

posted, of which the light-horse were not aware until a shot from Lieutenant Fenno's field-piece gave them notice by striking in the midst of them and pitching one from his horse. They then wheeled short about, galloped out of the field as fast as they had come into it, rode behind a hill in the road and faced about, the tops of their caps only being visible to Major-General Heath from where he was standing.

"The column came no farther up the road, but wheeled to the left by platoons as they came up, and, passing through a bar, or gateway, headed towards the troops on Chatterton's Hill, now engaged. When the head of the column had gone nearly across the field it passed out of sight, nor could the end of its rear at that time be seen.

"The sun shone brightly, the arms of British troops glittered, perhaps were never shown to more advantage than at that time. The column as far as it was visible halted, and for a few minutes the men all sat down in the same order in which they had stood, no one appearing to move out of his place.

"The cannonade continued briskly across the Bronx. A part of the left column, composed of British and Hessians, forded the river and marched along under the cover of the hill until they had gained sufficient ground to the left of the Americans. When they briskly ascended the hill the first column resumed its march with a quicker step."¹

"McDougall's men reserved their fire until the enemy were within short range, when they poured a destructive shower of bullets upon them. The British recoiled, but moved up again to the attack, while Rall came around more to the left, and after a brisk fight, in which the militia facing Rall failed to stand their ground, they succeeded in compelling McDougall to retreat. Had the militia held their own, the fight might have been another Bunker Hill for the enemy. As it was, Colonel Rufus Putnam compared it to that engagement. In falling back, McDougall suffered some loss, but the whole force escaped to the right of our lines with fewer casualties than they inflicted on the enemy. The latter lost about two hundred and thirty men; the Americans something over one hundred and forty. * * * * On the side of the Americans not more than sixteen hundred troops were engaged, but the action was an important one as it had the effect of changing the direction of future operations."²

The First New York Regiment (known as McDougall's) and the Third (Ritzema's), which supported Colonel William Smallwood's Maryland regiment in making two successful charges and checking the first advance of the British, were nowise wanting in valor at the supreme moment of the flood-

¹ Memoirs of Major-General Heath, pp. 75, 77, 78.

² Campaign of 1776. Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society, vol. iii., pp. 274, 275.