

In Support of Hancock.

After several changes of position and reinforcing the troops engaged on the Orange Pike on the right, about 3 P. M. the Maryland brigade was hurried over to the left to support Hancock on the Brock road, and was formed by General Robinson in two lines in rear of his first brigade to right of Birney's division. In this position the Fourth, First and Eighth formed a second line, and the Fourteenth Brooklyn and Seventh Maryland a third, the left of the Eighth and Seventh being both projected into a swamp. The young timber here was dense and choked with undergrowth. The third line was some 25 yards in rear of the entrenchments along the Brock road, a short distance north of its intersection with the Orange plank road, about midway between it and Germanna plank road.

Very soon after the brigade got into position, the fight on this part of the field reached its climax. The log breastworks along Hancock's front took fire from the burning leaves, the direction of the wind favored the enemy, Hancock's first line was driven out of the works, the fight to regain them was going on. While this was taking place on our near left, not within sight, because nothing could be seen through the thicket, the Maryland brigade, the Seventh regiment in particular, was going through a very extraordinary experience.

Scarcely had the brigade got fairly into position, when the din of battle upon the left rapidly drew nearer. Not only so, but it soon appeared to pass beyond our left, to get behind that flank into our left rear. As before stated, the Seventh held the left of the third line, and so dense was the brush that but a few files could be seen at once. The firing increased in volume, individual exclamations could be distinctly heard, the screaming and exploding of shell in quick succession rose above the continuous crash of musketry, stragglers and fugitives were seen to burst through the bushes. Every sign indicated the necessity for a prompt change of front to meet the impending attack upon the rear. General Robinson, at the right of the line, was notified, and erroneously explained that the line made a sharp angle on the left. The officer who had communicated this information was on his way back, when he met General Birney, riding hastily from Hancock's front to General Robinson with precisely the same information, followed by an orderly, who was at that moment shot from his horse and killed. Immediately after Birney communicated with Robinson, the second and third lines were faced to the rear.

An Awkward Fix.

And now rides up a stranger, purporting to be a staff officer, with a verbal order to the Colonel of the Seventh, "Swing your right around immediately." Being faced to the rear, our proper right was then our left. To be certain, "Which right was meant?" The officer replied that he gave the order just as he had it from Colonel Fowler. He was asked whether the order meant a "change front forward on Tenth Company," the effect of which would be to swing around our proper right, but our then left, and the precise movement dictated by the situation. He said "I suppose so," and rode off.

The tactical command for this movement was given: "By company, right half wheel, etc.," the Tenth Company established on the new line, and the Ninth as it came up, but when the next was partly in position, some hesitation and confusion were noticed towards the centre of the regiment. The other companies were not following up the movement. Riding up to see what was wrong, the Colonel found the right wing engaged in execut-