

## PREFACE

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BEFORE this monograph on Florida was begun American historians had presented with admirable clearness and breadth the essential facts and principles involved in the momentous issues which confronted the nation for more than a decade after 1861. The field had been fairly explored. Little that was both broadly significant and new remained unexploited. The present work is therefore something like a small section of a long appendix. It belongs logically to that body of monographic literature which usually follows the stimulating analysis of a period or of an extended institution. The crop of Civil War and Reconstruction monographs is steadily increasing and today at least exhibits evidences of good intention and industry on the part of the monographists. Maybe from these detailed studies a wiser and juster interpretation of the period will be produced for some later generation, although nothing, not even monographs, can save a generation from seeking what it desires, which in matters historical seems to be history that is proven ("authentic" is the word usually heard) and interesting ("just like a romance" is the phrase)—regardless of the facts in the case. People seem to want their opinions on past politics ready-made, and there is a successful effort to supply the small demand. This is evidently not a phenomenon of our utilitarian age. Montaigne referred to it more than three centuries ago. "The middle sort of historians (of which the most are)," he concluded sadly, "spoil it all; they will chew our

meat for us . . . they pass judgment and consequently twist history to suit their fancy."

The object of this particular monograph can be succinctly stated because the object is simple; namely, to present the course of political events in Florida through a limited period, to show how national policies affected local politics there, to supplement in a small way what is already well known concerning the history of the nation at large. No facts or conclusions of very broad significance are presented here for the first time. No claim is made to revolutionary, original, or particularly new explanation of what took place in Florida or out. It is probably just as well that the striking and original features of this book are left out, for it is thick enough as it is—which is a sign of literary youth, I am told.

I undertook the writing of this monograph on the suggestion of Professor William A. Dunning, in whose seminar at Columbia University I was a student when the suggestion was made to me. The work has slowly reached completion under the eye of Professor Dunning. To him I am sincerely grateful for what I believe to be the best help that a student of the Civil War and Reconstruction can receive on the subject.

In writing this book I have encountered the difficulties and disappointments incident to historical investigation. I have found surviving testimony very thin on some subjects. I have found many clear gaps in the surviving records. The historical material which is available is in reality scattered and scant. Hence there are gaps and thin places in this study. These shortcomings can best be appreciated by reading the monograph. It does not become me to point them out. I have written too much already about the book. "The author who speaks about his own book," wrote Benja-

min Disraeli, with the insight of one who had many books but no children to his credit, "is almost as bad as the mother who talks about her own children."

It has been my object to supplement as much as possible scientific use of documents by conversations with some of those men and women who personally experienced the Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida. I am much indebted to many of them for advice and information, particularly to Mr. Daniel Brent and the late Mr. Edward Anderson of Pensacola, to Mr. William Trimmer of Molino, to Judge P. W. White of Quincy, to Mrs. Chapman, and Mr. Thomas Barnes of Marianna, to ex-Governor Bloxham, Judge Hocker, Judge Taylor, Judge Bernard, Judge Raney and the late Colonel Fred. L. Robertson of Tallahassee. I have been greatly aided through advice and documentary material presented by other friends and acquaintances—younger men and women than the foregoing. My uncle, Philip Keyes Yonge of Pensacola, put his valuable library at my disposal. My cousin, Julien C. Yonge of Pensacola, through his scholarly insight aided me greatly in obtaining historical material. For various helpful suggestions and kindnesses I am indebted to Mr. and Mrs. William Milton, Judge Carter, and Mr. Thomas Walker of Marianna, Mr. F. F. Bingham of Pensacola, Mr. W. L. Cawthon of De Funiak Springs, Judge Parkhill of Tallahassee, Colonel Choate of Tallahassee, Miss Maggie Williams of Tallahassee and Miss Gamble of Virginia.

In the preparation of the manuscript for the printer I was faithfully and efficiently aided by Mr. F. W. Charlesworth, Mr. Earle Moore and Mr. R. E. L. Gunning, students in the University of Kansas, and by Mr. F. I. Carter of Lawrence, Kansas.

The proof was read by Professor Dunning, whose sug-

gestions and corrections proved invaluable to me. I am indebted to Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman for his kindly interest in getting the work into press. In the revision of the proof my sister, Sarah Caroline Davis, helped me greatly by her careful, patient work. For sound criticism and never-failing encouragement I am deeply indebted to two very dear kinswomen: Mrs. Malcolm C. Anderson and Miss M. Louise Sullivan of New York.

Finally I wish to acknowledge the substantial help and steady encouragement rendered by my father, to whom this volume is dedicated. He has shown deep interest in the work in spite of his many pressing business cares. He has sympathized intelligently with me in those inevitable difficulties that are apt to come, I am told, to young writers. He has backed me up consistently from first to last. His aid made the publication of this history possible.

WILLIAM WATSON DAVIS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS,  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS, *December 1, 1912.*