1. At the same time the Mississippi was opened in part from below. A great naval expedition under Far­ragut and Porter, with a land force under Butler, sailing from Fort Monroe, came to the mouth of the Mississippi. Farragut ran past the forts above the mouth of the river, sank the ironclads which met him, and captured New Orleans (April 25). The land forces then took possession of it and the forts, while the fleet cleared the river of obstacles and Confederate vessels as far as Port Hudson and Vicksburgh, where the Confederate works were situated on bluffs too high for a naval attack.
2. The energy of the combatants had already brought ironclad vessels to the test which they had not yet met elsewhere, that of actual combat. Western ingenuity had produced a simple and excellent type of river ironclad by cutting down river steamers and plating them with railroad or other iron. The type needed for the rougher Eastern waters was different, and the Confederates converted the frigate “ Merrimac,” captured at Norfolk, into an ironclad of a more sea-going type. The battle between her and the “ Monitor ” (March 8), in Hampton Roads, was inde­cisive; but the “ Merrimac ” was driven back to Norfolk, the blockade and the cities of the Atlantic coast, which had seemed to be at its mercy, were saved, and the day of wooden war-vessels was seen to be over. Before the end of the following year there were 75 ironclads in the United States navy ; the number of vessels had increased to 588, with 4443 guns and 35,000 men.
3. The hundred miles between Washington and Rich­mond are crossed by numberless streams, flowing south­east, and offering strong defensive positions, of which the Confederates had taken advantage. M'Clellan (§ 271) therefore wished to move his army to Fort Monroe and attack Richmond from that point, on the ground of Corn­wallis’s campaign of 1781. He believed that such a movement would force the Confederate armies away from Washington to meet him. The administration, believing that such a movement would only open the way for the enemy to capture Washington—a more valuable prize than Richmond—gave directions that a part of M‘Clellan’s force, under M‘Dowell, should take the overland route as far as Fredericksburgh, while the rest, under M'Clellan, were moving up the peninsula towards Richmond ; and that, as the enemy withdrew to meet the latter, a junction of the two divisions should take place, so as to carry out M'Clellan's plans without uncovering Washington. But a month was spent in besieging Yorktown; when the attempt was made to form the junction with M'Dowell it involved the separation of the two wings by the little river Chick- ahominy ; and in May the spring rains turned the little stream into a wide river, and the army was divided. Joseph E. Johnston, the Confederate commander, at once attacked the weaker wing at Seven Pines and Fair Oaks, but was beaten, and was himself wounded and com­pelled to leave the service for a time. This event gave his place to Robert E. Lee, whose only military service in the war up to this time had been a failure in western Virginia. He was now to begin, in conjunction with Thomas J. (“ Stonewall ”) Jackson, a series of brilliant campaigns.
4. From Staunton, 100 miles west of Richmond, the Shenandoah valley extends north-east to the Potomac, whence there is an easy march of 75 miles south-east to Washington. Jackson struck the Union forces in the valley, drove them to the Potomac, and excited such alarm in Washington that M‘Dowell’s troops were hastily withdrawn from Fredericksburgh. Having thus spoiled M‘Clellan’s plan of junction, and taken some 40,000 men from him, Jackson hurried to Richmond. Lee met him on the north side of the Chickahominy, and the two armies attacked M'Clellan's right wing at Gaines’s Mill, and cut the connexion between it and its base of supplies on the York river (June 26). Unable to reunite his wings and regain his base, M'Clellan was forced to draw his right wing south, and attempt to establish another base on the James river. Lee and Jackson followed hard on his retreat, and the “ seven days’ battles ” were the most desperate of the war up to this time, the principal battles being those of Savage’s Station (June 29), Glendale (June 30), and Malvern Hill (July 1). The last ended the series, for M'Clellan had reached the James, and his army had fixed itself in a position from which it could not be driven.
5. Pope had succeeded M‘Dowell, and Jackson at­tacked and beat him on the battle ground of Bull Run (August 29), driving his army towards Washington. M'Clellan was at once recalled to defend the capital. As he withdrew from the peninsula, Lee joined Jackson, and the whole Confederate army, passing to the north-west of Washington, began the first invasion of the North. As it passed through the mountains of north-western Maryland, the army of the Potomac, which had been brought up through Maryland in pursuit, reached its rear, and forced it to turn and fight the battle of Antietam, or Sharps- burgh, September 17. Both sides claimed the victory, but Lee was compelled to recross the Potomac to his former position. M'Clellan was blamed for the slowness of his pursuit and was removed, Burnside (p. 788) becom­ing his successor. The only great event of his term of command was his attempt to storm the heights behind Fredericksburgh (December 13) and the terrible slaughter of his defeat. Hooker was then put in his place. The year 1862 thus closed with the opposing armies in about the same positions as at the beginning of the war.
6. At the beginning of the war the people and leaders of the North had not desired to interfere with slavery, but circumstances had been too strong for them. Lincoln had declared that he meant to save the Union as he best could,—by preserving slavery, by destroying it, or by destroying part and preserving part of it. Just after the battle of Antietam he issued his proclamation calling on the revolted States to return to their allegiance before the following January 1, otherwise their slaves would be declared free men. No State returned, and the threatened declaration was issued January 1, 1863. As president Lincoln could issue no such declaration ; as commander-in- chief of the armies and navies of the United States he could issue directions only as to the territory within his lines ; but the Emancipation Proclamation applied only to territory outside of his lines. It has therefore been debated whether the proclamation was in reality of any force. It may fairly be taken as an announcement of the policy which was to guide the army, and as a declaration of freedom taking effect as the lines advanced. At all events, this was its exact effect Its international import­ance was far greater. The locking up of the world’s source of cotton-supply had been a general calamity, and the Confederate Government and people had steadily expected that the English and French Governments, or at least one of them, would intervene in the war for the purpose of raising the blockade and releasing the Southern cotton. The conversion of the struggle into a crusade against slavery made intervention impossible for Govern­ments whose peoples had now a controlling influence on their policy and intelligence enough to understand the issue which had now been made.
7. Confederate agents in England were numerous and active. Taking advantage of every loophole in the British Foreign Enlistment Act, they built and sent to sea the “ Alabama ” and “ Florida,” which for a time almost drove American commerce from the ocean. Whenever they were