of the fighting line, between Vionville and the Roman road, in a struggle as keen as it was bloody, with far superior and ever-increasing masses of

¹ The 2nd battalion was only three companies strong on the day of Vionville. The 6th company was detached as escort with the divisional baggage.

² About the point marked "c" in the sketch.—ED.

the enemy. Deployed in a long line, the further advance of the brave 24th had now been brought to a standstill. Its ranks had been fearfully thinned. The greater portion of the Officers were stretched on the battle-field, either killed or wounded.

In order to reach the point indicated, the Commander led his three companies, with the 5th company forming the advanced guard, through the Tronville wood, quitting it on the eastern side, in a northerly direction, until the fighting line was reached.

In advancing from the wood, the 5th and 7th companies formed the advanced line. They debouched from the wood on to the open ground with their advanced *züge* extended. Although the open space up to a small strip of meadow at the bottom of the valley was covered at the double, on account of the rapid fire directed upon the companies from all sides, the losses were, notwithstanding, considerable. They increased when the companies surmounted the opposite slope of the small valley. By the time the alignment of the 24th was reached most of the Officers were *hors de combat*. Besides the battalion Adjutant, the 5th company lost its Commander and two other Officers.

As the battalion was too weak to produce a change in the situation of the fight, it took part in the fire action of this flank, the men lying down.

The enemy was posted above on the edge of the plateau and the border of the wood, the other side of the Roman road, in enormous superiority. Fired on from the front and the left flank without intermission, the companies, now entirely extended in skirmisher lines, suffered fresh losses.

In order to strengthen the fire, the battalion Commander ordered the 8th company, which had been left as support in the hollow in rear, to extend and advance into the firing line. The 7th and 8th *züge* took their places on the left of the 7th company.

Soon this company began to gain ground to the front, following the example of its Commander. This was facilitated by the other two companies almost at the same time getting forward about 200 paces, the men crawling on one by one, so as to avoid the fire.

But the fight at this spot was too unequal. The fire of the needle-gun was here in no respect superior to the Chassepôt. To this was added the unusual difficulties of the ground, which offered only most incomplete cover.

Notwithstanding this, a sergeant of the 7th company succeeded in leading his *zug*, the Officer commanding which had been wounded, to a point nearly 200 paces in advance of the general front. This was in a field situated somewhat higher than the ground generally, where three single trees and the hedges abutting on them gave some cover to the men, who took shelter behind them. The 8th *zug* of the 8th company made its way to the same spot. It was possible from there to bring the enemy on the Roman road under an effective fire.

Repeated attempts to bring up fresh detachments failed on account of the watchfulness of the enemy, who swept the entire ground with his bullets whenever even a few men rose up. As this led to fresh

and heavy losses along the whole line, these attempts had to be temporarily abandoned.

In the meantime the situation of the troops at this place became worse and worse. It would have been an easy matter for the enemy with their entire 6th Army Corps to break through the thin lines by a determined advance.

Towards 1 o'clock, however, the left flank received a further reinforcement by the arrival of $2\frac{1}{2}$ battalions of the Xth Army Corps ($1\frac{1}{2}$ battalions of the Oldenburg Infantry Regiment, No. 91, and 1 battalion of the Regiment No. 78).

These troops endeavoured to advance from the north-eastern border of the Tronville copses, on the extreme left flank, against St. Marcel; but all their attempts, conducted with the greatest energy, failed here also, owing to the numerical superiority of the enemy, who outflanked the advancing troops and inflicted on them heavy losses with their long-range Chassepôts, at distances at which it was not possible to return an effective fire with the needle-gun.

The positions on the border of the wood were, however, maintained, notwithstanding that the arrival of considerable French reinforcements could be observed.

The French seemed gradually to have realized how small was the number of their opponents at this point. After they had strengthened their right flank by the entire 3rd Corps (Le Boeuf) and Grenier's division of the 4th Corps, these troops were put in motion for an enveloping advance against the Tronville copses.

Against such a superior force the wood could not be permanently held. After the troops of the Xth Army Corps had shot away their last cartridge, they had to relinquish the edge of the wood. Step by step they disputed the advance of the enemy pressing after them. He succeeded, nevertheless, about 3 o'clock, in getting into the plantations in rear of the position of the 24th Regiment and our 2nd battalion.

Naturally the maintenance of the position in front of the wood was no longer possible. As the left flank of the battalion was completely exposed, and the flanking fire was soon unbearable, they had to make up their minds to retire unless they wished to be cut off. The movement was carried out from the left flank, in the direction of the hollow, and along this to the south-east corner of the Tronville copses, with marvellous coolness. The enemy was kept at a respectful distance by constant halts, and the delivery of effective rapid fire.

Still it was impossible to prevent eight of the men, of whom most, however, were wounded, falling into the hands of the enemy during the retreat through the wood. Unhappily, also, the other losses of the companies during this dangerous retirement were considerable.

After the companies, having debouched from the wood, reached the road east of Tronville, the battalion Commander, himself slightly wounded, assembled the battalion on the same ridge from which it had commenced its advance in the forenoon.

The battalion set to work to occupy these heights against the enemy, who was pressing on, and to renew the fight. Our artillery,

however, by its heroic behaviour, succeeded in stopping the enemy in the Tronville copses. It was owing to its assistance that the French only gained ground very slowly, and did not reach the road.

It would not certainly have been possible to oppose for long such greatly superior forces. Already the shells of the enemy's batteries, which had come into action to one side of the Tronville copses, were falling in Tronville, when the heads of the 20th Infantry Division entered the field of battle at this point, and, by their instantaneous action, put an end to the advance of the French.

The men of the 2nd battalion, thoroughly exhausted after their glorious engagement with overwhelming superior forces, had to remain in the reserve position until further orders.

During the few hours occupied in the fight, the three companies had lost in killed and wounded 12 Officers, 15 non-commissioned officers, and 123 privates.

Let us now turn again to the right flank of our fighting line, where were the other portions of our regiment.

The 11th company was on the extreme right flank, separated from the other companies of the battalion. To the left the poplar wood had just fallen into our hands; on the right the hurrahs could be heard of the 35th, who, in concert with detachments of the 5th Division, had taken Flavigny. On both flanks the enemy was falling back in disorder.

The 11th company was moving with a company of the 35th north of Flavigny, along the hollow towards the road. The heights were just reached as French cuirassiers galloped up to attack some troops belonging to our 5th Division on the Flavigny plateau.

A few moments before, on the first signs of an impending cavalry attack being noticed, through the advance of single horsemen from Rezonville, the company Commander had hurried forward his company to the hedge of a high-lying field, from which the whole plateau could be commanded.

This short forward movement was now rewarded. The company was able from here to direct its rapid fire on the right flank of the cuirassiers.

In spite of the losses in men and horses which the cavalry suffered in galloping past, the attack was carried out with praiseworthy bravery. It failed, primarily, owing to the coolness of the 52nd, who allowed the enemy to approach to 300 paces in order then to receive him with a murderous rapid fire.

From the position occupied by the 11th company, the cuirassiers were seen to go back in confusion towards Rezonville, too far off to be reached again by our needle-guns. The attack cost the cuirassiers 22 Officers, 208 men, and 243 horses.

The battalion Commander now ordered the 11th company to join the regiment, by advancing to the road. The company Commander led the company, which was exposed to fresh losses, eastwards, past the poplar wood, up to the road, and took up a position there on the right, near the 1st company, with which the regiment Commander was at that moment.

In the 1st battalion, in the meantime, owing to the great losses it had suffered in attacking the line of the road and the stationary fire action that ensued, the rearrangement of the several commands, within the companies, was urgently required.

The whole of the Officers belonging to the three companies were now either dead or wounded. Of all the Officers of the battalion, only two Lieutenants were effective, though both were wounded. They assumed the command of the 1st and 2nd companies respectively; the company sergeant-major was placed in command of the 4th company.

The battalion Commander was not actually wounded, though the buttons at the back of his tunic had been cut off by a bullet, which caused a contusion.

On the left of the 1st battalion, first the 12th company, and then the 10th company, succeeded in making good their footing on the other side of the road. Advancing in a meadow bottom, surrounded by poplars, both had pushed forward to a fold of the ground in the direction of the road, from which an effective fire could be delivered on the enemy's lines. The 10th company had the good fortune to approach a battery of the enemy so unexpectedly that, surprised by the rapid fire of our Grenadiers at a few hundred paces, it withdrew rapidly, leaving behind an unlimbered gun. To reach the gun immediately under the enemy's fire, was not practicable, notwithstanding all the efforts of the brave Grenadiers. This was effected later, during a pause in the fight.

In this advance the Captain and a Second Lieutenant of the 10th company were wounded. One Second Lieutenant had been killed earlier, and also a Lieutenant of the 9th company, the Captain of which was wounded.

The greater portion of the 9th company, under the command of a Second Lieutenant, was on the left flank of the fusilier battalion; one zug, under a Second Lieutenant, had pushed forward still further to the Roman road, and had been posted since early in the afternoon north of the road at a small clump of poplars, mixed up with portions of its own regiment as well as the 64th and 91st Regiments. The greater portion also of the 3rd company took part in the further fighting at this spot. It consisted of the 5th and the rifle zug, which had been assembled by the company Commander after the advance described above, and led forward to the road at this point. He was severely wounded by two bullets, and the command was assumed by a Lieutenant. A Second Lieutenant was posted with the 6th zug, further south, on the road in action; he had been separated from the rest of the company during the advance.

The other companies, also of the 1st battalion, after a sanguinary struggle, pushing forward individual züge, had succeeded in crossing the road and occupying the long fold of ground beyond it. From time to time masses of the enemy attempted to advance against it. The rapid fire of our lines, and still more the accurate fire of our batteries, prevented these advances from succeeding. Soon the position was permanently occupied.

The fire, which had at first been directed at intervals with the greatest intensity against our positions, gradually diminished. About 2 o'clock that of the infantry ceased altogether. Everyone drew his breath! But it was only the calm before the storm. Before long the fire was taken up again by the enemy on the north with increased energy. Fresh batteries came into action on the Roman road, and the battle was soon in full swing again on this flank.

Things also became more lively in the front of our companies engaged east of Vionville. Here also the enemy brought up fresh troops, and sent them forward to make a new advance against the weak bodies of troops opposite to them.

The batteries brought into action on the heights north-west of Rezonville to prepare this attack fired shrapnel and shell on the position. The rattle also of mitrailleuses could again be heard.

Yet our riflemen held their ground bravely, supported by the artillery, which had come into action close to the infantry. The situation began to be critical. The troops had become extremely exhausted after the hour's fight in the hot August sun. And it was still little past two o'clock! Not a gun or a battalion remained in reserve, and fresh masses of the enemy continued to assemble against our position.

In this situation it became necessary for the cavalry to sacrifice itself.

Von Bredow's cavalry brigade, consisting of the 7th Cuirassier Regiment and the 16th Uhlán Regiment, undertook its self-sacrificing death ride before our eyes, passing north of the battle-field, and rode victorious up to the last French reserves. Here the two regiments, attacked on all sides by French cavalry masses, were forced to turn back. The enemy's artillery and infantry line had again to be ridden through on breathless horses, pursued by the French horsemen. The remains of the brave cavalry fell back hurriedly on our right flank, in the direction of Flavigny.

Under the powerful impression of this spectacle, the fight seemed for the moment to have ceased absolutely. Everyone watched the wild cavalry chase with breathless interest.¹

The two cavalry regiments had, indeed, suffered regrettable losses; but their blood had not been shed in vain. The bold attack had so confused the enemy, that the advance prepared from Rezonville was never carried out. Our companies, indeed, assisted by the confusion which the bold cavalry attack caused at first, succeeded in posting themselves still further forward, and gained a favourable position against the Roman road.

This position was held, when, after a short time, the moment described above supervened, and the two new Army Corps attacked our extreme left flank from Bruville and St. Marcel, and forced the infantry fighting on the left, at the Tronville plantations, to go back.

The left wing was now in the air, and the situation became very

¹ General v. Bredow, among the last to retreat, was saved from a pursuing French Officer by a musketeer of the regiment.—Ed.

dangerous. But, happily, no further serious fighting occurred. The enemy appeared to be exhausted. The infantry fire became more and more silent. Only the artillery fire on both sides was continued, becoming at one time heavier, and at another less intense.

After the 24th Regiment had moved off, the 64th Regiment, posted in our positions, received the order to assemble at Vionville. The 12th Brigade was to form a reserve there, ready for all eventualities.

The battalion Commander, viewing the marching away of the 64th Regiment as indicating a general assembly, went with the 11th company in a southerly direction across the road to the poplar wood, with a view to assembling the fusilier battalion there.

After he had picked up the 9th company he led the two companies back to the heights south-west of Vionville. On the way he picked up scattered men belonging to all the companies. He took up his position at the cemetery.

The interior of the peaceful spot was filled with dying and wounded men, amongst them 20 Officers of the 20th Regiment, who were being attended to here by our surgeons. Many a shot still reached the spot.

The 10th and 12th companies received the order to join the battalion at Vionville. But the existing situation did not allow these companies to give up their position. The battalion Commander was informed of this, when his order was received and his sanction obtained for the companies to remain where they were.

South of the road, on a level with the Gorze road, two batteries were still posted in an important advanced position.¹ For the protection of these batteries there were at hand, besides detachments of the 35th Regiment, now only our two fusilier companies, and the 1st, 2nd, and 4th companies. The battalion Commander placed one zug from each of his three companies in the advanced line, and pushed forward the rest of the 1st company, in one body, to the left; the supports of the 2nd and 4th companies were somewhat retired to the vicinity of the road, so as to be withdrawn, as far as immediate conditions would allow, from the ground where the enemy's shells were falling.

Thus, these companies were the only troops which, tired to death after seven hours' fighting in the excessive heat, held the French 6th Corps in check between Vionville and Rezonville during the later hours of the afternoon.

About 4 o'clock p.m. Prince Frederick Charles appeared on the battle-field. His Royal Highness had first received the report at Pont-à-Mousson at 2 o'clock, that the fight about Vionville had assumed greater dimensions. After covering, as rapidly as possible, the intervening 3 miles (German), he now arrived on the right flank of the 5th Division. From here he took over the further conduct of the fight, which now became more and more extended on both flanks owing to the appearance of fresh German troops.

The 19th Division also had now arrived at Tronville at exactly the right time to meet the 4th French Corps, which threatened to turn our

¹ About the point marked "d" on the sketch.—Ed.

left flank again from Briville. The movement was stopped by the 35th Brigade and the two cavalry brigades.

It was now 7 o'clock.

On the right flank, also, reinforcements—from the VIIIth and IXth Army Corps—had gradually come up and given fresh impetus to the fight by their immediate participation in it.

Prince Frederick Charles decided to make one last advance against the enemy's centre at Rezonville shortly before dark. Although, owing to the extreme exhaustion of the troops, an important tactical result was not to be expected, yet the enemy could be shown what could be achieved by Prussian tenacity.

The order to advance reached the fusilier battalion Commander south of Vionville, where, as we have seen, he had assembled a portion of his battalion. He moved off at once with both the companies, and marched south of the village as far as the poplar wood, and thence wheeling to the left up to the batteries on the road. Here the 10th and 12th companies joined the battalion, which was now reunited, though considerably diminished in strength.

As soon as the 1st battalion Commander received notice of the task undertaken by the fusiliers, he was delighted to join them with the remnant of his battalion. It was only a small body, of scarcely more than 200 exhausted men, he was able to dispose of. Animated, however, by unlimited trust in their leader, they all followed the order for a fresh advance—full of confidence. The advance was now made across the road, with the left shoulder forward, directly on the enemy's position. The 9th and 10th companies formed the first line with the rifle züge extended; the 11th and 12th companies followed behind; the 1st battalion was on the left flank.

The din of the day had been replaced by stillness; only here and there it was broken by the dull boom of artillery, or the sharp report of a volley far on the eastern horizon.

The crest of the heights had now been approached within about 500 paces. Suddenly masses of cavalry were seen to emerge from the enemy's position. "Lie down!" was shouted by the Officers, in the expectation of being attacked at once by the cavalry. Instead of this, the next moment the cavalry wheeled outwards and unmasked the enemy's infantry position. At 100 paces the musketry fire broke out at the same moment, and a shower of bullets whizzed through the air, happily too high to cause us serious loss. Only 9 men were hit; the fusilier battalion Commander had his second horse shot under him.

The fire was now taken up on our side, and a brief fire action ensued. It had already become dusky. A dark mass approached the 1st battalion on its left flank. Everyone observed it with breathless expectation. Suddenly the cry arose: "Hostile cavalry!" The 11th and 12th companies wheeled up, and, together with the 1st battalion, opened a rapid fire that forced the cavalry to turn about quickly. At this moment our Zieten Hussar Regiment came up from the rear. Greeted with loud shouts by our regiment, it rode through the infantry position and followed the enemy's cavalry. The fire of the

infantry in front of us, on the heights, broke out again with renewed intensity. The hussars had ridden up to the enemy's skirmishers, and were now between us and the enemy. By the efforts of the Officers, the fire from our side was soon stopped. In a few minutes it was shown how necessary this was, for the Zieten Hussars galloped back on our lines and assembled behind the infantry.

Once again they rode forward to attack. But in the dusk any result could no longer be looked for. It was 9 o'clock in the evening, and had become so dark, that friend and foe could no longer be distinguished from one another. The engagement gradually died away on both sides.

Deep silence prevailed in the ranks of the battalions as they now marched over the battle-field to the village of Vionville.

During more than eighteen hours no one had rested. For twelve hours the troops had been hotly engaged. Their last powers were used up.

After the men had had some rest at Vionville, and had been somewhat refreshed by water, the 1st battalion commenced its march back to Tronville, and bivouacked near the 20th Division. The fusilier battalion went into bivouac on the heights south-west of Vionville. Everyone stretched himself close by the arms, and all were soon wrapt in deep sleep. The exhaustion was so great that only few succeeded in keeping awake sufficiently long to recall the impressions of the eventful day.

And yet how much had happened between the forenoon hours, in which the battalions had first entered that plain, and the evening! The most sanguinary battle of the whole campaign had been fought. 8 Officers, 14 non-commissioned officers, and 140 men of the 20th Regiment lay dead on the battle-field; 34 Officers, 52 non-commissioned officers, and 481 men were wounded.

The regiment could say that it had done its duty, and contributed to the results of the day. And these results were far more important than the immediate tactical conditions seemed to imply. The German troops had gained a great strategical victory over an enemy more than double their number. The design of Marshal Bazaine to lead the Rhine Army to Verdun to join the Chalons Army had been frustrated. Without Vionville, Gravelotte would not have been possible.

On the morning of the 17th August the men were early afoot, awakened by the keen air, and collected in groups round the bivouac fires. The battalions of the regiment were ordered to assemble at the Vionville cemetery.

Soon the regimental wagons arrived in the bivouac. The men had had nothing to eat, except coffee and some bread, for nearly forty-eight hours; their joy, therefore, at the arrival of the provisions was accounted for. The wine which the regiment Commander had requisitioned from the village of Onville the day before was received from the company wagons with special satisfaction.

¹ It may be remembered that the knapsacks had been taken off and left behind near Tronville. When these were recovered they were found rifled of their contents. The surgeons had ordered them to be opened, and the linen in them to be

The companies had, later, to be re-formed. Seven out of the twelve had lost their Commanders, either by death or wounds. The command of three of these was taken by First Lieutenants, that of the remaining four by Second Lieutenants. The Adjutants of the 1st and 2nd battalions had to be replaced.

The dead were buried in the evening at a spot close to the poplar wood.

Whereas, on the morning of the 17th, it was apprehended that the enemy would employ his great superiority in a renewed attempt to break through, the reports of the cavalry soon announced that the French Army was falling back on Metz.

As early as the forenoon of that day, it was decided to attack it on the 18th. During the course of the day five Army Corps of the 2nd Army, and two Army Corps of the 1st Army, were concentrated in front of the enemy's position.

The regiment had received the order to be ready to march at 5 A.M. About 8 o'clock it was ordered to cook, and to march at mid-day.

About 1 o'clock P.M. it moved off. The division marched in rendezvous formation in a northerly direction.

The corps, however, did not take any active part in the battle, and at night the occupation of Verneville was specially allotted to the 11th Brigade.

The 1st battalion was to occupy the village itself; the other two battalions and the 35th Regiment took up a position in reserve behind the village. The rest of the division occupied a position south-east of Verneville, with the front towards Malmaison.

While the regiment was settling down in the large divisional bivouac at Verneville, the order was received for it to march back to Doncourt to cover the headquarters, and bivouac there. The distance was not very great, but the night march appeared interminable.

Between 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning the regiment reached Doncourt, and bivouacked without wood or straw. Requisitions could not be made in the village, for it was full of wounded, whom it was undesirable to disturb at that hour of the night.

The three battles on the 14th, 16th, and 18th August had for their effect the shutting up of Marshal Bazaine and his Army within the walls of Metz. The next task to be provided for by the headquarters was the investment of the fortress, perhaps to besiege it and to prevent any attempt of the Metz Army to force its way out.

On the morning of the 19th August the necessary order was issued to the 1st and 2nd Armies. The 1st Army and the 3rd Reserve Division, the IInd, IIId, IXth, and Xth Corps were to be employed in the investment.

The dispositions for giving effect to this order were arranged in the course of the 20th, and were in part carried out the same day. On the left bank of the Moselle, where attempts to break out were most likely to take place, a continued entrenched line was to be established. On the right flank of this position the VIIth Corps, with the VIIIth taken for binding up wounds. A similar instance occurred two days later with the 3rd Regiment in the Mance Valley.—Ed.

Corps on its left, was to occupy the ground as far as Moscow, the IIInd Corps that between Moscow and the road from St. Privat to Woippy, and lastly the Xth Corps the valley of the Moselle below Metz.

The IIIrd Corps was directed to occupy hutments in the vicinity of Caulre farm, the IXth Corps about St. Ail. The former was to act as a reserve to the right wing, the latter to the left wing of the line of investment.

At mid-day the regiment received the order to cook as quickly as possible, as it was to march in the course of the afternoon to Caulre farm.

At 6 p.m. the regiment left its bivouac at Doncourt, and after a short march bivouacked again, north-west of St. Marcel. The 6th Division took position here on the left flank of the corps.

After arriving at the spot named, at 7.30 p.m., a general endeavour was observed to make the bivouac as comfortable as possible, for a considerable stay here was not improbable. In the absence of straw, attention was given to the construction of huts made of boughs. The aspect of the weather seemed to warn us to make their construction as solid as possible. While still busied in making the huts there was a heavy storm with hail; but the rain was welcome. The long-continued heat had become by degrees unbearable. It was hoped also that the want of water, which was severely felt, might be mitigated by the rain. In contrast to the extreme heat by day, the mornings and evenings, and still more the nights, were often sensibly cold. This and the want of water were the chief causes that led to the condition of the troops as regards health not being a favourable one. Belonging to the regiment there were, exclusive of wounded, 9 non-commissioned officers, 1 musician, and 115 men sick in hospital.

In order to fill the vacancies amongst the Officers of the regiments in the 10th Infantry Brigade, Officers of the 20th and 35th had to be detached to them.¹ From the 20th Regiment eight 2nd Lieutenants were detached to the 12th Regiment. Most of these Officers assumed the command of companies which had no Officers and few non-commissioned officers. One-year Volunteers, in many cases, took over the duty of sergeant-major.

The proportion of Officers in the regiment was by this measure reduced to one per company, besides the company leader, inclusive of the vice-sergeant-major and the *Portepeeführer*.

Definite orders had been given from Army Corps Headquarters respecting the supply of provisions. Independent requisitions were only to be made quite exceptionally by the troops, and then only under the authority of the regiment Commander. As a rule, all provisions were to be drawn from the stores of the division, which were to be supplied under requisitions by the Intendance officials in the neighbourhood of Metz.

¹ The 10th Brigade belonged to the other division of the corps. The 12th Regiment had lost 16 Officers, the 52nd had lost 50, killed and wounded. Two of the 20th Officers detached to the 12th had themselves been wounded in the battle.

Generally speaking, at this time there was no lack in the quantity of the supplies. Live cattle were available in large numbers; but the bread failed almost entirely and also spirits. Both were painfully missed; the latter especially, owing to prevalence now of rain and to the cold nights.

On the 23rd August the line of investment was drawn closer round Metz, which necessitated the movement of the IIIrd Corps. The new bivouac of the regiment was west of Verneville, where huts were again constructed.

On the 25th August the following was the strength of the regiment:—1st battalion, 698; 2nd battalion, 815; fusilier battalion, 685; total 2,198 men.

On the following day, the 25th August, the companies had just returned from drill and were busy cooking, when suddenly the camp was alarmed. The outposts had reported the advance of the French. In storm and rain, mixed with hail, the division marched out to a reserve position at the village of Amanvillers. But about 2 o'clock, after remaining there for an hour, it marched back. On reaching the bivouac it was found that the storm and rain had played havoc with the huts, and seriously weakened the soup left in the kettles. An extra ration was issued as a special case.

On the 27th the regiment received a great and joyful surprise in the receipt of the order to march at 10 A.M.; its destination was rumoured to be Paris. The march was by Jouaville on Conflans, and the regiment was cantoned at Warcq and Etain.

On the 28th the march was resumed early, and the division had just passed Mergemoulin when the order was received to halt. The troops stood for more than an hour in the streaming rain, until the return of the regimental Adjutant, who then brought the order for the return march to Metz.

March-quarters were arranged for the regiment for the night at Mergemoulin and other localities in its immediate vicinity.

The reason for this march was that on the previous day intelligence had reached Prince Frederick at Bar-le-Duc, that the Army of Chalons had marched off in a northerly direction in order to assist Marshal Bazaine. In consequence of this, the order was given for two Army Corps of the investing army to march on Damvillers, so as to be ready to attack Marshal MacMahon's Army from thence on the day following.

As on the 28th the situation had been so far cleared as to make it evident that the movements of MacMahon on the Meuse could be held in check by the IIIrd and the Meuse Army, the forward movement of the two detached Army Corps was at first temporarily postponed, and later on they were again placed at the complete disposal of the Commander of the Metz investing force.

29th August was to have been a rest day after the fatigues and the constant exposure to rain of the preceding days. But at 4 P.M. the cantonments were alarmed, and the return march to Metz commenced by Etain. It was greatly delayed in the most fatiguing manner by the train and other vehicles, which on a reversal of the direction of the

march, were partly in front of the troops. The new march-quarters, at Jeandelize and Boncourt, were not reached until 11 p.m. The regiment remained in them the 30th, and it was intended it should remain there on the 31st also; but shortly before 1 o'clock the whole of the cantonments were alarmed. The division marched in the direction of St. Privat la Montagne, and assembled at the eastern entrance of Jouaville about 4 o'clock, where it was halted. It was moved forward at 6.30 p.m. as far as the Batilly-Verneville road, where the troops bivouacked, the regiment with the advanced guard, its left flank resting on Batilly.

After the quarters it had occupied during the last few days, the regiment experienced again the most uncomfortable aspect of the bivouac. There was no straw, and only wood in insufficient quantities. The night was really cold, and the baggage train had been left behind at the cantonments. Hungry and cold, the men lay down in their half-dried clothes on the damp ground, to seek in sleep oblivion of the uncomfortable situation. Happy were those who succeeded in securing a place in the proximity of a warm fire.

It was no wonder, considering this anything but healthy life, that the sanitary condition grew worse from day to day, notwithstanding the endeavours of the superior Officers to neutralize as far as possible these harmful influences. Amongst other things the regulated issue of a small ration of spirits was rendered possible by the extensive requisition of brandy and arrack. It was also directed by an Army Corps order that an extra ration of flour was to be issued daily, to facilitate the preparation by the men of an evening soup, as the continued consumption of fresh-killed meat was found to be detrimental.

1st September.—The morning was bright and sunny, and the old humour of the men began to return. "They could not get over the disappointment experienced through the hoped-for march to Paris not having come off. "Prince Frederick Charles loves us a great deal too much," said one, "how could we ever have thought he would permit his IIIrd Army Corps to go away from here?" Another suggested that it was in the interests of maintaining the purity of morals in the IIIrd Army Corps that it was not to be brought into contact with the Babel on the Seine.

On this day the battle of Noisseville was fought on the right bank of the Moselle. At 8.30 a.m. the 6th Division was moved to Marengo farm, but was not engaged. It subsequently occupied the section of the first line of investment, extending from Saulny to Châtel, relieving the VIIIth Corps, moved to the south front.

The 11th Brigade took over the actual outpost position, with the 20th Regiment on the left and the 35th on the right. The 12th Brigade bivouacked at Marengo in the 2nd line.

The entire extent of the outpost line occupied by the regiment was more than 3,000 paces; and the following was the distribution of the troops:—

5th company: 1 züg, pushed forward as a picquet; 2 züge as support at the Saulny Bath-house, communication with the 35th Regiment.

6th company: 1 zug as a picquet between the bath-house and the brick-kiln; the two others as support in the 2nd line.

7th company: 1½ züge in the brick-kiln, the remainder behind the barricade on the road.

8th company: in the alarm-house, as support to the 7th company at the barricade.

9th company: 1 zug as picquet behind the abattis north of the road; 2 züge behind in support.

12th company: 1 picquet to the left of the 9th company, with support behind, communicating with the Xth Army Corps.

1st battalion: in the alarm-houses of Saulny.

10th and 11th companies: 1 mile behind on the road to St. Privat as a general reserve.

An Officer's post of observation was established on a clear spot highly situated north of Saulny. Two Officers were detached there, one of whom belonged to the regiment. During the day the whole of the ground in advance was to be continuously observed, and any important movement of the enemy reported at once to the Commander of the outposts. To facilitate this, mounted orderlies were attached to all the observatories established on the elevated points around Metz.

Shortly before nightfall the outposts at Saulny were reinforced, and parties were sent forward in different directions to listen. Fires were not permitted during the night, because the French at once opened fire on them. On this day, when the regiment had only completed the occupation of its position as night began to fall, this precaution, though necessitated by the circumstances, made itself very unpleasantly felt by our men. Since the coffee at the Batilly bivouac, they had had nothing, and but few carried any provisions in their haversacks.

From 3 A.M. until daylight all the posts and picquets were under arms.

3rd September.—Consequent upon the arrival of the 5th Division from Maizières, a change was made in the dispositions of the outposts. From that day the section of ground was divided between the two brigades. The left portion, hitherto occupied by the 20th Regiment, was allotted to 12th Brigade; the right portion to the 11th Brigade. The regiments of the brigades changed places in such a manner that one was in the advanced line, while the other was placed behind in reserve. In consequence of this arrangement the 20th Regiment was withdrawn to Amanvillers, where it was bivouacked and extempore shelter constructed.

7th September.—It relieved the 35th Regiment on the outpost line. The following were the dispositions:—Right: the fusilier battalion, 1 company as picquet at the Châtel wood, behind an abattis, with 2 advanced non-commissioned posts in the most advanced shelter trenches. Communication with the IXth Army Corps. 1 company in shelter trenches, on the southern border of the Vigneulles wood; a non-commissioned officer's post, about 300 paces forward, on the Amanvillers-Woippy road; 2 companies in support, in front of St. Vincent. Centre: 2nd battalion, 1 company in St. Vincent, 1 in St. Maurice,

2 as support west of the redoubt (of the battery placed in the second line of defence). Left: 1st battalion, 1 company in the Vigneuelles wood, at the abattis, in prolongation of the line of shelter trench leading to the brick kiln from Saulny. Communication with the 12th Brigade: 1 company to its right, behind an abattis, which blocked the hollow running through the Vigneuelles wood in a south-easterly direction; 2 companies in support in front of St. Maurice.

The regiment, therefore, was placed in three lines, one behind the other. In the first line were 4 companies as picquets, which had pushed forward non-commissioned officers' posts. In the second line were three half-battalions as supports. In the third line 2 companies for the occupation of the two farms.

The regiment Commander commanded the outposts, having at his disposition the battery and the zug of cavalry attached to the outposts.

10th September.—The dispositions were slightly modified by the withdrawal by order of the division Commander of the centre support, and the occupation of St. Vincent and St. Maurice, each with two companies.

On the 10th September an Army Corps order directed that regiments were not in future to be kept for more than forty-eight hours together on outpost duty.

13th September.—A draft of 5 Officers, 9 non-commissioned officers, and 95 men arrived from the Ersatz battalion.

The marching out strength of the regiment on the 14th September was the following:—

1st battalion ...	14	Officers,	64	non-com. officers,	606	men.
2nd " ...	10	"	62	"	735	"
Fusilier " ...	14	"	43	"	732	"
<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>		
Total	38	"	169	"	2,073	

From this date up to the 27th October, when the fortress and garrison of Metz capitulated after seventy days' investment, the movements of the 20th Regiment call for no special notice.

March from the Moselle to the Loire.

After the fall of Metz, the 2nd Army, with the exception of the IInd Army Corps, which was ordered to reinforce the Army of investment round Paris, was directed on the middle Loire, to support the weak German forces already detached there from before Paris.

30th October.—The 20th Regiment, which was occupying Plappeville fort, received the order to march. It moved forward the same day.

31st October.—At Waville the regiment was rejoined by a detachment of convalescents, about 100 in number, sent from the Ersatz battalion. The strength of the several battalions was now as follows:—

1st battalion	16	Officers, 58 non-com. officers, 761 men.
2nd battalion	17	" 69 " 784 "
Fusilier battalion ..	19	" 49 " 764 "
Total	52	" 176 " 2,309 "

2nd November.—The greater part of the 6th Division entered the Department of the Meuse. The 1st battalion reached Boucourt; the 2nd battalion, St. Julien, and the fusilier battalion Commercy, and remained cantoned in these places during the 3rd November, which was a rest day. But there was plenty to do. Arrangements had to be made for putting into effect an order received from headquarters allowing of the attachment of two wagons to each battalion. Of the surplus teams, those of which the material was good were to be formed into a park carriage column, and the rest dismissed.

Further orders were also received regarding the manner of marching, which was in future to be by brigades or divisions, connection being maintained on the march between the two divisions. Strict injunctions were given that sick soldiers were on no account to be left behind during the marches, and that the artillery and train columns were to take them up.

4th November.—The 1st battalion reached Velaines, the 2nd battalion Ligny, and the fusilier battalion Nançois le Petit. This day's march was a long one again. The few days' marching had been sufficient to improve the powers of the Brandenburgers, who had in some degree become unaccustomed to marching. There were hardly any footsore men. More attention was now paid to the measures for security. In the 1st and fusilier battalions, besides strong cantonment guards, alarm-houses were selected at the exits of the villages; the 2nd battalion sent forward picquets in the direction of Stainville. Besides these precautions patrols were sent out from the 1st battalion to search the Velaines wood, and from the 2nd battalion to the Ligny wood.

5th November.—The 1st and fusilier battalions reached Savonnières-en-Perthois, and the 2nd battalion Nancy. During this day's march a formed advanced guard was employed again. From the last rendezvous the units separated to march independently to their several cantonments. As a rule the Quartermasters went in advance to the cantonments from the general rendezvous. There was for the troops this disadvantage in the arrangement, that their coming was not known to the inhabitants sufficiently early, and they had frequently, therefore, to wait a long time after their arrival before they could get a hot meal.

During the further advance it frequently happened that single companies were detached. This was generally done with the object of obtaining better shelter, and often also to cover the larger bodies and staffs in rear.

6th November.—The regiment marched again closed up; but the wagons followed their own battalions. One wagon was employed to carry the sick, the number of whom had again increased during the

last two days. It was noticeable that those who fell sick were almost entirely convalescents, who had rejoined with the last draft from the Ersatz battalion. In the opinion of the medical Officers their strength had not been sufficiently re-established to support continuous fatigue. In the cases of some men who had been wounded, the wounds broke out again in consequence of the arduous marches. The Ersatz battalion was, therefore, notified from the regiment not in future to send back sick or wounded men before they had been quite re-established, and their powers of endurance tested.

The regiment suffered inconvenient delay in crossing the Marne at Bienville, where all the streets were blocked by the train of the IXth Army Corps.

10th November.—The country through which the march lay was so poor that the villages in which the battalions were cantoned were unable to provide sufficient food for the men, and recourse was had to the provision wagons. It rained almost all day, and was very cold.

11th November was to have been a rest day. But news was received from the headquarters at Versailles that the 1st Bavarian Corps had been forced by superior forces to evacuate Orléans, and that the enemy was advancing on Paris. Haste was therefore necessary, and the 2nd Army was directed to continue its advance by forced marches. In consequence of this the Army was moved forward half a day's march in the afternoon of the same day. The 1st battalion reached Montieramey; the 2nd battalion Lusigny; the fusilier battalion Mesnil St. Père.

The first snow fell during the night of the 10th to the 11th November, the precursor of the severe winter that followed. During these forced marches the carriage of the men's packs on carts was permitted. The carts were requisitioned, and formed an imposing train behind the advanced guard.

12th November.—The 2nd battalion received the order direct from the division to advance to Troyes, and cover the headquarters there.

The other battalions moved again with the advanced guard; the 1st battalion to St. Savine; the fusilier battalion to St. Martin.

At Troyes traces began to be seen of the newly organized resistance. In the town itself were traces of entrenchments and barricades, showing that the original intention had been to defend it. Other bodies of troops had also been in contact with franc-tireurs. Picquets were therefore placed on the left bank of the Seine, on all the main roads leading in the direction of Némours.

The stay in the manufacturing town was utilized by making considerable requisitions of woollen clothing and stockings.

November 15th.—Headquarters arrived at Gens on the Yonne. Here, on the previous day, the Post and Telegraph Staff of the IXth Army Corps had been seized, and the post carts emptied; and generally in Sens feeling was very much excited, so that armed resistance appeared possible.

On this account, the 2nd battalion received orders to march there early in the morning, accompanied by a squadron, to free the cap-

tured postal officials, and, after restoring order, to prepare everything for the arrival of the troops behind.

Besides this, the 2nd battalion had another special duty to perform on the same day. On the previous night, an hussar of the 16th Hussar Regiment had been assaulted and robbed by the inhabitants of the village Pont-sur-Vanne. He had the paces of his horse to thank for his life. Until the end of the enquiry into this, a zug of the 5th company was left in the village. After the guilty persons had been identified, the punishment was carried out the same afternoon by shooting two of the inhabitants and burning the farm.

16th November.—After nine consecutive days' marching, the division was given a day's rest.

17th November.—The regiment moved, the 1st battalion to Villebœon, the 2nd to Lorrez-le-Bocage, and the fusilier battalion to La Villeneuve. The hospital cases were sent to Sens, where a convalescent company was left by the division, a measure rendered necessary by the hostile attitude of the inhabitants and the absence of étapen troops.

19th November.—The 1st battalion reached Aulnay-la-Rivière; the 2nd battalion, Grangermont; and the fusilier battalion, La Neuville.

With a closer approach to the theatre of war, the measures for security became more and more extended. The most advanced cantonments were now regularly secured by outpost positions. The non-commissioned officers to mark off the billets could no longer be despatched in front from the last place of assembly, as had previously been done, but formed the head of the advancing troops. The occupation of localities, therefore, was now generally carried out without billets for lodging.

The signs of the enemy's proximity increased with each day's march. The roads were found broken up more and more frequently, without causing, however, a real hindrance to the advance, for the pioneers knew how to restore them in the shortest possible time. When the roads were found to be blocked on the enemy's side of the advanced cantonments, the civil authorities were made to restore them under pain of considerable contributions. The work was generally duly carried out in an incredibly short time.

20th November.—Two companies of the fusilier battalion were sent on early before the advanced guard to occupy Pithiviers. The 1st battalion reached Escrennes, the 2nd Frenay, and the fusilier battalion Pithiviers.

On the arrival of the 1st battalion at Escrennes, the Commander of the regiment received a report that Santeau was occupied by the enemy. From the wording of the report, it appeared that the enemy was not in strength. The 1st and 2nd companies were therefore ordered to advance and clear the place of the enemy. They had scarcely marched off when fresh reports arrived to the effect that Santeau was occupied by strong bodies of infantry, apparently the outposts of the Loire Army, situated immediately behind them. The movement was therefore countermanded, and the two companies

advanced as outposts towards Santeau, the other two companies of the 1st battalion being placed in alarm-houses.

The German troops had re-established touch with the enemy, who were situated hardly further than $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from our cantonments. After twenty days' marching, the 2nd Army was in the positions in which it would be able to fulfil its object of covering towards the south the Army investing Paris against the French Army of the Loire. The distance traversed was over 237 miles.

22nd November.—The 6th Division was ordered to move to its right to make room for the 2nd Army to form up. After dinner had been cooked in the old quarters, the 11th Brigade assembled, at 3 p.m., south-west of Jouy, and from there took up the line of outposts allotted to it by Atray-Crottes-Liphérmeau farm.

The left flank of this line fell to the regiment's lot. On account of the close nature of the country, which in Beauce, the granary of France, is covered with villages, farms, and groups of trees, the adoption of an ordinary outpost line was quite impracticable. Recourse was had to positions of preparation, so arranged that strong masses capable of resistance were cantoned in the first line, secured by individual picquets being pushed forward and by an active patrol service being maintained, both by day and night. Entire companies were posted in alarm-houses on all the approaches leading towards the enemy.

The fusilier battalion was in the most advanced line, with three companies in Montigny and one company, with a Zug of dragoons, in Bout-de-la-ville. Two outposts were placed south of Montigny, and one south of Bout-de-la-ville. Three companies of the 2nd battalion, with the regimental Staff, were in immediate support at Atray; the 6th company occupied Baudas, on the extreme right flank.

The whole of the 1st battalion was in the second line at Izy (see sketch 2).

23rd November.—The situation remained the same, except that the companies in support changed places with those on the outposts, and the regimental Staff changed their quarters to Baudas. The enemy had occupied the villages on the near side of the great Orléans wood. In front of the position occupied by the regiment, their presence was reported at Chilleurs-aux-Bois and Neuville.

24th November.—With a view to ascertain more clearly the position and strength of the Loire Army, reconnaissances were ordered along the whole extent of the line occupied by the 2nd Army. The force employed for this purpose by the 6th Division consisted of 4 battalions (the 1st and fusilier battalions of the 20th Regiment, and 2nd and 3rd battalions 35th Regiment), 2 squadrons, and 2 batteries, under the command of the Colonel of the 20th Regiment. Its advance by Teillay-St. Benoit, towards the Orléans wood led to the engagement of Neuville-aux-Bois.

The order for the troops to assemble at 5 a.m. north of Teillay-le-Chêne was issued late on the previous night. Packs were to be left in the cantonment, and the ammunition carried in the haversacks.

It was quite dark when the troops were marched to the place of

assembly; the roads were very deep after the continuous rain of the preceding days. No one knew what was the object of the movement. The order received to avoid all unnecessary noise and loud words of command led to the idea that the intention was to surprise the enemy. On arriving at the place of assembly, the object and general disposition to be adopted were explained to the Officers.

At 5.30 the actual reconnoitring detachment, consisting of the fusilier battalion 20th Regiment, the 3rd battalion 35th Regiment, 6 züge of dragoons, and the heavy battery, marched off. The next column remained at Teillay in reserve.

The 11th company of the 20th and the 11th company of the 35th Regiment formed the advanced guard, the command being given to the Officer commanding the latter, as he had been on outpost duty with his company opposite St. Germain, and therefore knew the ground.

The 9th, 10th, and 11th companies of the regiment and the dragoons followed immediately in rear of the advanced guard. The cavalry had orders to move forward directly the farms situated in front were attacked, and getting in flank and rear of them, to take as many prisoners as possible of the retiring enemy.

The 9th, 10th, and 12th companies of the 35th Regiment and the battery formed the main body, and were to take up a sheltered position temporarily at Mauregard. The advance of the advanced guard companies took place west of this place, the 11th company 20th Regiment on the left, the 11th company 35th Regiment on the right. Each company had one zug extended; the other two züge followed at about 50 paces distance in close order.

The expectation of surprising the enemy was disappointed. The places reported the previous night to be strongly occupied were found to have been evacuated. Wheeling to the left, the advance was continued in the direction of Neuville-aux-Bois.

The 9th and 12th companies followed the 11th, in company columns at deploying interval. The 10th company received the order to maintain communication with the company of the 35th Regiment, and to extend in the gap between it and the 11th company.

On approaching the ridge on which was situated the Moulin-de-la-Motte, the enemy's advanced troops posted there opened fire on the skirmishers as soon as they appeared on the open ground. A further advance could only be carried out at the expense of serious losses. The Commander, therefore, ordered up the battery to fire on the mill from a position south of Mauregard. After the artillery fire had produced its effect, the position was assaulted, and the enemy driven back on Neuville.

From the Windmill ridge the ground slopes down gently to the little town of Neuville, distant 700 to 800 metres. The ground is generally flat, only in places covered with stone houses, outlying buildings of the town. On the easterly side of it the Orléans-Pithiviers Railway sweeps in a great curve in the general direction north-east and south-west.

An immediate advance on the town would at this moment have

probably been successful, for the enemy seemed to be still in the act of assembling, and now for the first time hastened up to occupy various points of their line of defence. But the companies were so out of breath that it was necessary to give them a moment's rest. Besides, the supporting companies, retarded by the sticky clay, were not yet up.

In the meantime the battery was ordered up to the Windmill ridge, and opened fire from its position east of the mill on the enceinte of the town. The enemy had occupied the border of the town, the issues from which were strongly barricaded, the houses situated on the front of attack, and a portion of the railway embankment.

When the battalion had assembled again the order was given for a further advance. The 10th company and the 11th company of the 35th Regiment advanced on the right of the St. Germain-Neuville road; the 11th company on the left of it. The 9th and 12th companies followed in close order.

The embankment was successfully assaulted, though with considerable loss, owing to the advance being over open ground in clay soil under a heavy fire. The enemy fell back into the town. The 11th company, entirely extended in a skirmishing line, occupied the embankment; behind it were the 9th and 12th companies, also protected in some degree by the embankment. The 10th company was extended on its right, opposite to the northern border of the town, only scantily sheltered by the garden hedges. Two of its *züge* were extended as skirmishers; the third was in support in close order.

The fire only ceased for the few minutes during which the enemy was occupied in getting into their new positions. It then broke out again with renewed intensity at close range, not exceeding 200 paces.

The enemy was difficult to get at; they were covered by a fortified enceinte which had been made almost secure from assault. A stationary fire action ensued, while the artillery from its position on the Windmill ridge endeavoured to set fire to Neuville. In spite of the accurate fire it did not succeed in doing this, as the buildings were massive and the roofs slated.

In the meantime, the Commander received intelligence from cavalry patrols sent round to the rear of the town, that strong infantry columns were visible there, and that all the farm buildings situated between the town and the Orléans wood were occupied by the enemy.

In these circumstances, as the only object in view, which was to force the enemy to deploy so as to observe his strength, had been attained, the order was given to retire slowly. It was now about 8.30 o'clock. The retirement, over open and bad ground under the enemy's close fire, was carried out by the several lines occupying successive positions to cover the movement of the advanced line.

The reconnaissance actions engaged on the 24th November in front of the entire line occupied by the 2nd Army showed that the enemy occupied with all three arms the line Chevilly-Neuville-aux-Bois-Chilleurs-aux-Bois-Bellegarde.

25th November.—The general distribution remained unaltered, as from the reports received from the cavalry and other news it was now beyond doubt that considerable and far superior forces of the enemy were situated about Orléans. Prince Frederick Charles determined to remain on the defensive until joined by the Duke of Mecklenburg's troops, which had been directed on Beaugency, and the arrival of which would nearly double the number of troops at his disposal.

On account of the close proximity of the enemy, the duties in cantonments, especially in those situated in the first line, became every day more arduous. Numerous precautionary measures made the outposts' duties more difficult. Amongst others, the positions of the several posts were frequently altered at night, so as to be more secure from the enterprises of the enemy.

Cavalry Officers' patrols went out early in the morning to the front to observe any changes in the occupation of localities. Special reconnaissances of the ground were made by infantry detachments under the command of Officers. These had particularly to obtain reliable information regarding the direction and condition of the existing communications. The maps of the neighbourhood in possession of the troops were very inaccurate, and urgently required correction. It was of the utmost importance to fix accurately the metalled roads, for the roads shown on the maps had proved when used for concentration to be frequently impassable.

On the 28th November was fought the battle of Beaune-la-Rolande, in which the regiment took no part.

On the 29th the regiment went into cantonments at Boynes.

At this period the supply of the troops became again a matter of difficulty. The entire district was completely exhausted, and an *étappen* line with a regular service of supplies from the rear did not exist. The villages occupied, though generally willing, were not for the most part able to furnish anything, as they had been taxed to the uttermost by the prolonged stay of the army in this position. Indeed directions were given by the superior Officers not to take the last resources of the inhabitants, lest famine should ensue.

In order to ensure supplies in the event of a longer stay, committees were appointed to buy provisions of any description and at any price. The gold always brought to light much that could never have been got at without it. Altogether, and especially in the regiment, the want was not very great. The men learnt that they must depend on their own activity to supplement the irregular issues.

1st and 2nd December.—The regiment remained in its cantonments at Boynes until the evening of the 2nd. On the afternoon of that day a telegram was received from headquarters at Versailles, to the effect that the situation demanded a general attack on the Loiro Army, and the advance on Orléans. In preparation for carrying this out on the following day, Prince Frederick Charles assembled on the evening of the 2nd December the IIIrd Army Corps about Pithiviers, and the Xth Army Corps at Boynes and Beaune-la-Rolande.

Late in the evening the order for this concentration was received

by the regiment, which reached Pithiviers at 11 P.M. An Officer had been sent on to arrange the billets, so that notwithstanding the lateness of the hour there was no confusion in getting into quarters.

3rd December.—The forward movement undertaken by the whole force on this day led to a series of isolated engagements on the 3rd and 4th December, which, taken together, constituted what has been termed the battle of Orléans. The 20th Regiment participated in the actions of Chilleurs-aux-Bois on the 3rd, and of Vaumainbert on the 4th December.

Engagement of Chilleurs-aux-Bois. (See Sketch 2.)

About 6 o'clock on the morning of the 3rd December the regiment commenced its march to the place of assembly ordered for the division, on the Pithiviers-Orléans main road, north of Mareau-aux-Bois. The following was the strength of the several battalions:—

Regimental staff and 1st

battalion	15	Officers,	46	non-com. officers,	608	men.
2nd battalion.....	12	"	61	"	633	"
Fusilier battalion	13	"	43	"	608	"
Total.....	40	"	150	"	1,849	

The ground was frozen and covered lightly with snow; a cutting, cold wind blew across the fields.

The 6th Division was concentrated across the Pithiviers-Chilleurs-aux-Bois road, with the corps artillery behind it, and the 5th Division on its left. Officers' patrols returning reported Santeau, which was situated in front, to be strongly occupied.

In accordance with the orders given by the Corps Commander, the 6th Division with the corps artillery commenced its advance on La Brosse at 9.45 A.M. The 11th Brigade formed the advanced guard, followed by the 12th Brigade as main body; the divisional artillery moved between the two. The 20th Regiment followed the 35th Regiment as second line. The deployment followed in every respect the regulation pattern of a peace manœuvre. The brigade advanced in column from the centre at full deploying distance until it reached the limit of the enemy's fire. North of La Brosse the companies in the first line were extended.

Owing to an unfortunate accident the Commander of the 2nd battalion, whose leg was broken from a kick by a led horse, had shortly afterwards to be replaced by the senior Captain.

A halt was made at the village of La Brosse. The Fusilier Regiment occupied the border of the village, the 20th Regiment was placed behind it, sheltered as far as the open nature of the ground would allow. The artillery took up a position from which to bombard the enemy's position. This led to a lively artillery action, which was shortly supported on our side by the corps artillery coming into action on the right flank.

The French artillery fire caused little damage, some shells burst

SKETCH 2.

Scale, about two miles to an inch.

in front of the battalions, some behind them, while a great number never burst at all, notwithstanding the hard state of the ground. Their guns gradually ceased firing, and the infantry was also seriously shaken. A retrograde movement began to be apparent at different points.

About noon, therefore, orders were given for a general advance. The 11th Brigade, with the 20th Regiment in second line, advanced against the heights of Santeau. The enemy, without awaiting the attack, withdrew to Chilleurs-aux-Bois.

The enemy's batteries had already withdrawn to a position south of this place. The village itself was occupied strongly with infantry. But our skirmishers were not to be stopped in their forward movement, which was joined in by the artillery. A lively artillery action took place again; but it was of short duration. The enemy's guns were overwhelmed, and the 35th entered the village without serious opposition about 2 p.m. The enemy disappeared into the Orléans wood.

A long halt was made south of Chilleurs, so as to assemble the troops of the first line, and to rest the men after their fatiguing march through the heavy ploughed fields. The cavalry followed the enemy, and established the fact of his retirement into the wood without rallying.

The weather had changed to heavy snow, mixed with rain; but, notwithstanding this, and the lateness of the hour, the pursuit of the enemy was resumed at 4 o'clock. Both divisions entered by different paths into the thick wood. Before the main Orléans road was reached the regiment had to force its way through the thick underwood. The main road, when reached, was found to be obstructed with trenches, wire entanglements, pits, and every kind of obstacle. Evidences were to be seen in every direction of a disorderly retreat. While other portions of the division were still in the middle of the wood, a heavy musketry and artillery fire suddenly broke out in the direction of Neuville, which necessitated their forming up. The rest of the division, including our regiment, continued their march to Loury 4 or 5 miles further south on the Orléans road; Loury was reached in the dark at about 6 p.m.

The 35th Regiment furnished the outposts south of the village, and our 2nd battalion did so in the wood itself; the two other battalions bivouacked at the northern issue of the village.

It was bitterly cold, the men were drenched through, and, owing to the rapid advance, the provision columns had not been able to come up. Some straw and damp wood from the village were the only aids to comfort available. The careful men who had carried in their haversack some coffee or a piece of bacon or erbswurst, prepared their warm meal, envied by many. The majority had to go without. During the night the bivouac was alarmed by firing at the outposts, bullets falling thickly in the bivouac, and the 3rd company turned out to support the outposts.

Action of Vaumainbert.¹

4th December.—The order was received for a further advance on Orléans; the 6th Division to march by the main road, and the 5th Division by the Vennecey road, to its left. The baggage, for the protection of which on the previous day the 9th company had been left at Pithiviers, was ordered forward to Loury, there to await orders.

At 8.30 A.M. the 11th Brigade assembled south of Loury, and, shortly afterwards, commenced its forward movement.

The 1st battalion 35th Regiment led the advance, followed by the 10th, 11th, and 12th companies of our fusilier battalion, the 5th heavy battery and the 1st and 2nd battalions of the regiment. The 2nd and 3rd battalions 35th Regiment protected the right flank, marching by Rebréchien and Marigny.

On approaching the outskirts of Orléans, the village of Vaumainbert was found to be strongly fortified, and the cavalry advanced guard was received with a hot fire.

Most of the farms situated on both sides of the road leading through the village were prepared for defence, and connected by entrenchments. The vineyards to one side and behind the village, as well to the south of the ridge as far as the main road, were furnished with trenches. The defence had been entrusted to the marine infantry, the best troops of the Republican Army.

The 1st battalion 35th Regiment extended for the attack, and, notwithstanding a determined resistance on the part of the enemy, penetrated the village. But a further advance was impossible without reinforcement.

The brigade Commander, therefore, ordered the 1st and 2nd battalions, 20th Regiment, to advance right and left of the road against the enemy's flanks. It was now about 2 P.M. The 1st battalion advanced with the 2nd and 4th companies to the right of the road, and the 1st and 3rd to its left. The movements of the former two companies will be first described.

The 2nd company, covered by a strong firing line formed by the 4th zug, turned a half to the right and moved forward towards the vine-covered hill in front. Pressing forward rapidly against a farm, situated on the northern edge of the village, it gained possession of this without a check. The enemy withdrew through the gardens to the hill, and thus enabled the company, which now extended, also, its rifle zug on its right flank, and took position with the 3rd zug in close order at a deep-cut ditch, to occupy the farm buildings, and bring from thence an effective fire to bear on the enemy.

On the further side of the garden a pretty broad ditch, filled with water, brought the advance temporarily to a standstill. An attempt

¹ Vaumainbert is a village about 2 miles N.E. of Orléans on the Pithiviers Road. No plan, except on a very large scale, would render the details of the attack clear, and this is not forthcoming. The account is, however, inserted, as it may be useful to any Officer who may at any time be studying this part of the campaign on the ground.—ED.

to jump over this obstacle failed. The Lieutenant in command of the company was severely wounded in reconnoitring for a way to advance.

To the right of the riflemen of the 2nd company was situated a larger farm which the enemy still occupied strongly. The 4th company was directed against it, and advanced under a murderous fire. Both the battalion Commander and the company Commander accompanied the 7th zug, which was the first extended, and advanced to the right of, and in line with, the 2nd company against the farm.

In order to take the enemy more in flank, the riflemen crept along the ditch, already referred to, until they were able to bring their fire to bear on the farm from its north side. Shortly afterwards the two züge of the company, still in close order, were brought up to this point at the double. As soon as the company was recruited it dashed forward towards the farm, from which the enemy withdrew in the direction of the main road.

The 4th company now established itself behind a garden wall fronting towards the road, and from thence brought its fire to bear upon the enemy's position.

During these occurrences the 2nd battalion was brought forward from its reserve position. With the exception of the 5th company, which received orders to remain in close order at the eastern issue of Vaumainbert at the disposition of the brigade Commander, the battalion advanced in line of company columns to the right of the road.

The 7th company formed the right flank of the battalion, and moved forward half right immediately on the border of the village. With the 5th zug in advance, it pushed on, suffering heavy losses, to the vine-clad heights north of the village, and wrested from the enemy a row of houses lying to the east of them at the moment that the 4th company took the farm, as recounted above. From here the company joined in the advance of the 4th company.

The 8th company was to follow the 7th, but, receiving a hot fire from the left flank, it took shelter in the nearest farm, which was occupied by detachments of the 2nd company. From here the company pressed forward with the 7th zug leading against the heights, while the company Commander, with the 8th and the rifle züge, moved further to the right and established connection with the 7th company. Gradually gaining ground, the company succeeded in capturing a large building only 200 paces from the enemy's entrenchments, but any further advance was impossible. A long stationary fire action now ensued with the enemy posted under cover in front. A decision could only be arrived at by simultaneous energetic action on the south side of the village.

We must recall the situation that had been developed here. As has been already related, the 1st and 3rd companies were intended to operate on this side of the battle-field against the enemy's right flank. The 3rd company advancing south of the road, found itself soon in front of an entrenched line, opposite which lay the 35th Fusiliers firing on it. The company joined them, and was immediately hotly engaged with the enemy at a distance of barely 200 paces. The 5th

zug was in front, opposite the shelter trenches, whilst the two other züge were still in close order behind a farm belonging to the village situated in rear.

The 1st company, still further to the left, had occupied two houses very favourably situated for firing on the entrenchments, and kept up from here an effective fire on the enemy's position. In spite of this well-sustained fire action along the entire front, for a long time it was not possible to suppress the enemy's fire. On the contrary, it increased every moment in intensity. The flanking fire from a corner of the entrenchment jutting out still further south, made itself particularly unpleasant. The losses inflicted from thence on our 5th zug and the 35th made it necessary for the rifle zug, and soon afterwards the half of the 6th zug, to extend against it.

The enemy lay, completely covered, in the shelter trenches. Their fire appeared to be delivered in part without aim; seldom was a head seen above the parapet for the purpose of firing. Still the attack on this position was most difficult owing to the open approach which offered no sign of cover. Only very gradually single small parties succeeded in gaining ground to the front.

The resistance of the enemy appeared slowly to relax in face of the well-aimed fire and determined perseverance of our men. Their fire became weaker, and already single French soldiers could be seen falling back in the direction of the main road. At this moment Bugler Selchow, of Blumberg, of his own initiative, sounded the "Advance rapidly!" The entire skirmishing line rose up, as if on the parade ground, and stormed the entrenchments with a ringing cheer.

After a short halt, caused by re-forming and sending back the prisoners taken, the company, reinforced by a portion of the 1st company, proceeded to the attack of the salient jutting out to the left, before which, during the general advance, a section of the rifle zug of the 3rd company had been left to occupy the enemy. Emboldened by the success just obtained, a long preparation by fire was not awaited. The assault was made with the bayonet, accompanied by a lusty cheer. The entrenchment was carried, and 40 unwounded prisoners fell into the hands of the victors.

Those detachments of the enemy which had succeeded in withdrawing from the entrenchments in time fell back to a large farm situated about 150 paces further back, and held it. Against this the company Commander led the 5th and the rifle züge, while the 6th zug rallied in the entrenchment, and remained there in close order. After seizing a small farm on one side of it, in which ten prisoners were taken, the company brought an effective fire to bear on the larger buildings, which were then successfully assaulted, and 100 prisoners taken.

In the meantime the enemy in the farm buildings, situated on the main road, had to retire owing to the determined advance of our troops. The greater number of the buildings as far as the hill rising behind the village was already in our possession. Two züge of our 1st company were engaged here in concert with the 35th and the 6th company was further to the right.

The 1st company, after taking a large villa, had turned up a village street parallel to the main road, and was engaged opposite the row of houses in front, which was still held obstinately by the enemy. The 1st zug had entered a park further to the left, and was able, from the park wall, to bring an effective fire on that portion of the entrenchments still in the enemy's hands.

The 6th company shortly after joined on to the right of the 3rd company. Here again the resistance of the enemy was overcome; the row of houses was captured and occupied. The village of Vau-mainbert was in our hands. It was now 4.30 p.m. and night was falling. The enemy were in full retreat on Orléans.

The 12th company had been kept in reserve, and was not seriously engaged.

The losses of the 1st and 2nd battalions were 1 Officer, 2 non-commissioned officers, and 12 men killed; 2 Officers, 7 non-commissioned officers, and 29 men wounded.

5th December.—An advance was made as far as Bourgogne, a suburb of Orléans, which city had been already occupied by the 17th Division during the preceding night. By its capture the attempt made by the French to relieve Paris from the south was frustrated. The next point was to break up the remainder of the Loire Army—it had lost 20,000 men on the 3rd and 4th December—which was reported to have divided and retired in three directions. The 3rd Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division had for their task to ascertain whether any large bodies of troops were in the neighbourhood of Gien and Montargis.¹

The 6th December was a rest day.

7th December.—The 11th Brigade formed the main body for the march. It assembled west of St. Denis at 8.30 a.m. The regiment went into march quarters at Chateauneuf and St. Martin d'Abat.

8th December.—The order to march reached the troops at 3 a.m., and they assembled at St. Aignan at 8 a.m. As the advanced troops observed signs of increasing resistance which led to the expectation of a collision with large masses of the enemy at Gien, the baggage was left with an escort in the cantonments.

About 4 kilometres west of Gien a halt was made, and, after a long period of waiting, the order was received for the battalion to be cantoned at Dampierre and its neighbourhood, some miles in rear. The evening was pitch dark, and the troops did not reach their cantonments till 7 p.m. On this day the regiment marched altogether 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles, which, looking to the extremely unfavourable condition of the weather, was a considerable performance. After a hard frost snow had fallen. The roads were like glass, and on foot progress could only be made with difficulty. Riding was only possible with the shoes turned up, and was then extremely difficult.

9th December was a rest day, much needed for mending boots, which had suffered from the constant marching. The day of rest was followed by a disturbed night. About 9 p.m. orders were received for the battalions to march at once independently in the direction of

¹ To the E. and S.E.—Ed.

Orléans. It was early morning when they reached their new quarters, Les Bordes, Bonnée, and St. Père, after a very arduous march. The reason for this sudden change in the previous arrangements was that the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg's force had since the 7th December been seriously engaged with far superior forces of the 2nd Loire Army. The IIIrd Army Corps, therefore, as well as the IXth and Xth Corps, was ordered to reinforce it.

10th December.—The march was continued on Orléans; the brigade assembled at St. Martin d'Abat, and thence the battalions marched by the shortest route to their new march quarters (St. Denis de l'Hôtel and vicinity); on the way the regiment was joined by an Ersatz draft of 1 Lieutenant and 150 men, who were distributed among the companies.

11th December.—A short march brought the troops about mid-day to Orléans, where quarters were provided, and in most cases the men were well fed in them. They also received an issue of tobacco and cigars, which were very welcome. A regular transmission of cigars from home by post had been established; but latterly the postal service had not been up with the troops, so they had for some time been without them. In Orléans also erbswurst was again received for use in times of emergency.

In order to hasten as far as practicable the march of the advanced guard, of which the regiment had formed a part since the march back had commenced, 50 wagons of a provision column were placed at the disposal of the 20th and 35th Regiments, to carry their packs on the following day.

12th December.—The march of the advanced guard was continued to Beaugency, where it remained the following day.

14th December.—It advanced to Maves, from which point the battalions moved independently to their cantonments at Conan and the neighbouring localities.

Action of Coulommiers.¹

15th December.—The Xth Army Corps was ordered to push forward a reconnaissance on Vendôme. The advanced guard of the IIIrd Army Corps, together with a brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, was directed to advance by Selommès-Coulommiers-Villetrun, and from there to push on to Vendôme, in order to gain news of the strength and the positions of the enemy, or else to support the movements of the Xth Corps.

The following was the order of march:—

1 squadron.

1st battalion 20th Regiment.

2 batteries (1 light, 1 heavy).

2nd and fusilier battalions 20th Regiment.

¹ The maps on which the further movements of the regiment can be followed are those in the official account of the war, namely, 28A in Section 14, 28c in Section 15, plan of the Battle of Le Mans, Section 16, and the sketches given in this last-named section.—Ed.

35th Regiment.

1 section of sanitary detachment.

On arriving at the heights of Villemardy, packs were taken off. From Solommes the fusilier battalion branched off to the left, to cover that flank of the advance.

On a report being received north of Villarecau that the hostile cavalry had appeared at Villetrun and fired on our cavalry, the light battery was sent forward to a hill commanding Villetrun. Simultaneously the 1st battalion deployed into line of company columns, and took post with two companies on either flank of the battery. After a few shots had been fired into the village, the enemy's cavalry were observed withdrawing in a north-westerly direction.

The 2nd and 3rd companies, with skirmishers thrown out in their front, advanced on either side of the road against Villetrun, where some infantry still held their ground. The 1st and 4th companies followed in close order as a half battalion. The village was not defended, and Coulommiers, upon which place the advance was continued in the same formation, was found not to be occupied.

By order of the brigade Commander, the regiment occupied Coulommiers defensively; the 1st battalion was disposed on the southern and western borders; the 2nd battalion occupied a reserve position in the vicinity of the church. The fusilier battalion was directed to establish communication with the Xth Army Corps from the Houzée valley. It might now be about 2 P.M.

The two batteries had come into action north of the village, and thence fired on the enemy's artillery situated on the heights south of Bel-Essort. The 35th Regiment had now already left its position behind Coulommiers, and deployed for action on Rocé, as well as in the wood west of that place. The 5th and 7th companies 20th Regiment were in the meantime pushed forward to the single farm situated at the northern issue of Coulommiers, to cover the batteries.

At about 3.30 P.M. the brigade Commander ordered a battalion to attack that portion of the wood situated on the opposite heights, which was sharply marked by a row of poplars in front. The advanced guard Commander detailed for this service the 2nd battalion 20th Regiment, which advanced in two lines in the direction ordered. The 6th company was on the right flank of the front line, with the 5th company on its left. The 7th and 8th companies were in the second line overlapping the left flank.

The ground rose towards the front in a gentle slope to a broad ridge. No enemy was at this time visible. But hardly had the skirmishers of the 5th and 6th companies reached the ridge when suddenly the rattle of musketry broke out in their front, and a thick hail of lead whistled through the ranks of the battalion. The enemy, posted behind a hedge situated in advance of the wood, had on this occasion, contrary to their usual practice, reserved their fire for the most effective range. The volley delivered, at about 250 paces, was immediately followed by the hottest, rapid, independent fire.

At the first moment of surprise the whole battalion had thrown

themselves down on the ground. Almost at the same instant all appeared to be animated with the same feeling. "Forward and at them!" With a loud ringing cheer, skirmishers and columns rose up, and threw themselves, without firing a shot, upon the enemy, who thought it best to retreat at a very rapid pace. On arriving at the hedge, the 7th and 8th companies were also extended in the advanced line.

On the other side of the hedge lay a meadow, the north side of which was also bounded by a thick hedge. From thence the enemy now received our skirmishers with a hot fire, whilst on each side, to the right and left, the troops driven out of the former position disappeared into the wood. This well-considered retreat, in which evidently a rapid clearing of the front of the new position had been kept in view, evidenced a better and surer leading than had been observed in our former engagements.

After a short fire action, and after all had got through the hedge, an advance was made at the double against the new position. The Captain at the head of his company gave the first impulse to this advance. The enemy again fell back into the real position on the border of the Bel-Essort wood. Along this extended the row of poplars, visible from a long way.

The ground rises gently from the hedge now evacuated to the wood, and is covered with thin bush. This bush is completely overlooked, and can be kept under fire from the edge of the wood. In prolongation of the wood towards the east a shelter trench had been thrown up, and was occupied by the enemy.

After taking the hedge, the 8th company received orders from the battalion Commander to assemble, and to follow the advanced companies as reserve. The company assembled in a ravine running in front of the wood, and remained there. The other companies continued their attack on the wood, pressing forward from copse to copse. Whilst the 5th company, wheeling slightly to the left, took a portion of the border of the wood in flank, the 7th company joined this movement on the extreme right flank, and in its further advance cleared the shelter trench. The 5th company penetrated simultaneously into the easterly corner of the wood, and thereby forced the enemy to give up the border of the wood.

The 6th company which, situated on the left flank of the battalion, had not found it possible to make rapid progress, was placed by the wheel of the 5th company in rear of its firing line. The Commander therefore assembled his skirmishers and joined the 8th company.

Whilst the 5th company occupied the edge of the wood, the 7th company on the right flank succeeded in occupying a clay pit, from which could be brought under fire the further border of the wood, and the open ground beyond, which had to be passed by the enemy in his retreat from the wood.

Shortly afterwards the 5th company also pressed forward to a ridge north of the wood, from which also this open ground could be brought under fire.

The darkness setting in—it was 5 o'clock—as well as its isolated situation, forced the battalion to make a short halt in its victorious advance. After a patrol had been sent to the large wood lying eastwards, and reported it to be occupied by the 3rd battalion 35th Regiment, the advance was continued to La Forêt farm, where the battalion received orders to halt and assemble.

Notwithstanding the fatigues of the day and the falling rain, the men were in excellent spirits at the success gained, and jokes were indulged in freely. One source of merriment was the Ersatz men, who for the most part had for the first time been under fire. The important order to search for bullets after the close of the action was given them. “A lance corporal and six men to the front, to look for bullets!” was the joke of the day.

About 7 P.M., a dragoon brought the order to the brigade to march into quarters at Villetrun, which place was reached by the battalion at 10 P.M.

The 1st battalion had not come into further contact with the enemy; neither had the fusilier battalion, which, as has been seen, was detached to maintain communication with the Xth Army Corps. The losses of the 2nd battalion were 7 killed and 39 wounded.

16th December.—The whole regiment was cantoned at Villetrun, which proved very close quarters.

17th December.—The 20th Regiment, together with the 35th Regiment, two squadrons of dragoons, and two field batteries (one light and one heavy), a sanitary detachment, and a field hospital, were constituted until further orders the “11th Combined Infantry Brigade.”

In consequence of the news received from the Upper Loire, the march back there was ordered, and the brigade assembled east of Villetrun at 9 A.M., and reached at 1 P.M. its new quarters at and about Marchénoir. Though not actually raining, the roads were almost impassable.

18th December.—Assembling at 9.15 A.M., the brigade reached its next march quarters at Beaugency, at 2 P.M., the packs being carried for the men. It halted there the following day. The 1st company was detached as escort to the Army Corps provision columns. About thirty men of the regiment, unable to march, together with others from other regiments, were also detached for stationary duty at Mer with the departments.

On the evening of the 19th orders were received for the IIIrd Army Corps to go into extended quarters and rest for some days. The news was received with great joy, for, apart from the rest being very welcome, both clothing and boots had suffered severely from the constant marching in all weathers on bad roads, and repairs were urgently required.

As soon as the troops had settled into the allotted quarters, all the available tailors and shoemakers were set to work, the materials for repair being in part served out and in part obtained by requisition. Even billiard cloths were employed in repairing the men's coats and trousers. It was many days before the piles of clothing and of boots

for repair showed any material diminution in bulk. As articles were carried away; others were brought in, to the despair of the workmen.

At the same time the arms and accoutrements underwent a thorough cleaning and inspection: workshops were established, and all necessary repairs carried out.

On the 30th a convoy arrived from the Ersatz battalion with 750 long boots. Almost all the men were now in possession of two pairs of serviceable boots.

1871.

From the Loire to the Sarthe.

On the 1st January the 2nd Army received orders to take the offensive against the enemy advancing from the west, from the line Vendôme-Illiers.

3rd January.—The regiment marched in brigade to Beaugency, where it was rejoined by the 1st company.

4th January.—The regiment marched independently to St. Leonard and Marchénoir, with the exception of the 7th company, which had preceded it, accompanied by a cavalry zug, to patrol towards the Bauvilliers and Villegomblain forests.

5th January.—The brigade assembled at 10 o'clock at the eastern outlet of Oucques, and marched to Noyers. Thence battalions moved independently to Renay, Champlain, &c.

The 9th company was detached to form a guard to the Army Corps Headquarters.

During the entire march the fog was so thick that it was impossible to see more than 50 paces ahead. In the evening patrols were sent out from all the cantonments in the direction of the Loire.

6th January.—Action of Azay-Mazange.

The strength of the regiment on this date was as follows:—

Regimental Staff and 1st				
battalion.....	15	Officers,	44	non-com. officers, 664 men.
2nd battalion.....	12	"	59	" 627 "
Fusilier battalion	13	"	42	" 602 "
Total :.....	40	"	145	" 1,893

Reliable information had not been received of the enemy. To all appearance he had occupied the Braye position, and intended from there to make strong offensive movements.

The 6th Division received orders to cross the Loire at St. Firmin and Meslay, and from there to gain the Azay position with its advanced guard. This was composed of the 1st and 2nd battalions 20th Regiment, the 35th Regiment, 2 squadrons, and 2 batteries.

The fusilier battalion 20th Regiment, with 1½ squadrons and a pioneer company with light bridging train, formed a flank detach-

ment on the right. The brigade assembled at 10.30 and crossed the Loire, by the bridges which had been re-established in the early morning. The cavalry was in advance, followed by the 2nd battalion; then a battery, followed by the 1st battalion.

The 5th and 8th companies, with a zug of cavalry, were detached by Belair-Château to advance on the Vendôme wood, clear it of the enemy, and then move in the direction of Azay, and cover the right flank of the advanced guard.

The remaining six companies of the regiment, with the advanced guard, reached the Vendôme-Epuisay road about noon. When the column had arrived on the alignment of La Briochetterie, reports were received from the cavalry patrols that the rear edge of the Le Plessis ravine was occupied by the enemy's infantry. The 6th and 7th companies, leading the advance, were deployed at once into company columns, the leading zug of each company extended, and they advanced, the 6th company on the right, against the ridge.

The 1st battalion followed in column, in rear of the centre.

The two companies advanced at a rapid pace, without firing a shot, and drove back the advanced detachments of the enemy.

The enemy had apparently occupied in force the farm of La Charbonnerie, situated about 500 paces in front. The 1st battalion now deployed against this. The 1st and 2nd companies were placed on the right in extension of the 6th company. The 3rd company was to follow in support of these in close order. The 4th company was placed in reserve behind the 6th and 7th companies.

An advance in the direction of the main road was hardly practicable on account of a heavy flanking fire from the wood and the Georgeat farm situated on its border; line was formed in this direction and a sustained fire brought upon it, assisted by a battery at La Merillière.

As, however, the 6th and 7th companies had been brought to a stand, and a rapid advance was not to be expected without reinforcement, it was determined to assault La Charbonnerie without further delay. The line gradually worked its way up to within 300 paces of the farm, and then successfully stormed it.

The enemy fell back across the meadow valley of the Boulon stream to the ridge beyond, and occupied the village of Azay on the slope, and the buildings and thick stone fences which here traverse the country in all directions. A hostile battery came into action east of the village, and fired on the slope.

A heavy fire action was now developed against the enemy, and especially against the village of Azay from the opposite ridge.

The troops gradually pushed on into the low-lying meadows; but no decisive effect could be achieved against the enemy, who were sheltered behind the houses, walls, and hedges. After a brief preparation, therefore, the assault of the village was ordered.

The 2nd and 4th companies led the advance, the 1st company making a turning movement towards the northern issue. The 5th zug of the 3rd company, which at this time occupied the La Fosse buildings with two züge, joined in the advance.

By 3 p.m. the village of Azay was carried by $3\frac{1}{2}$ companies of the 1st battalion and detachments of the 35th Regiment.

In the meantime the 6th and 7th companies pressed forward on the left, and succeeded in gaining the La Galette buildings.

At 4 o'clock, when it was beginning to get dark, the fire suddenly increased in intensity along the entire line, and the enemy made a desperate attempt to take the offensive.

All available troops were pushed up into the firing line to meet it, and the advance melted away before the fire brought to bear on it from all sides.

About 9 o'clock p.m. the 12th Infantry Brigade arrived to take over the outposts for the night. Our battalion marched back at once to the quarters allotted to them north of Vendôme, where they arrived late at night. The losses of the 1st and 2nd battalions were 13 Officers, 16 non-commissioned officers, and 101 men killed and wounded.

The fusilier battalion, with the right flank detachment, reached Danzé.

7th January.—The brigade assembled at 9 A.M. at Courtiras. An ammunition column was waiting drawn up on the road, from which the ammunition was completed.

Prince Frederick Charles rode up and addressed the regiment: "You have again fought as bravely as you always do, only too impetuously; hence the heavy losses." The joy of the men at this honourable recognition from the lips of their distinguished leader was to be read in their beaming faces.

8th January.—The brigade assembled at 7.30 A.M. on the main road near Poirier. About noon St. Calais was passed, and shortly before 4 p.m. the regiment was told off to quarters in Conflans and neighbouring farms.

9th January.—The orders to march reached the regiment at 5 o'clock. The brigade was ordered to be formed up on the main road opposite Le Mesnil farm at 8.30. Owing to the companies of the Fusilier Regiment being scattered about the assembly of the regiment could not be effected before 9 o'clock.

In accordance with a divisional order, the more serious cases amongst the sick were sent back to Savigny, to be conveyed thence to Orléans by the Army Corps columns. As escort, thirty-five foot-sore men and stragglers were detached from each regiment.

The continued fatigues of the march increased the sick list from day to day. The cases of frost-bite of the extremities were especially numerous; but were fewer on fighting days than on days spent in marching, when the main body followed the advance guard at a very slow pace, repeatedly interrupted by long halts.

The sick in hospital on the 7th January numbered 3 non-commissioned officers and 45 men; and on the 12th January, 6 non-commissioned officers and 71 men.

While the 12th Brigade was engaged at Ardenay, the regiment had to remain for hours at the junction of the main road and the Surfond-Le Breil road. Dead tired by the march on the slippery

SKETCH 3.

Scale, about 800 yards to an inch.

road, and wet to the skin, the men threw themselves down in ditches filled with deep snow. After 7 o'clock p.m., the order arrived at last for them to go to quarters, the Staff and fusilier battalion at Le Breil, the 1st battalion at Soulitres, the 2nd battalion at Nuillé.

Battle of Le Mans on the 10th, 11th, and 12th January.—Engagement at Changé on the 10th. (See Sketch 3.)

It appeared from the reports that the XIIIth and Xth Army Corps, on the right and left flanks respectively, were far from having reached their objectives, and that the IIIrd Corps was in advance in the centre like a wedge. The intention, on the contrary, had been to carry out an enveloping attack. Notwithstanding this, Prince Frederick Charles ordered the advance of the IIIrd Corps to be continued.

The enemy was to be attacked along the entire line Champagné-Changé, and to the left as far as Parigné l'Evêque, in order to facilitate the advance of the Xth Corps on the Grand Lucé road.

An advance in four columns was ordered by the Corps Commander. The 12th Brigade was placed on the extreme right flank, and advanced by the Ardenay-Le Mans road. The 11th Brigade moved on its left, turning to the left at Ardenay, through the Bois de Loudon on Changé. The 5th Division advanced on the left, also divided into two columns, in the general direction of Parigné l'Evêque.

This advance led, on each of the four roads, to serious fighting.

The proceedings of the 11th Brigade only will be followed here.

The 1st and the fusilier battalions¹ marched at 8 o'clock to the brigade assembly at the cross roads Bouloire-Le Mans and Surfond-Le Breil. In accordance with superior orders, the 2nd battalion remained at Nuillé to protect the right flank.

A thick fog lay on the morning of the 10th over the snow-covered fields. The air was somewhat milder, but this intensified the slippery condition of the roads. It was hardly possible to ride.

At 10.30 a.m., the advance was commenced from the place of assembly; the 35th Regiment led, followed by the two battalions.

About 3 o'clock, the advanced guard—2nd battalion 35th Regiment—came into contact with parties of the enemy at Le Puits, a farm situated about 2 kilometres east of Changé. A brisk action ensued in which the whole of the 35th Regiment was soon engaged. The enemy, at first driven back along the entire line, was soon reinforced to such a degree that at some points an advance could only be made very gradually through the close country devoid of any clear view; whereas at other points the positions already gained could be maintained only by great efforts.

The 1st battalion 35th Regiment was detached from the right against the enemy's left flank. As owing to the long and difficult way, the early action of these companies was doubtful, our fusilier battalion received the order about 3.30 p.m. to advance north of Les

¹ One Zug of the 11th company remained at Le Breil, to guard the hospital.

Gars on Amigné-Château, in order to relieve the pressure on the parties of the 35th Regiment fighting beyond that farm.

On arriving abreast of Les Gars, the 9th company was advanced against the copse lying north-west of that farm, with a view to establishing from there communication between the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 35th Regiment, and to supporting the attack in a westerly direction. The 2nd zug of this company occupied the hedge of the garden belonging to the farm-house, and from thence carried at the first rush the southern border of the alder plantation beyond.

During the advance the zug had been molested by fire from the left flank, directed on it by the enemy from Le Pavillon farm.¹ The two other züge, therefore, proceeded to attack the farm. Running forward from one quick-set hedge to another, they succeeded in reaching a deep ditch lying south of and at about 250 paces distance from the farm. From thence they opened a lively independent fire on the houses and walls of the farm.

The other companies of the battalion had, in the meantime, continued their advance along the main road. Beyond Les Gars, they moved off the road in a northerly direction in order to gain the right flank by passing behind the companies of the 35th Regiment engaged here. The extended 35th, in the direction of the stream of Gué Perray, suffered sensible losses here from flanking fire from a northerly and north-westerly direction. The Commander of the fusilier battalion 20th Regiment, therefore, directed the 10th company to advance to the left of the country road to Amigné against an alder thicket abreast of Le Pavillon.

The 4th zug pressed forward up to a hedge running diagonally up to this thicket, and was at this moment supported on its right by the 3rd zug, which had been led up by the company Commander himself, who was wounded, and his place taken by a Second Lieutenant.

In order to strengthen the fire at this point, the 12th company, which had hitherto remained posted in reserve on the road, was now ordered up. It took post on the right of the 10th company. Advancing along a thick-set hedge, it soon reached a ditch, from whence the alder thicket could be outflanked. After the first shots the enemy began to give way. Their retreat was converted into a confused flight, when immediately afterwards the hurrah of the two companies resounded, and these rush forward to the border of the thicket. By the time they reached this, the enemy had disappeared into the wood.

In the further advance the 12th company moved with its right in touch with the 9th company, which was posted behind a hedge west of the thicket and parallel with it, and firing on Le Pavillon. The enemy, shaken by the troops falling back from the alder thicket, now gave way here also, and retreated from the farm in a northerly direction upon Amigné-Château. The next moment our men crowded into Le Pavillon from all sides.

With a view to the attack of the château and the wood situated behind it, the 9th company received orders to move further to its

¹ I cannot fix the position of this farm.—ED.

right, in the direction of a wet ditch, to seek for a crossing point further up, and then to advance against the eastern border of the wood.

In front the 5th zug of the 11th company had now joined the left flank of the most advanced fighting line. During the advance on the château it made prisoners a post of sixteen Frenchmen, whom it surprised.

In the meantime the 9th company had reached the further bank of the watercourse, and had just formed front towards the château, with the 1st zug on the right, when some of the enemy's riflemen came out of the wood in front, pressed by parties of the 35th Regiment, who followed them with "hurrah!" The company was able from its sheltered position to direct aimed fire without hurry, and at barely 200 paces distance, on the retiring enemy. It was one of those very rare moments in the field, where every man was able to observe the effect of his own fire. The enemy left on this spot a number of killed and wounded.

The other companies of the fusilier battalion, and on the extreme left flank a company of the 35th Regiment, having gradually gained ground from hedge to hedge, had also crossed the stream and were engaged in a fire action against the château. When the fire from thence began to slacken the buildings were carried by a general advance. Over fifty Frenchmen were found in the château and made prisoners.

Shortly afterwards the 9th company also arrived there.

After the companies had assembled, the battalion Commander ordered the 9th and 12th companies, the latter on the right, to examine the extensive park. Parties of the enemy were found in it, but they offered a very slight resistance.

While these occurrences were taking place, our 1st battalion had not been idle. Soon after the fusilier battalion had become engaged, it had received abreast of Les Gars farm the order to advance south of the Changé road, and to move round two companies sufficiently far to turn the enemy's right flank. The latter had occupied the group of houses that are situated opposite to the passage of Ardenay-Changé road over the Perray stream, and held it with great determination. The energetic attacks by the 35th Regiment had up till now been driven back with heavy losses.

The 2nd and 3rd companies received the order to advance along the road and support the front attack by the 35th Regiment. The 2nd company extended one zug, and placed itself north of the road, on the right flank of the troops already extended there, which were directing from the bank of the stream a lively fire on the Gué la Hart farm. Shortly afterwards the other two züge were also brought into the firing line. For the moment further progress here was impossible.

The 3rd company moved south of the road, and aligned itself with the 35th Regiment on the left flank, occupying a hedge in front of the Goudrière farm.

The 5th zug succeeded in crossing the stream, and sheltering itself

in a hollow way immediately before Le Bordage, on the Parigné-Bordé road.

The other two companies—the 1st and 4th—were led between the farms of Goudrière and La belle Prêle, in order to undertake from the left bank of the stream the attack on the south side of the farms; by the help of ladders and planks the stream was crossed with small losses, notwithstanding the heavy fire by the enemy.

On the other side of the stream the Officer in command of the two companies found two companies of the 35th in front of him, which had crossed it earlier, and were now firing on Le Bordage. Portions also of the 5th Division had towards the evening been directed from the southerly roads upon Changé, and now came into touch with our two companies on the left flank.

The various units thus collected here now precipitated themselves with a lusty hurrah upon the buildings. After a brief struggle, in the course of which it often came to hand-to-hand fighting, the positions fell into our hands.

The 2nd battalion, as already related, had been left behind in Nuillé. At 11.30 it marched, by order of the division Commander, by Le Breil, Ardenay, and Rossay to rejoin the regiment. It arrived at Changé at 4.30 P.M., before the decision had taken place at Gué la Hart, and was ordered to the Les Gars wood in reserve.

About 6 o'clock the regiment Commander received orders from the brigade Commander, and almost simultaneously from the corps Commander, to advance with the 2nd battalion on Changé and seize the wooded heights to the west of it. Two companies of the fusilier battalion—the 9th and 12th—were ordered to support the movement on the right flank.

Immediately on crossing the water-course, which is traversed by the main road, hardly 200 paces from the village, the battalion was fired at from its border. Two companies—the 6th and 7th—extended to the right and left of the road, and brought their fire to bear on the village. After a long fire action, lasting for nearly half an hour, all moved forward to the attack. In the village our men met the 52nd. The enemy gave way on all sides, followed closely by our troops, who pursued them as far as the heights beyond Changé.

It was now past 7 P.M. The firing shortly died away on both sides, and the engagement was at an end.

The 1st and 2nd battalions took up alarm-quarters late in the evening in Changé. The place was so fully occupied with Staffs, troops of the 5th Division, prisoners, and wounded men, that place could not be found for all to lie down. Still they rejoiced to have a roof over their heads during the cold night.

Outposts were placed by the fusilier battalion on the heights west of Changé. In the snow, with 8 degrees of frost, without wood or straw, the fusiliers passed a night of hardship. Their food also was insufficient, for the baggage had not been able to get up owing to the slippery roads.

Notwithstanding this the spirit of the men was excellent; they comforted themselves with the thought that the French were suffering

still more than we did from the cold, as could be seen by the miserable appearance of the prisoners. In the early morning, when all in the bivouac were stiff from the frost, a wag was not to be denied his joke. He remarked that he had not been cold for a moment during the night, explaining, "I had two helmets. With one I covered myself, and the other I put under my head as a pillow."

The losses of the regiment were comparatively small—2 killed and 12 wounded. The result of the action was brilliant. The IIIrd Corps had pushed forward close up to the enemy's main position. The corps on each flank had also moved forward successfully.

Engagement at La Landrière and Le Tertre on the 11th and 12th January, 1871.

During the night the order reached the regiment to complete the men's supply of ammunition at once. The ammunition wagons were to be filled up again early next morning from an infantry ammunition column situated at Changé.

Prince Frederick Charles had ordered a continuation of the attack by the IIIrd Army Corps, in the direction of Le Mans, for the following day.

The troops had been severely exhausted by their previous efforts, but the Prince judged it to be of the utmost importance to hold the enemy in the centre of his positions on the Huisne stream, so as to prevent his falling on the XIIIth Army Corps, which was threatening him by a turning movement on the north.

At this time it was believed that the enemy's main position was on the heights situated on the further side of the stream, and that there were only strong detachments to be dealt with on the near side.

After the attack only it was learnt that the main force of the enemy was posted on the wooded heights, running to Champagné, on the Huisne, north of and in a direction parallel to the Chemin-aux-Bœufs. The IIIrd Army Corps had three hostile divisions in front of it.

At 8.30 A.M. the 11th Brigade assembled in a meadow east of Changé. At 10 o'clock the advance was commenced by the Changé-les-Arches road. The brigade had for its task to attack from the Parray stream the left flank of the enemy posted on the heights, and to hold the passages of the Huisne stream at Les Arches Château and Les Noyers Château against the enemy situated on the Auvours heights, and on the right bank of the Huisne until the arrival of the 12th Brigade. The 5th Division was to advance simultaneously to the front upon Le Tertre.

In the neighbourhood of Beauregard farm the outposts of the fusilier battalion were drawn in. The battalion received orders to assemble towards the right flank and follow in rear of the Brigade. The 35th Regiment was told off to occupy Les Arches, it halted at the passage over the stream south of the castle, and prepared it for defence.

Our regiment continued its march from here, the 1st battalion on Les Noyers Château; the 2nd battalion, wheeling to its left, through

the wood south of Les Arches; the fusilier battalion followed in close order in rear of the centre.

At the point of junction of the Chemin-aux-Bœufs with the Les Noyers Château-Changé road, the advanced line of two companies (the 7th on the left, the 8th on the right flank), each with one zug extended, moved by their right and with the left resting on the road, and examined the wood in front.

The extended züge had hardly reached as far as the Maison Blanche, when they were received by skirmishers' fire, and suffered some loss.

The enemy were posted in a thin firing line at a ditch which offered them shelter, in the middle of the wood. At that moment the order was given to the two companies by the battalion Commander—"Double!" The companies rushed forward with the bayonet cheering, and drove the enemy back. But a long closed line came into view through the thin brushwood. The enemy in the strength of at least two battalions was doubling forward to restore the fight. The battalion Commander moved up the other two companies of the 1st line at the double, the 5th on the left, the 6th on the right flank. The enemy was again charged with a cheer. They paused, delivered a terrible rapid fire, and then fled, followed by our men, who in a few minutes were in possession of the hostile position, a hollow way at the edge of the wood.

The enemy took up a fresh position in a wood opposite. On the left an elevation covered with small fir trees was strongly occupied. A stationary fire action was now engaged against this height and the wood, during which the companies posted in the hollow road suffered constant losses, notwithstanding their excellent cover. The cause of this was soon discovered. During the incautious advance of the battalion a farmstead, La Landrière, situated on the road, had been disregarded. It was still occupied by the enemy, and gave them the opportunity of firing on the flank and rear of our men in the hollow way.

The fusilier battalion had been moved to the left, behind the 2nd battalion as a reserve, and from it the 9th and 12th companies were sent against the farm. The 10th company received at the same time the order to keep up communication with the 1st battalion. To this end the 3rd zug was detached to the right to the path through the wood; the remainder of the company was kept temporarily behind the 8th company in close order.

The 9th company went forward to the left of the road, the 12th company in the wood close to its edge. Covered by hedges and brushwood, which stretched to its left close up to the path, the 9th company succeeded in getting to within 150 paces of the farm. The 12th company had advanced simultaneously by the edge of the wood to a position north of it. After the needle-gun had been at work for some time from both directions, the order was given for the assault. The buildings were carried with the bayonet, regardless of the enemy's fire, which was kept up with great determination from the windows and roofs.

Whilst the fusiliers advanced victoriously on the left flank, the 6th and 8th companies on the opposite flank had succeeded in occupying a quarry situated about 150 paces in advance of the hollow way, in a clearing in the wood. From this spot there was a clear field of fire to the heights on the left front. Parties of the enemy were driven by this fire from the fir woods in front, behind the crest of the heights, whence a lively fire was kept up against the edge of the wood and the La Landrière homestead.

Already, shortly after this had been captured by the fusiliers, the 12th company had attempted an independent attack on the heights. But it had to be abandoned on account of the superiority of the enemy, who took the offensive from the fir wood on the approach of the attackers. The company withdrew with loss into the wood, as far as the hollow way, and had now again taken position between the 9th company, which had advanced as far as a hedge west of the homestead, and the left flank of the 2nd battalion (5th company).

On the order of the battalion Commander, both züge of the 10th company were now brought up here. They extended to the left of the 12th company on the edge of the wood:

The three companies in common now fired on the heights; the 2nd battalion joined them; the 6th and 8th companies extended to the right, further forward, and came in here very effectively. The more the enemy suffered from the fire, the greater importance he seemed to place upon holding on to the heights. Fresh troops were continually brought into the advanced line. An almost nervous movement was apparent with the enemy. It was taken by us to indicate the commencement of their withdrawal, particularly as at certain points individual men could be seen to go back. "It is time!" shouted our Officers to one another, "Up, hurrah!"

All rose up for the result. At the same moment the French were to be seen advancing on us from the brushwood. The uneasiness had been nothing more than the preparation for the offensive. But our brave Märker¹ were not to be confused by the enemy's advance. Without any special order being given, the drummers beat the charge, the buglers sounded. The enemy stopped and began to fire; but he soon learnt that the 20th were in bloody earnest with their attack.

He still hesitated for a moment, one could see how the Officers exerted themselves to get the lines forward; then all turned about and hastened back to the heights, which were reached almost simultaneously by our companies, so that destructive losses could be inflicted on the retiring Frenchmen by our rapid fire.

On the other side of the clearing, even the enemy had been unable to withstand the general advance and abandoned his position—a ditch with perpendicular banks—which was occupied by the companies of the 2nd battalion.

A portion of the men had pressed on beyond the ditch in the excitement of the attack, and followed the retiring Frenchmen close up.

¹ A name for the inhabitants of the Brandenburg District, to which the regiment belonged.—ED.

to the far edge of the wood. Amongst them was Private Wille, of the 7th company, a native of Berlin. He suddenly found himself in the presence of three Frenchmen, who pressed in on him and tried to drag him off. But in spite of a wound in the hand, he succeeded in holding his own in the hand-to-hand fight until other men came up and overpowered the Frenchmen.

In the meantime on the left flank still further progress had been made. A battery came up on the heights south of La Landrière, and after long search found a position on the road from which it could fire on a group of houses, Les Granges, situated on the edge of the wood, which was occupied by the enemy. Encouraged by the co-operation of the artillery, the Commander of the 12th company led it and a portion of the 10th company out of the wood as far as the road, and stormed the buildings.

The first care of the companies was now to place Les Granges in a state of defence. The seven companies had now advanced so far, that the 5th Division, at Le Tertre, was fighting almost in their rear. Not the noise only, but still more the bullets falling from that direction, made us aware of this fact. It was 1 P.M.

The men were still occupied in making openings in the walls abutting on the front, which were completely devoid of windows, when a battery moved up south of L'Epaui, and shelled the buildings. Soon infantry masses advanced by the road. In spite of the works of fortification being hastened on, it was not possible to complete them. They had to be abandoned, and a hedge with ditch at the side of the homestead was occupied. From thence a veritable shower of lead was poured on the advancing Frenchmen. Presently, however, the situation began to become very serious. A strong hostile column appeared on the slope to the left, and threatened to turn the fusiliers. The 4th zug, 10th company, was detached to meet this. But the superiority of the French, now pushing on from all sides, was so great that the homestead had to be abandoned. The fusiliers fell back with heavy loss in a northerly direction on the road. Only now could it be seen with what strong masses this offensive movement had been undertaken. The enemy had brought up another brigade from the reserve, so that now the two battalions were engaged with an entire division of the enemy.

The enemy's attack had been made with equally superior forces against the 2nd battalion in the wood. Here also the companies, with the exception of the 5th company, posted further back, pressed from all sides, had to give up their endangered position, to save themselves from complete destruction. The fight slowly moved back. But the battalions took post in the hollow way, the first position captured from the enemy, with the fusiliers in the La Landrière farm on the left, determined not to give way a foot further, but to wait there the arrival of reinforcements.

As at the commencement of the fight, the 2nd battalion was on the right flank with the 10th and 12th companies on its left. The 9th company was in the farm.

Shortly before, so soon as the great superiority of the enemy was

recognized, the Adjutant of the 2nd battalion had been sent to the regimental Commander, at Les Noyers Château, and the Adjutant of the fusilier battalion to the 35th Regiment, to ask for support. At the same time the regimental Adjutant had ridden back to fetch up an ammunition wagon, as the 2nd battalion was beginning to run short of ammunition.

The enemy had fixed a limit to his advance in the middle of the wood. He was now situated at a distance of barely 250 paces from the position. A furious musketry fire broke out along the entire line.

Gradually the fire on our side almost ceased, by order of the Officers, on account of the lack of ammunition. The enemy, apparently encouraged by this, immediately resumed the offensive; but the moment they rose up, such a rapid fire was directed on them that they abandoned the attempt after the first few paces. A second attempt was made to advance, but with a similar result. In face of the steady bearing of our men, any purely frontal attack was bound to fail.

In the meantime the 2nd and 3rd companies had come up from Les Noyers Château, and taken position by the 6th company. It was high time, for the enemy, constantly pushing forward on his left flank, threatened to outflank our right.

Our ranks became thinner and thinner in this long fire action. The 2nd battalion was almost without Officers. Yet there was no unsteadiness, no apprehension. Gradually, and owing to the increasing lack of ammunition, the situation of our troops had become worse. Already the cartridges had been taken from the dead and wounded men and distributed; cartridges had also been brought up in haversacks and handkerchiefs from the two companies of the 1st battalion. Again the enemy had tried to advance; and, brilliantly as this attempt had been hindered, still a renewed attack could only be regarded with anxiety, for some of the units had literally fired their last round.

The first support was received from the fusilier battalion. Its Commander, so soon as he heard of the difficult position of the 2nd battalion, sent his 9th company from the left to the extreme right. The 3rd battalion 35th Regiment occupied, directly afterwards, the La Landrière hamlet in its place.

As soon as it was relieved, at Les Arches, by the 12th Brigade, the Fusilier Regiment (35th) had moved to our support. Its 3rd battalion had now arrived on the left flank. Shortly afterwards the two other battalions brought direct support to our pressed right flank. Our 2nd battalion, that had suffered the most and had fired all its ammunition away, assembled on the arrival of these reinforcements behind the fighting line, as 2nd line, and soon afterwards completed its ammunition from the wagons which had been brought up with great effort.

It only remains now to turn to the action of the 1st battalion. As already recounted, it had advanced against Les Noyers Château, and, finding it unoccupied, took possession of it and set to work to prepare it for defence. Admirably adapted by its situation for defence,

the castle was, on the one hand, a powerful supporting point for the other two battalions in the case of their being driven back; while, on the other hand, from it the enemy, posted on the heights on the other side of the Huisne stream and on the heights of Le Luard, could be held in check and prevented from debouching.

The position was occupied as follows:—The 1st company was posted at the bridge over the Huisne and in the mill buildings situated there; the 4th was in the château, and the third in the out-buildings adjoining it. The 2nd company was posted in reserve behind the château.

The whole of the buildings were prepared for defence in the most approved manner, and shelter trenches constructed at appropriate points.

About 2 o'clock the 2nd and 3rd companies were despatched to the assistance of the 2nd battalion.

A lively fire, both of musketry and artillery, was maintained on both sides throughout the day. The enemy sent forward a thick skirmishing line against the bridge; but the attempt was easily repulsed.

Nightfall brought the fight to a close along the whole line.

Late in the evening the regiment was despatched to its quarters in the farms north-east of Changé, which were reached at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 12th January.

The losses of the regiment were:—Killed, 3 Officers, 7 non-commissioned officers, 33 men; wounded, 7 Officers, 11 non-commissioned officers, and 85 men.

The final decision at Le Mans itself had yet to be fought out. The rest of the force had also gained ground, and reached forward positions towards that place.

At 6 A.M. the regiment was turned out, as the enemy had attacked the outposts.

On assembling it numbered only 15 Officers and a little over 1,000 men. The 2nd battalion was broken up, and two companies were attached to the 1st and two to the fusilier battalion.

The 6th Division remained the whole day in readiness at Changé.

About 6 P.M. news reached that place that Le Mans had been captured in the course of the afternoon by the Xth Corps after severe fighting.

The losses of the whole Army between the 6th and the 12th January was 189 Officers and 3,470 men killed and wounded. Of these numbers, 127 Officers and 1,771 men belonged to the IIIrd Army Corps, which had the severest portion of the fighting. The actual capture of Le Mans, on the 12th January by the Xth Corps, was effected with comparatively small losses, and resulted in 22,000 prisoners being made, and the rest of the French 2nd Loire Army dispersed.

The regiment entered Le Mans on the 16th January, and received there on the following day a convoy of 644 Ersatz men, convalescents, and Ersatz recruits; 155 had been left sick on the way owing to the extreme cold.

On the arrival of this convoy the battalions were again organized in four companies. Of the 12 companies, 3 were commanded by First Lieutenants, the remaining 9 by Second Lieutenants.

The regiment remained at Le Mans until the 23rd January, when it moved out to relieve the Xth Corps, which, with the IIIrd Corps, was forming the advanced guard, and furnishing the outposts in front of the Loire Army.

Shortly afterwards the first armistice occurred, at the expiration of which, on the 20th February, the regiment had the following strength:—

	Officers.	Non-com. officers.	Musicians.	Men.
Regimental Staff and 1st battalion	15	65	23	848
2nd battalion	19	73	15	760
Fusilier battalion	10	61	18	860
Total	44	199	56	2,468

The armistice was prolonged successively to the 24th February, the 27th February, and then to the 12th March—after the Peace preliminaries had been signed.

Active operations were not resumed; but the 20th Regiment was destined to remain a long time yet in France, as part of the Army of Occupation.¹

¹ One of the features in the campaign was the constant changes in the commands of the companies, but time and space are wanting to put this in tabular form. Discipline did not depend on personal relations between Officers and men, but on the ingrained habit of obedience to rank, no matter who was the possessor of the rank. I strongly recommend those who in our own Service insist so strongly on the need for men to work under their "own" Officers, or who advocate personal relations among "groups" in the ranks, to study the histories of the German regiments who did most work in the campaign, and then tell us how their remarkable proposals would work under similar circumstances.—ED.