

troops, and his popular fame increased rapidly. But he still had to suffer the envy and ill-will of the many officers who remained jealous of his swift rise to conspicuous command, and of such jealousies he was never to be wholly free while he lived. His self-assured ways and remarkable mode of dress made him noticeable wherever he appeared, and if his deeds had not compelled admiration and respect he would have been the butt of ridicule and contempt. It was probably not long after the Gettysburg campaign that he possessed himself of the extraordinary picturesque adaptation of the regulation United States uniform for which he was soon known everywhere. It consisted of a velveteen blouse with heavy gold braid, reaching above the elbows, on the sleeves; a blue shirt bearing silver stars embroidered in the corners of its wide collar; a flowing red necktie; loose velveteen trousers tucked into soft knee-height cavalry boots with ample spurs at heel, and black felt hat whose broad, rolling brim revived a fashion once favored by Prince Rupert. When to these embellishments of costume were added a drooping mustache and small goatee, and a mass of golden curls flowing down to the wearer's shoulders, he became more the image of a cavalier stepping from a Van Dyke portrait than that of a soldier in the first of modern wars.

His general popularity and the series of brilliant successes which had attended him throughout the Gettysburg campaign perhaps inclined Custer to look for an uninterrupted succession of such victories. But if so, he was soon due to receive a chastening awakening. Following the return to the Rapidan there was a respite from active operations until late in the fall of 1863. Then, following two months of idleness, suddenly, early in October, Lee took the field again, marching around Meade's right flank toward Washington. The Federal Army retreated before him to the old Bull Run battlefield. Here, finding himself unable to cut Meade off from Washington or to force a battle in advantageous circumstances, Lee, about October 17, began retiring once more toward the Rappahannock, Stuart's cavalry covering his rear and actively engaging that of Pleasonton. Early on the morning of the 19th, Stuart, having learned that Kilpatrick's division was following him, posted Hampton's division of his own corps on the south bank of Broad Run at the crossing of the Warrenton Turnpike near Buckland Mills, and at the same time sent orders to Fitzhugh Lee, whose division was at Auburn, to come to his assistance. General Lee thereupon suggested to Stuart that Hampton's division retire slowly toward Warrenton, drawing Kilpatrick after him, while Lee himself should move from Auburn to Greenwich and, approaching the Federal column from the south, attack it in left flank and rear. Stuart accepted the suggestion, arranging that Hampton, on hearing Lee's guns, should turn and attack Kilpatrick in front.

Totally unconscious of the crafty plan, Kilpatrick pushed forward Custer, who fixed the crossing of Broad Run, after a stiff fight and, about noon, occupied the

south bank with the 2nd Brigade. Davies's 1st Brigade then followed Hampton to within two or three miles of Warrenton. Custer, who had halted for his men to get dinner, was about to follow, when Lee's squadrons, supported by the fire of Breathed's battery, burst upon his flank from the woods in the direction of Greenwich.

For a short time Custer's veteran Michiganders made a stout resistance. But Davies's men, furiously assailed by Hampton in front, came pouring back upon them, and, caught between two fires, they gave way. Wickham's brigade, of Lee's division, got possession of the bridge and ford at Buckland, and the Federals who had not already crossed were forced to wade the stream further up, escaping thence across country to Haymarket. Pennington's battery got away by a narrow margin, and some of Custer's troops, notably the 1st Michigan, made a brave effort to cover the retreat. But Hampton and Lee pursued them until after dark, riding nearly into Haymarket and Gainesville, where, so Stuart reported, the infantry pickets of the 1st Army Corps were attacked by moonlight and many of them captured. He also stated that "about 250 prisoners were captured, together with eight wagons and ambulances, Brigadier General Custer's headquarters baggage and official papers, with many arms, horses and equipment." Custer's West Point friend and classmate, Thomas L. Rosser, now commanding one of Stuart's brigades, was among the foremost in gaining the victory, of which Stuart said, "I am justified in declaring the rout of the enemy at Buckland the most signal and complete that any cavalry has suffered during the war."

This was the exaggeration of exultation, but as pardonable in the circumstances as were Kilpatrick's and Custer's equivocating phrases in their official reports, wherein they sought to cover up the humiliating completeness of their defeat. Less pardonable was the attitude of Custer's most voluminous and most generally satisfactory biographer, Whittaker, who, writing eleven years after the close of the war, and after Custer's death, when most of the facts were known, endeavored to perpetuate the fiction that "Buckland Races" was a minor affair, at best, and that there Custer gave the enemy just about as good as he received. As a matter of fact it was the most stinging defeat he ever suffered up to that of his last fatal battle. It is no true compliment to a soldier to falsify his reverses. Every general who has accomplished anything has suffered some defeats and profited by their lessons. If he was generally successful, as Custer was, they merely furnish a dark background to set off the brilliance of his victories.

It was near the end of February, 1864, that Custer was called back to duty, interrupting his honeymoon, in order to lead a force of about 2,000 cavalry on a raid to Charlottesville, as a diversion in aid of Kilpatrick's and Dahlgren's raid on Richmond. He was absent for about eighteen days, and though he did not capture Charlottesville, he drew Stuart thither with a large body of cavalry supported by infantry columns. He succeeded in destroying