of the attack, it will probably be wise for them to wait until the advancing columns of infantry have deployed; should the positions be reversed, it will be well for the gunners of the attack to leave their weapons and to remain under cover until such time as their opponent is compelled to turn his attention to repelling the infantry. So great is the power of the modern rifle and quick-firing gun that infantry, unsupported by artillery, has but little chance of carrying a position held by determined men, and it is for this reason, and not with a view to saving their own lives, that the gunners must reserve themselves until the last moment. They must be ready and alert when their services are most required; moreover their final positions should be selected with a view to keeping up their fire until the last possible moment. Indeed they must often run the risk of injuring some of their own troops when firing over their heads. Sometimes a favourable position may be found for the artillery upon the flank of the attack. Such positions have a double advantage. Not only do they bring enfilade or oblique fire to bear upon the enemy’s trenches, but they are able to continue the bombard­ment much longer than is possible when posted directly in rear of the assaulting columns. But whatever the position of the artillery may be, one thing is certain: namely, that the infantry of the attack can hardly hope to succeed if its own guns have been disabled while striving to maintain an unequal duel. Thus in the earlier stages of battle the action of the artillery will be characterized by a certain degree of prudence. The com­manders on either side will strive to conceal the numbers and positions of their batteries, and will not employ more guns than are absolutely necessary for the attainment of any particular object they may have in hand. But when the preliminary stages are over, and the infantry is finally committed to the assault, a change must come over the conduct of the artillery. In this final phase there is no longer room for prudence. In­direct fire is out of place, and the duty of the guns cannot be better described than in the words of the French text-books, “ to follow the infantry in a series of rapid advances, by echelons, without hesitating to come into action within the shortest range of the hostile infantry.” But when the time comes to follow up the infantry the skill and knowledge of the battery commander are most highly tried. Concealment is no longer his object, and he must trust all to his offensive power. To make the most of this power it is of the first importance that his guns should be brought at once into positions whence they can be effectively used; for, quoting again from the French instructions, “ con­siderations of concealment lose their importance for artillery that is told off to follow up the movements of the infantry. In this case artillery must not fear to come into action in the open, although in this situation a battery usually forfeits its freedom of manoeuvre.”

Even the introduction of shielded guns will not affect this loss of mobility, for batteries which are brought to within effective rifle range of the defence must expect to lose a considerable proportion of their horses. Hence it follows that although the position into which they are brought in support of infantry may prove to be unsatisfactory it cannot be changed; their assist­ance will be lost at the most critical moment, with the result that the attack, deprived of their support, will probably fail. In France, where artillery tactics have perhaps received even more attention than in other countries, the necessity for this close support by guns has been so far recognized that the batteries of the attack have been divided into two distinct portions. The duties of one section have already been described. Those of the second are:—(1) To continue to shell the enemy’s position as long as possible without danger to the advancing infantry; (2) To engage the hostile infantry “ avec la dernière énergie ”; (3) To watch carefully for counter-attack.

It is perfectly clear that the performance of these duties, in fact, the application of the whole principle of co-operation between infantry and artillery, is intimately connected with the use of ground. The art of utilizing ground to the best advantage must therefore be deeply studied. If we look back upon history, we cannot but be struck by the important part that the apprecia­tion or neglect of the capacities of the ground has played in almost every battle. The most brilliant victories have been won by manoeuvres which, if not suggested by the physical features of the battlefield, were deprived by the nature of the ground of half their risk. What was true of Austerlitz and Leuthen is true of Liao-yang and Mukden. Now, as in the past, battles resolve themselves into a series of struggles for certain localities, a methodical progression from point to point, each successive capture weakening the enemy’s position until at last an over­whelming fire can be brought to bear upon some vital point. This method of attack is most distinctly seen in siege operations, such as those round Port Arthur, where the attack closed gradually in upon the defence until the possession of one or two points rendered the capture of the place a matter of time alone. Now the difference between the attack of a fortress and of a defended position is, in the main, one of degree rather than of kind. But there is no doubt that the chief point of difference is often overlooked, both by the amateur and by the uneducated professional soldier.

In staff rides and in war games, occasionally even in peace manoeuvres, it is usually assumed that the party who starts upon the defensive must remain in that unenviable position throughout. This, however, is not the teaching of history. If there is one lesson in tactics which stands out more clearly than all the others which may be learnt from the campaigns of the great commanders, it is that a defensive attitude should never be assumed except as a means of passing to the offensive under more favourable conditions than those which present themselves at the moment. In siege operations the rôles of the rival forces are more clearly defined; and until the operations are brought to a conclusion the relations of the two commanders remain unchanged. In the open field of battle, except in the case of a purely delaying or of a rear­guard action, this is not the case. There both generals, if they understand their duties, are always striving to secure the offensive, for no battle has ever yet been won by purely defensive tactics. The defensive attitude is, therefore, only a phase of that manoeuvring to secure the upper hand which begins with the strategic concentration, almost, one might say, with the peace organization.

In spite of Moltke’s oft-quoted saying that the combination of the tactical defensive with the strategical offensive is the strongest form of war, the very fact of one side adopting the defensive proves, in at least ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, that in earlier stages of the campaign the enemy has gained an advantage, either by his numbers, his strategy, or his readiness to act, which can only be counterbalanced by success in battle. Other things being equal, the side which is numerically the weaker is naturally the first to be forced to relinquish the initiative. But, whatever the cause, the aim of the commander will be to retrieve his fortunes by a tactical success. Perhaps the most striking example in history of its accomplishment is furnished by the campaign and battle of Salamanca. There, after weeks of marching and counter-marching, Wellington was finally out-manoeuvred by Marmont and forced to stand and fight under circumstances by no means favourable to the defence. His line of communication was in danger, and his trains were already being hurried to the rear. Then Marmont made a mistake; and in a few hours the French army was in full re­treat. Never was the tactical genius of a commander more dramatically displayed; but we may well ask ourselves whether under modern conditions similar results would be possible. The point is, however, that to the true general the purely defensive battle is unknown; and in place of a single movement directed by a master mind we shall see in future a series of com­bats, each with its stroke and counter-stroke, taking place upon a front extending over many miles of country. Of this type of battle the Sha-ho is at present the best example. There the operations opened with an attack against the Japanese right, which was met by a similar attack delivered by the Japanese centre and left. A less able commander than Oyama might have attempted to check Kuropatkin’s offensive movement by