19th of September about 2 m. east of Winchester. Sheridan had crossed the Opequon and found the enemy in position astride the Winchester-BerryvilIe road. Early was out- numbered and outfought, but he attributed his defeat to the enemy’s “ immense superiority in cavalry,” and in fact Sheridan depicts Merritt’s division as charging with sabre or pistol in hand and literally riding down a hostile battery, taking 1200 prisoners and 5 guns. The Federal victory, however, cost Sheridan 4500 casualties and he had hoped for greater success, since Early had divided his forces. Sheridan’s plan was to overwhelm Ramseur before he could be supported by Rodes and Gordon, but Early contrived to bring these divisions up and counter-attack while Sheridan was engaged with Ramseur. Early had confided his left to Fitz Lee’s cavalry and taken Breckinridge to strengthen his right. But Merritt’s horsemen rode through the Confederate cavalry, who fled, communicating their panic to the infantry of the left wing, and the day was lost. Early retreated through Newtown and Strasburg, but at Fisher’s Hill behind Tumbling Run, where the Valley was entrenched on a front of 3 m. between the Shenandoah river and Little North

Mountain, Early rallied his forces and again detailed his cavalry to protect his left from a turning movement. But Sheridan repeated his manoeuvre, and again on the 22nd of September Early was attacked and routed, General Crook’s column having outflanked him by a détour on the western or Back road. Early now retreated to Mount Jackson, checked the pursuit at Rode’s Hill, and, evading all Sheridan’s efforts to bring him again to battle, reached Port Republic on the 25th of September. On learning of this disaster, and the distress of his troops, General Lee promised to send him boots, arms and ammunition, but under pressure of Grant’s army, he could not spare any troops. Lee had estimated Sheridan’s force at 12,000 effective infantry, and Early’s report as to his being outnumbered by three or four to one was not credited. Yet Early had much to do to avoid destruction, for Sheridan had planned to cut off Early by moving his cavalry up the Luray Valley to Newmarket while the infantry held him at Fisher’s Hill; but Torbert with the cavalry blundered. Sheridan made Harrisonburg his headquarters on the 25th of September, where he relieved Averell of his command for having failed to pursue after the battle of Fisher’s Hill. In the first week of October Sheridan held a line across the Valley from Port Republic along North river to the Back road, and his cavalry had advanced to Waynes- boro to destroy the railroad bridge there, to drive off cattle, and burn the mills and all forage and breadstuffs. Early had taken refuge in Blue Ridge at Rockfish Gap, where he awaited Rosser’s cavalry and Kershaw’s division (Longstreet’s corps), for Lee had resolved upon again reinforcing the Valley command, and upon their arrival Early advanced to Mount Crawford and thence to Newmarket. The Federals retired before him, but his cavalry was soon to suffer another repulse, for Rosser and Lomax having followed up Sheridan closely on the 9th of October with five brigades, the Federal cavalry under Torbert turned upon this body when it reached Tom’s Brook (Fisher’s Hill) and routed it. Sheridan burnt the bridges behind him as he retired on Winchester, and apparently trusted that Early would trouble him no more and then he would rejoin Grant at Petersburg. But Early determined to go north again, though he had to rely upon Augusta county, south of Harrisonburg, for supplies, for Sheridan had wasted Rockingham and Shenan- doah counties in accordance with Grant’s order. The Union commander-in-chief, contemplating a longer struggle between the main armies than he had at first reckoned on, had determined that the devastation of the Valley should be thorough and lasting in its effect.

Sheridan at Winchester was now free to detach troops to aid Grant, **or** remain quiescent covering the Ohio railroad, or move east of Blue Ridge. He had resisted the demand of the govern- ment, which Grant had endorsed, that Early should be driven through the Blue Ridge back on Richmond. Sheridan pointed out that guerrilla forces were always in his rear, that he would need

to reopen the Alexandria railroad as a line of supply, that he must detach forces to hold the Valley and protect the railroads, and that on nearing Richmond he might be attacked by a column sent out by Lee to aid Early. Yet in fact Sheridan carried out the government programme at the beginning of 1865, and therefore we may assume that his objections in October were not well-founded. Then he was expected to drive Early out of the Valley, but halted at Harrisonburg and, although in superior force,· afterwards retired to Winchester, and his boast of having wasted the Valley seemed ill-timed, since Early was able to follow him down to Strasburg. There was evidently some factor in the case which is not disclosed by Sheridan in his Memoirs.

Early at Newmarket on the 9th of October said that he could depend on only 6000 muskets if he detached Kershaw, and he had discovered that all positions in the Valley could be turned, that the open country favoured the shock tactics of the Federal cavalry, and so placed his own cavalry at a disadvantage, who, he declared, could not by dismounted action withstand attacks by superior numbers with the *arme blanche.* In these circumstances it would appear that Early showed great enterprise in following Sheridan down to Strasburg on the 13th of October “ to thwart his purposes if he should contemplate moving across the Ridge or sending troops to Grant.” But as his forward position at Fisher’s HilI could not be long maintained for want of forage, he resolved to attack Sheridan, and on the night of the 18th of October he sent three divisions under Gordon to gain the enemy’s rear, while Kershaw’s division attacked his left and Wharton’s division and the artillery engaged him in front. The attack was timed to commence at 5 a.m. on the 19th of October, when Rosser’s cavalry was to engage Sheridan’s cavalry and that of Lomax was to close the Luray Valley. This somewhat complicated disposition of forces was entirely successful, and Early counted his gains as 1300 prisoners and 18 guns after routing the Federal corps VIII. and XIX. and causing Wright’s corps (VI.) to retire. Yet before nightfall Early’s force was in turn routed and he lost 23 guns. Early’s report is that of a disheartened general. He complains that his troops took to plundering, that his regi­mental officers were incapable; and it is always the Federal cavalry that cause panic by threatening to charge; he has to confess that with a whole day before him he could neither complete his victory nor take up a position for defence, nor even retreat in good order with the spoils of battle. Sheridan had, it seems, actually put Wright’s corps in march for Petersburg when news of Early’s advance down the Valley reached him; then he recalled Wright and on the 14th of October was holding a defensive line along the north bank of Cedar Creek west of the Valley pike about Middleton. Early had reconnoitred and withdrawn as far as Fisher’s Hill near Strasburg. Sheridan at this juncture was called to Washington to consult Halleck, the “ chief of staff,” on the 16th of October in reference to his future movements: for Halleck claimed to control Sheridan and often modified Grant’s instructions to his subordinate. Before Sheridan could rejoin his army on the 19th of October Early had attacked and routed it, but Sheridan met the fugitives and rallied them with the cry: “ We must face the other way.” He found Getty’s division and the cavalry acting as rear-guard, and resolved to attack as soon as his troops could be reorganized. Sheridan was, however, disturbed by reports of Longstreet’s coming by the Front Royal road to cut him off at Winchester, and hesitated for some hours; but at 4 p.m. he attacked and drove back the Confederates and so recovered all the ground lost in the morning, and recaptured his abandoned guns and baggage.

After the battle of Cedar Creek, Early again retreated south to Newmarket and Sheridan was in no. condition to pursue. The Federal government had agreed to Sheridan’s proposal to fortify a defensive line at Kernstown and hold it with a detachment while Sheridan rejoined Grant with the main body. On the 11th of November, Early again advanced to reconnoitre at Cedar Creek, but was driven back to Newmarket. At the beginning