

CHAPTER XIV

REORGANIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

(Political)

Effort to Restore Civil Government

(1865-1866)

Judge William Marvin was appointed provisional governor of Florida by President Andrew Johnson in July, 1865. On August 2, Governor Marvin addressed a meeting at Jacksonville and the next day issued a proclamation, calling an election of delegates to a convention which would be empowered to establish a new State government for Florida in accordance with the President's amnesty proclamation. Some of the Southern people took the oath required and others secured the special pardons offered by it, so that the class of people entitled to vote in this election comprised Southerners as well as those that had sympathized with the North throughout the war; many were Republicans, but all were bona-fide white residents of Florida, as one of the requirements of the President's proclamation was that the applicant for registration must have had the qualifications to vote at the time the State withdrew from the Union.^a

The oath was taken by 7042 persons in Florida. The election was held in October and the convention of 56 delegates assembled at Tallahassee late in that month. The constitution adopted by this convention provided for an election in November following, for governor and other State and County officers, legislature, judges, and members of Congress. In the November election David S. Walker, of Tallahassee, was elected governor.^a

The Legislature elected in November met at Tallahassee in December, 1865. It was composed of the same class of citizens as those of the convention. Governor Marvin addressed it with an appeal to lay aside revengeful feelings and institute a just and reasonable policy in the re-establishment of the State government. He was opposed to granting suffrage to the negro so soon after emancipation.^a

Governor Walker was now inaugurated, and in addressing the Legislature he recommended a policy of conciliation similar to that of Governor Marvin. He, too, was opposed to