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Our feet are upon the threshold of the third year of the most gigantic struggle for national independence to be found in the annals of the world. Assailed on all sides by armies, which, for numbers and appointments, have been hitherto unequalled in any war. Though we have been stripped of much territory, have lost our chief city, and though the enemy have gained a foothold in every State of our Confederacy, yet the skill of our generals and the courage of our devoted legions, evinced on a hundred bloody fields during the year just closed, enable us to-day to stand before the world and our enemies a more powerful, united and determined people than at any previous period of our history. The time is opportune to pause for a moment, and cast a retrospect over the great events of the past twelve months. A recollection of our disasters and our victories is useful knowledge for the present and the future.

The year of our Lord 1862 dawned gloomily for the Southern republic. The hopes of government and people had just been sadly dashed by the disappearance of a chance of war between England and our enemy. Terrified by the growth of Britain, Lincoln had liberated the Confederate commissioners and apologized for the conduct of Commodore Welles. We began for the first time to realize that we had to rely upon our own strength and courage alone to carry us through a war with one of the most powerful nations of modern times. Since the breaking out of the war it had been the universal belief that, suffering for cotton, England would take advantage of the first pretext to quarrel with the North, form an alliance offensive and defensive with the South. But the settlement of the Mason Slidell difficulty demonstrated the fallacy of this hope. We had to look our enemy in the face, and single handed, prepare for the unequal contest.

At that time it was the avowed policy of our government to hold every foot of the territory in each of the States of the Confederacy. To carry out this policy the armies of the Confederacy, numbering perhaps 200,000 men, scattered along the Potomac, the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and along our western frontier, were watching in indolent, cowering inactivity for the enemy to strike. The enemy feeling secure of his prey whenever he should choose to advance, was strengthening his numbers, and by drill and discipline performing the slow but sure process of making soldiers out of volunteers. He was massing troops at every accessible point on our north and western frontier, and fitting out a great armada to operate against our seaboard cities. His fleets and cordons of land forces constituted the Anaconda, the great bugbear of that day, which was to crush the young republic in its coils. It will further be seen that this terrible beast discovered too late for its own safety that it had entrapped a lion and not a lamb in its folds. However, it then inspired no little terror.

Active hostilities were instituted this year by General Jackson, who attacked and drove the enemy out of Morgan county on the 4th January. A number of skirmishes followed in Northern Virginia and in Western Kentucky, and in Missouri, in all of which the advantage was decidedly with the Confederates. Our people took our successes as matters of course, as it was universally believed that the "Bull Runners," as it was the fashion of that day to call them, could not stand before Southern troops in a land fight.

While we were consoling ourselves with this view of our land forces for our disasters past and to come by water, Gen. Crittenden marched his little army of 6000 men into a trap at Somerset, Ky., laid for him by the Yankee Gen's Schepff and Thomas, and only extricated himself after a loss of 500 men, killed and wounded, his artillery equipment and 3000 men. He thought the enemy's numbers were less than his own, but found them to exceed 15,000. This affair produced a sensation North and South out of all proportion to the numbers engaged or its actual results. Six months later it would have been regarded as an insignificant skirmish. It struck a gloom to every Southern heart which we can now afford to smile at, and sent a corresponding thrill of joy through the North. The New York Herald, of the day, commenting upon the affair, expressed the opinion that the rebels would in consequence sue for peace by the 1st of the then ensuing May. The depression occasioned by this mishap continued through the remainder of the month, though our arms had met with some considerable success on the Florida coast, and was only dispelled by the intelligence of Gen. Price's victories at Booneville, Missouri, on the 1st of February.

But February, which had dawned so brightly, soon became overcast, and disasters befel the Confederate arms fast and heavy.

On the 6th Fort Henry, on the Cumberland river, was taken, and on the 8th Burnside captured Roanoke Island, after a very trifling resistance by the garrison, who consisted of a portion of the Wise Legion and some North Carolina Troops. With the fall of Roanoke Island, the enemy obtained quiet possession of all the neighboring coast of N. C.

On the 14th of February, after two days of battle such as at that time had never been equaled upon this continent, the enemy, by

clint of overwhelming numbers and the material aid of his gunboats, compelled the surrender of Fort Donelson and the greater part of its garrison. The desperate character of the battle which preceded surrender can be seen by the fact that the Confederate forces at that point.

Though these terrible disasters filled the nation with terror and alarm, there is now no doubt that they were blessings in disguise. Our Government had undertaken the impossible task of defending a coast and frontier thousands of miles in extent against an enemy of greatly superior numerical strength and possessing all the advantages of a powerful navy. It now, for the first time, seemed to awaken to the dangers of the attempt. Against such a policy of defence the Yankee Anaconda must have been successful. It became apparent that our only hope of safety consisted in contracting our lines of defence, consolidating our scattered forces into two or more great armies and by sudden and vigorous blows breaking the long back of the republic.

The resistance at Donelson was protracted just long enough to permit the evacuation of Bowling Green by Gen. Johnston, which took place on the following day.

On the 18th of February the last of the Confederates had evacuated Nashville, and the Yankees took possession. There is little doubt that the inhabitants have seen cause to regret that they preferred a surrender, with Andy Johnson as military governor, to a bombardment.

Gen. Johnston by railroads and forced marches hurried to form a junction with Beauregard, who having a month before been removed from the army of Northern Virginia to the command of the Department of the Mississippi, was withdrawing his troops from Columbus.

On the very day that Nashville was given up to the enemy, our forces were victorious at Sugar Creek, Missouri, and Val Verde, New Mexico, and a great storm was scattering Burnside's fleet on the Atlantic.

On the 22d of February President Davis was inaugurated at Richmond. The day, like the hearts of our people, was gloomy, and the inaugural ceremony took place amid a tremendous snow storm. Still, the installation of the President was gratifying to the nation. The Yankees had boasted that he should never be inaugurated at Richmond, and it was thought that affairs would be managed with greater vigor by the permanent Government.

The first joy the nation knew sprang from the unexpected appearance, and glorious victory of our unrivalled Virginia over the Yankee frigates Cumberland and Congress, and steamer Minnesota, in Hampton Roads, on the 8th of March; and her victory over the far-famed Monitor, on the day after. The intelligence of these exploits electrified the whole country. The Virginia at once became the pride and hope of the South. Many believed she was destined to clear our waters of the enemy, and put a new face upon the war in Virginia. What she might have done under different management remains unfortunately an open question. She was blown up by her commander, a month afterwards, without having attempted any other service than the capture of two unarmed Yankee schooners. The grief of our people when this catastrophe was made known, was unbounded, and to this day they refuse to be comforted.

While the Virginia and Monitor were battering each others iron side in Hampton Roads, the army of Northern Virginia was performing the most masterly movements of the war in falling back from Winchester, Centerville and Manassas, and entailing upon McClellan all the results of a defeat. McClellan advanced upon our deserted works to find that for months he had been kept at bay by Quaker siege guns and an army a third the size of his own.

Gen. Johnston fell back to Gordonsville, and McClellan, after a pretended pursuit, returned and transported his army, of over 100,000 men, by water, to the York Peninsula, where he was checked and held by Gen. Magruder with less than 11,000 effective men.

As soon as this movement of the enemy was ascertained, Gen. Johnston transferred his troops to the support of Magruder. The passage of his hungry and ragged veterans through the streets of Richmond will not soon be forgotten by our citizens.

At this juncture the attention of the world was distracted from Virginia to the southwest, where on the 6th of April Gen. Beauregard beat Grant on the bloody field of Shiloh, killing, wounding and taking prisoners 23,000 of his troops, but lost his advantages by the indiscipline of his troops next day at Pittsburg Landing. Gen. A. S. Johnston, the commander in chief of the Western army, was killed at Shiloh. After the battle of Shiloh there ensued another almost unbroken run of bad luck for the Confederate cause, it losing during the month of April Island No. 10, Fort Pulaski, Forts Jackson and Phillip, and the city of New Orleans.

New Orleans was surrendered on the 26th of April, and immediately occupied by the Massachusetts tyrant, Butler, who for more than seven months exercised his power after a fashion so brutal and atrocious as to call down upon his head the execrations of the whole civilized world. Far better had it been for the people of New Orleans to have had their houses levelled with the ground and their women and children driven forth into the forest for shelter, as were the inhabitants of Vicksburg and Fredericksburg, than

to have submitted to the rule of a Yankee Haynau.

After the fall of New Orleans victory deserted the Yankee banners and perched permanently on those of the Confederacy. With the bright month of May a new era of fighting had been passed by Congress during the preceding month, and proved the salvation of the republic. Without it our armies would have been disbanded just at the period when the enemy was preparing to make his great, and was thought by the world at large, overwhelming advance upon Richmond.

The conscript law held our armies together and reinforced them with thousands of fresh troops, who were in a short time, by conduct and example, rendered as efficient as volunteers. It was now thought advisable still further to contract our lines of defence in Virginia, and draw the enemy inland to a point beyond the cooperation of his gunboats. With this view Gen. Johnston withdrew from Yorktown and fell back towards Richmond. McClellan becoming, through an accident, aware of the movement, immediately pursued our columns, which recoiled on him at Williamsburg on the 3d of May and drove back his army, killing and wounding between 3 and 4000 and taking 400 prisoners. Johnston then resumed his march, and after some inconsiderable skirmishes took position on the south bank of the Chickahominy, within five miles of Richmond.

Acting upon the policy of contracting our lines, which had now been generally adopted, Pensacola and Norfolk were both evacuated on the 10th of May, Gen. Bragg uniting his troops with those of Beauregard, and Gen. Hunter consolidating his with his army before Richmond.

At this time the intelligence of the destruction of the Virginia burst upon the people of Richmond like a clap of thunder from a cloudless sky. A distressing gunboat panic was the consequence. While this skurry was still going on the Monitor, Galena and two other gunboats steamed up the river and on the 15th of May attacked Drewry's Bluff.

In the meantime the Legislature of Virginia and the citizens of Richmond had passed resolutions urging the Confederate Government to defend the city to the last extremity. After a vigorous defence of several hours the gunboats were repulsed at Drewry's Bluff, and three of them crippled. Richmond for the time was safe. The next events of importance were Jackson's victories over the enemy in the Valley on the 2d and 25th May, and his recapture of Winchester on the latter day.

On the 31st of May occurred the great battle of the Seven Pines, in which the Yankees were defeated and driven from their camps with a loss of over 10,000 killed and wounded. This was the first great stock McClellan had received since his appearance before Richmond, and he did not seem ever afterwards to have recovered from its stunning effect. The number of our killed and wounded was also great, perhaps amounting to 4000.

Gen. R. E. Lee, appointed by the President on the 18th of March Commanding General of the armies of the Confederacy, (Gen. Johnston being disabled by his wound), assumed the immediate command of the army of Virginia.

In the early part of June military operations were carried on with great activity in the South and West. In the first week of that month the Yankees experienced a severe rebuff on James Island, near Charleston, and began the siege of Vicksburg.

On the 9th Memphis was evacuated by our forces, and Gen. Jackson, by the help of brave old Ewell, gained another great victory at Port Republic over Sanada, Milroy, Banks and Fremont. From this time until the 25th of June skirmishing was of daily occurrence on the lines in front of Richmond.

On the 25th the enemy attacked our right on the Williamsburg Road, about two miles on the city side of the battle field of Seven Pines. The skirmish was severe and the advantage remained with the enemy.

The Lincoln Government having become alarmed by the victory of Jackson at Port Republic recalled McDowell from Fredericksburg to protect the Federal capital. This left Gen. Jackson free to wheel down by a rapid movement, the best of the war, on the enemy's right, and enabled our generals to take the offensive instead of standing a siege as they would otherwise have been forced to do.

On the 25th Gen. Jackson arrived at Ashland, and the next morning moved in the direction of the enemy's right at Mechanicsville. It was calculated that he would arrive at that place in time to co-operate with Gen. A. P. Hill, who crossed the Chickahominy at the Meadow Bridges at three o'clock, P. M., on the 26th, to begin the attack on the enemy.

The results and details of the battle of this and the succeeding six days are too perfectly known to every Southern reader to require particular mention at this day. The enemy was driven successively from Mechanicsville, Ellyson's Mill, Cold Harbour, Savage Station, Fuzzie's Farm and Malvern Mill, and, but for the tremendous rains of the night succeeding the last battle, the beaten and demoralized remnant of his army would have been cut to pieces or driven into the river on the next day. He fled from Malvern Hill during the night, and before daylight the rain, which continued throughout the day Wednesday, had rendered the roads impassable for artillery. The enemy admitted a loss of 30,000 killed, wounded and taken prisoners in these battles.

With the defeat of McClellan active operations ceased for a time in Virginia, but were carried on with vigor on the Mississippi and in Southern Tennessee. The Confederate ram Arkansas immortalized her name by fighting a whole flock of Yankee arms in prototype, she was afterwards blown up by her commandant. In the latter part of this month the enemy abandoned the siege of the heroic city of Vicksburg, after a bombardment of nearly two months.

In the beginning of August the enemy mustered another large army in Northern Virginia and put in command of it one Gen. Pope. Pope came to the command with a great sound of trumpets, and issued an infamous order to his soldiery, which gained him memorable notoriety.

Gen. Jackson met this braggart at Cedar creek, in Culpeper, on the 9th of August and beat him in a pitched battle; killing and wounding between 3 and 4000 of his men, and taking 5000 prisoners. From this time forward Pope's history is too well known to require repetition. McClellan and Burnside were both recalled to his assistance, but to little purpose, as Gen. Lee, on the 26th and 30th of August met and defeated their combined forces in two sanguinary battles on the already historic fields of Manassas.

On the latter day Gen. Kirby Smith beat the enemy at Richmond, Kentucky, killing and wounding 1000 and taking several thousand prisoners.

On the 4th of September Gen. Lee leaving to his right Arlington Heights, to which had retreated the shattered army of Pope, crossed the Potomac into Maryland.

On the 14th Gen. McClellan, having resumed command of the Yankee army, came up with a division of our forces at Boonsboro. A sanguinary battle ensued in which we were outnumbered and driven back. On the same day Gen. Jackson and A. P. Hill having taken Harper's Ferry, the capture of which had been the prime object of the invasion of Maryland, Gen. Lee prepared to re-cross into Virginia. But McClellan, confident in his numbers, pressed on his columns, and on the 17th Gen. Lee delivered him battle at Antietam. Gen. A. P. Hill by forced marches from Harper's Ferry came up in time to take part in this engagement and save the day. The enemy claims a victory, but the best evidence, if any were wanting, to prove that he was really defeated and his army crippled is found in the fact that he did not renew the fight on the succeeding day, and on the next permitted Gen. Lee to recross the Potomac without any attempt to obstruct him. The pretence of victory on this occasion cost McClellan his command, and very properly. If he was victorious he should have advanced on the beaten Confederates and reaped the fruits of victory. But this he could not be brought to do by all the whipping and spurring of the Yankee press and Government, and therefore they deposed him. On his first leant of a forward movement, he was met at Shepherdstown by Gen. A. P. Hill and driven back with terrible slaughter.

For more than a month the hostile armies confronted one another near Winchester. During this time our troops were recuperating, after the toils of the two most arduous campaigns known in history.

The scene of active hostilities again shifts to the Southwest. On the 3rd of October Gen. Van Dorn attacked Rosecrans at Corinth, and was disastrously defeated. This defeat, a disaster in itself, was doubly so as it hastened the conclusion of the Kentucky campaign from which so much had been anticipated.

Gen. Bragg and Kirby Smith, who penetrated almost to Louisville, on the 10th, suddenly began a retreat towards Cumberland Gap after the former had been victorious in the battle of Perryville. Bragg's hasty retreat has been ascribed to the dissatisfaction of the Kentuckians to the Southern cause, but the best opinion seems to be that he was out-Generalized by Buell.

Interest was attracted to the Army of the Potomac by a daring but apparently fruitless raid, made by Gen. J. E. B. Stuart into Pennsylvania. He made the entire circuit of McClellan's army, but it accomplished nothing beyond frightening the German farmers out of a few horses.

Gen. Lee having withdrawn most of his army to the East of the Blue Ridge, McClellan, who had followed him to Warrenton, was superseded in the command of the Yankee army by Gen. A. E. Burnside, who took command on the 5th of November.

McClellan having been deposed because he would not "advance," Burnside, *ipso facto*, by the acceptance of his position stood committed to advance at once. Immediately upon assuming command he marched towards Fredericksburg, and had he crossed the Rappahannock at once he would have found nothing there to prevent his taking possession of the town and the heights subsequently occupied by our forces. But he lost the golden opportunity in waiting for certain pontoon bridges, which did not arrive until after a week's delay. In the meantime Gen. Lee had arrived on the south bank of the Rappahannock and selected his position. On the 11th of December Burnside constructed his bridges and was permitted to cross, after only so much resistance had been offered as was sufficiently to throw him off his guard.

On the next day Burnside felt our position from right to left with his artillery, and having satisfied himself by this process and certain information which he derived from an "intelligent colored man" that our weakest point was directly in his front, he on the morning of the 13th made his grand attack,

which was to scatter the Confederate army and win Richmond, but which resulted in the bloodiest and most complete repulse which is known in the history of battles. The particulars of this glorious Confederate victory are too fresh in the memory to require a series of battles fought in North Carolina about the same time. Gen. Smith's report of which we publish to-day.

These events concluded the war in the East for the present, but it has only opened in the West. While we write this review, on the last day of the year, two battles of the first historic magnitude are actually being fought, one in front of Murfreesboro' and the other before Vicksburg.

Particulars of Stuart's Raid.

The Lynchburg Virginian gets through a gentleman the following particulars of the recent "raid" of General Stuart from four of his men, who were wounded in the fight at Fairfax Court House, and who had arrived at Gordonsville.

General Stuart had crossed the Rappahannock and proceeded to Fairfax Court House before he encountered any of the enemy in force. When he reached that place, he rather unexpectedly came in contact with a body of the enemy's infantry which greatly outnumbered him; when a severe fight took place, in which four or five of Stuart's men were wounded. He then withdrew his men and advanced in another direction to within four miles of Alexandria, captured four hundred prisoners, a large number of wagons, and a quantity of stores, &c., besides destroying what could not be removed.

On his return he was pursued by the Yankees across the Rappahannock, who immediately returned after crossing the river.

It is stated that the reconnaissance of General Stuart was to ascertain whether the Yankee army was retreating from Fredericksburg, in the direction of Alexandria, but it was ascertained that the enemy had only a small force in that direction, and it is the general impression that they have fallen back from Fredericksburg towards Aquia Creek.

There is no force of the enemy at Warrenton, but occasionally a small squad of Yankee cavalry visit the place, but these are generally captured or quietly dispatched by a detachment of the Black Horse troop who remain in that neighborhood. A few days since a portion of this company made a descent on a party of Yankees, and captured seventeen horses and eight men, and nearly every night they succeed in capturing a few of their pickets.

The Lynchburg Republican says—

General Stuart is said to have gone as far as Aldie, in Loudoun county, in his raid, and to have there captured a number of prisoners.

The quantity of commissary stores destroyed by General Stuart is said to have been large, and to have embraced articles in which the enemy stood much in need. At Aldie he had a small brush with the enemy, three regiments strong, whom he dispersed, killing a number and capturing over a hundred prisoners. He pursued them to within 12 miles of Alexandria. This he accomplished without the loss of a man.

AFFAIRS IN THE SOUTHWEST—CHANGES IN COMMAND—GENERAL VAN DORN'S SUCCESS, &c.

We gather the following interesting items of affairs in the Southwest from our latest Southern papers:

The privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* has been suspended by proclamation of President Davis in Vicksburg and the country within ten miles of the city.

The Grenada (Mississippi) Appeal says some important changes have occurred in the different commands in that vicinity. General Van Dorn has been assigned to the duty of re-organizing and commanding the cavalry forces; General Lovell, lately at the head of General Van Dorn's old corps, has been transferred to other duty, and General Loring now commands. General Price's force remains as it was.

The late attack of General Van Dorn on the Federals at Holly Springs, Mississippi, was a great success. The Federal prisoners taken numbered about seventeen hundred, and the stores destroyed were of immense value—none of the estimates placing the Federal loss at less than a million and a half of dollars. Several railroad trains, and all the shipping facilities found, were also destroyed. So unexpected was the appearance of our forces that but little resistance was offered; and our loss was comparatively nothing. Van Dorn destroyed all that fell into his hands.

It is stated that Van Dorn, after his successful attack on Holly Springs, made a dash at Grand Junction, twenty miles distant, from which, as well as other points above, like glorious news may be daily looked for.

The Jackson Appeal says that the most reliable information concerning the location of the Federal General Grant's army, locates him in the vicinity of Oxford, Mississippi. The movement of General Van Dorn, therefore, cuts off his railroad communication, and, as we have good reason to believe, that even with this facility uninterrupted, his men were on short rations, we now infer that his troubles in this respect will be increased. As the country has already been exhausted, and communication by wagon trains must be slow