

were loading their wagons with wheat on the battlefield of Antietam, and seizing all the cattle that the farmers had not driven off. But these were now recalled. As soon as Sheridan could get his force well in hand, he moved it southward toward Winchester, in order to threaten Early's communications and draw him into battle. Early retreated as far as Fisher's Hill to meet reinforcements, and was followed by Sheridan, who was about to attack there when warned by Grant to be cautious, as the enemy was too strong. He therefore withdrew to Opequan Creek, facing west toward Winchester and covering Snicker's Gap, through which reinforcements were to come to him. Here he was attacked, August 21, and after a fight in which 260 men on the National side were killed or wounded, he drew back to a stronger position at Halltown.

Early reconnoitred this position and found it too strong to be attacked, but for three or four weeks remained with his whole force at the lower end of the valley. There were frequent minor engagements, mainly by cavalry, with varying results.

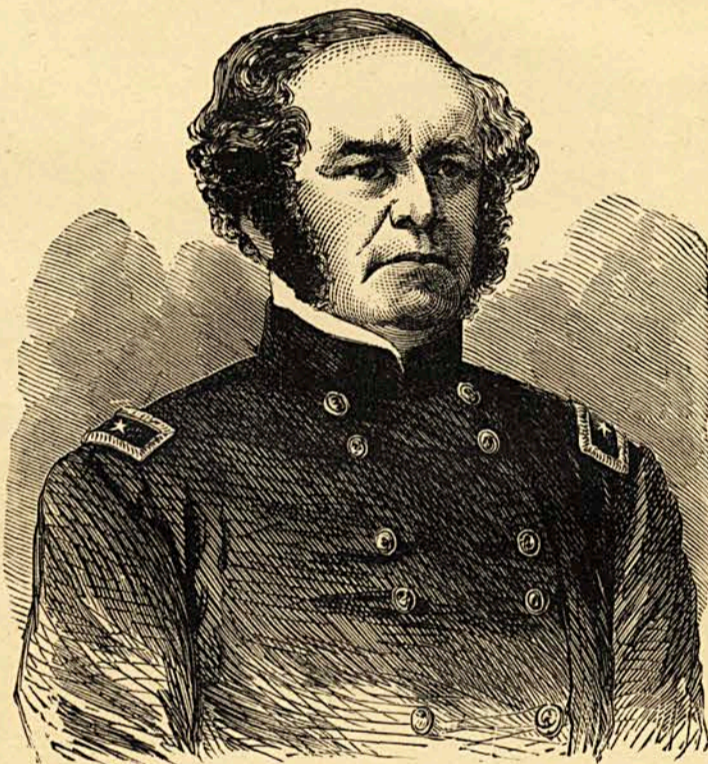
Grant and Sheridan were in perfect accord as to the best policy, and they pursued it steadily. They knew that the time must come when Lee would recall a part of the forces that he had sent to the valley, and that would be the moment for Sheridan to spring upon Early. The opportunity arrived on the 19th of September, when Lee had recalled the command of R. H. Anderson, with which he had reinforced Early in August, and Early had sent a large part of his remaining troops to Martinsburg. Grant's order to Sheridan at this juncture was to "Go in," and Sheridan promptly went in.

The various movements of the two armies had brought them around to substantially the same positions that they held in the engagement of August 21—Early east of and covering Winchester, Sheridan along the line of Opequan Creek. Sheridan's plan was to march straight on Winchester with his whole force, and crush Early's right before the left could be withdrawn from Martinsburg to assist it. He set his troops in motion at three o'clock in the morning, to converge toward the Berryville pike. There was, as usual, some difficulty in moving so many troops by a single road, and it was midday before the battle began. This delay gave Early an opportunity to bring back his troops from Martinsburg and



HEROIC CONDUCT OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MORRISON, SEVENTY-NINTH NEW YORK (HIGHLANDERS), ON THE PARAPET OF THE TOWER BATTERY, JAMES ISLAND.

FROM A SKETCH BY AN OFFICER.



HENRY W. BENHAM.



THE THIRD RHODE ISLAND VOLUNTEERS, COLONEL WILLIAMS, DRIVING, BY A BAYONET CHARGE, THE CONFEDERATE SHARPSHOOTERS FROM THE WOODS ON JAMES ISLAND, JUNE 16, 1862.

FROM A SKETCH BY AN OFFICER.

unite his whole force in front of Winchester. Sheridan's infantry deployed under a heavy artillery fire and advanced to the attack, when the battle began almost simultaneously along the whole line, and was kept up till dark. There were no field-works, and the fighting was obstinate and bloody. The usual difficulty of preserving the line intact while advancing over broken ground was met, and wherever a gap appeared it was promptly taken advantage of. In one instance, a Confederate force led by General Robert E. Rodes drove in between the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps, crumbled their flanks, and turned to take the Nineteenth in reverse; but at this juncture a division of the Sixth Corps under General David A. Russell, coming forward

to fill the gap, struck the flank of the intruding Confederate force in turn, enfiladed it with a rapid fire of canister from the 5th Maine battery, and sent it back in confusion, capturing a large number of prisoners. In this movement Generals Rodes and Russell were both killed.

Sheridan now brought up his reserves, while the cavalry divisions of Merritt and Averell, under Torbert, came in by a detour and struck Early's left, pushing back his cavalry and getting into the rear of his infantry. From this time Sheridan drove everything before him. The Confederates fled through the town in complete rout and confusion. But darkness favored them, and most of them escaped up the valley. The National loss was nearly 5000 men. The Confederates lost about 4000—including Generals Rodes and Godwin—with five guns and nine battle-flags.

When Early retreated southward after this battle of the Opequan (or battle of Winchester) he took up a position at Fisher's Hill, where the valley is but four miles wide. His right rested on the North Fork of the Shenandoah and was sufficiently protected by it; but for the left there was no

natural protection. There was an eminence overlooking the Confederate intrenchments, and after a sharp fight this was gained by the National troops, who at once began to cut down the trees and plant batteries. When Sheridan had thoroughly reconnoitred the position, he planned to send the greater part of his cavalry through the Luray Valley to get into the rear of the Confederates and cut off retreat, then to attack in front with the Sixth and