

soon came up from the rear, passed through intervals formed for the purpose, swept forward, through the woods, skirmishers ahead, and in a few minutes became hotly engaged. Their battle for some time prospered, hundreds of prisoners were sent to the rear, with several colors, and considerable ground was gained. Then the tide turned, the first symptoms being the suspicious numbers of supernumerary attendants upon the wounded, soon followed by stragglers with the usual discouraging reports. An aid, galloping from the front, wanted to know who commanded these troops, and was referred to Colonel Denison. He said he had no time to go to him; "tell him the rebels are driving our right, and there is no support on that flank." This message was promptly communicated to Denison, who remarked with great composure that he had just received an exactly similar report about the left. The Seventh held the left of the brigade, its left emerging from the woods into a clearing of the Hagerson farm, south of the Orange Pike. Near the edge of this clearing a venerable mounted officer, unattended, said to be General Wadsworth, his white locks streaming, was shouting, "Where is my second line? Bring up my second line!"

Before any response could have been given, the crisis came; the Iron brigade had fairly broken to the rear, the enemy close upon their heels, charging after colors, picking up prisoners, until they rushed impetuously up to the very muzzles of the leveled pieces of the Maryland brigade (at some points of the line), our men having held their fire to the very last minute so as not to injure our retreating friends. Then followed a hot and bloody duel at close range, which lasted nobody knew exactly how many minutes, but long enough, at all events, to clear the front of the Seventh, at least, from every sign of a live Confederate. The fire slackened on both sides, but it appeared at a glance that this was but a lull in the storm. All that now remained of the brigade was the Seventh and a fraction of the Eighth on its right. The entire right wing of the brigade, formed of the Fourth and First, with most of the Eighth, had been flanked and "fell back, rather irregularly, about a mile." (Camper and Kirkeley, page 128.)

It should be noted that only a small battalion of the 1st Maryland is here referred to; the majority of that regiment, having lately re-enlisted, were on "veteran furlough," under Colonel Dushane.

There was nothing now in front of the Confederate force but the small command of Phelps, just referred to, which found itself isolated, left flank "in the air," right flank in the bush. When the attack was shortly after renewed, there was also a mischievous fire from fugitives who had rallied some distance back in the thicket, and who doubtless supposed, in good faith, that everything had fallen back when they did. Under these discouraging circumstances some of the rank and file began to grow unsteady, and the utmost exertions of the officers were required to keep the line firmly in place, seconded by the dauntless bearing of the color guard. By a hot and well-directed file fire the position was stubbornly maintained, until at last Denison rode up and ordered Phelps to "fall back steadily." The movement was executed by word of command as if on drill, the men reloading while marching by the rear rank, then halting, facing front and firing at short intervals. Some men, it is true, were lost at each halt, but, from the difficult character of the ground, nothing else could have been expected. The same difficulties equally obstructed the rapid advance of the enemy in anything like good order, and the deliberate and steady punishment they were getting warned them of