Early Camp near Forestville
Shenandoah County Oct 23/64

I wrote you a short letter from New Market soon after reaching my command, promising to let you hear from me again in a few days, but I have defered writing from day to day, hoping that something good might turn up and that I might be able to record a victory or at least a partial success to our arms in the Valley; but it seems that disaster after disaster attends this army that defeat & disgrace await us in every conflict with the enemy and our once proud battle-flag is doomed to trail in the dust. It is very galling to me to have to acknowledge all this, but at the same time I know 'tis folly to attempt to smooth things over the truth will come out at some time.

You have, I presume seen the partic-

and of course we had to do the same. We recrossed Cedar Creek and fought the Yankee cavalry there till after dark then fell back at our leisure to this place. The Yankees did not follow us on this road and our pickets are nearly ten miles below here. It seems that Early did very well in the morning. Gordons Division by a flank movement on the right got entirely in Sheridan's rear and pitched into the Yankees before day, surprising their camp capturing 20 pieces of cannon about 2000 prisoners and a large wagon train, and every body thought the Yankee army was routed. Our men scattered through the deserted camps to plunder (as the Yankees left every thing behind) and before they knew it the enemy had rallied and got in our rear. One regiment gave way and then a general stampede commenced

ulars of the recent stampede of Early's army from Strasburg + Fisher's Hill. I have seen no paper since the fight and therefore know nothing of the fighting on the right + centre except through rumours afloat in camp which though conflicting all agree as to the rout + stampede of our Infantry. On the left where our cavalry operated I had an opportunity of seeing every movement as I was on the field from day light till sun-set. Gen Rosser with two brigades of cavalry (his own + Wickham's) moved down what is known as the middle road on the night previous to the day of the battle, halted the whole command just one mile from the enemy's outer picket line, dismounted our brigade and sent us ahead to surprise the Yankee camp which we did in gallant style, flanking the picket and charging on foot right into their camp before they had time to arrange their morning toilet. We killed + wounded a few captured quite a number of prisoners and scattered the rest in every direction a good many escaping through the bushes under cover of the darkness. A more complete surprise could not be planned or executed by any one. This too was an Infantry camp as well as cavalry, but all were routed effectually. Rosser now rested awhile awaiting Early on the right. Presently his artillery opened and we knew the ball had fairly commenced. We then continued to advance slowly driving the enemy's cavalry back upon his Infantry which our horse artillery shelled furiously and every thing was going well with the left of the lines when a dispatch reached Rosser that our Infantry was rapidly falling back