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Notes and Comment

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NOTES AND COMMENT

The perilous and tragic adventure of Mrs. Perrine and her children, described in the account of the Indian Key massacre in this issue, must take its place among the most extraordinary of the many remarkable escapes of which there is authentic record in the long intermittent warfare through which our race took and held the country of the American Indian. As an officer of the Army (General Thomas W. Sherman), who visited the scene and talked with the survivors, told Mrs. Walker, "It was an escape from death at the hands of the Indians, from fire, and from drowning," all within a few hours, and by the narrowest margins.

The reason for that three hundred years' struggle is understandable - it was, of course, a fight for possession of the land. While at times it is surprising, we may understand why the Indians so often continued the fight long after they must have known it to be hopeless : A few preferred to die rather than fall back or submit. With others, doubtless, a kind of reasonless, dogged perseverance kept them fighting. But likely the majority were only following their more spirited leaders. It would have been the same, or more so, had our own race been defenders.

But the spirit which led or urged the pioneer is not so readily understood. He was moved largely by a hope of gain: Beyond the settlements, land was his for the taking and he seemed to be getting something for nothing. There was the chance, too, that the outlying land was the better. A distant prospect usually pleases, and present troubles and disadvantages outweigh any the future may hold. And with some

there was the constant desire for what is new. But with these and other reasons for the steady advance of the pioneer in mind, there still lacks enough to fully understand why he takes his wife out into the wilderness where the danger of a horrible death at the hands of savages must be added to the absence of associates and of every comfort to which she has likely been accustomed, as well as the continuous hardships of such a life. Must there not be a spirit coming down with the race urging the individual onward.

It is not satisfying to hold that man has come to be what he is through a series of changes, even if unmeasurably small and innumerable, brought about by chance alone and wholly by a power outside of himself - for man's growth would be inconceivable if it were not here before us - it is not convincing, nor tolerably satisfying. Is there a spirit coming down through the race urging him, not always, not necessarily, upward, but onward ; and is that spirit related to, or connected intimately with, or a part of, the Spirit of the universe.

The leading article this time is dry-or, its author is quite sure it is. Admitting nothing, we'll not argue the question, but only suggest that those who find no interest there can claim no great measure of interest in the history of our State. The writing of history is not what it once was. Written history is largely a narrative of certain events and of the parts played by a few men; but events are only the high points of more or less continuous movements, and men can only lead or try to thwart the masses. The history of the beginnings and the hundred years' growth of our methods for choosing those of us who are to make, interpret, and enforce our laws is of more importance, if of less general interest, than a guess at why so-and-so killed

his friend, or enemy, in a duel ; or an answer to the vexed question whether the first railroad in the State ran from here to there.

Dr. Knauss says (though not for publication), "I have often wondered why this subject has not been worked up in each state. I know now. I've never worked harder with such meagre results ; the article is almost a digest of election laws, past and present, compressed into a few pages." But he overlooks the interest we find in tracing the successive efforts made to safeguard the choice of the majority and to compel the ins to be fair to the outs.

In losing Dr. Knauss, who is leaving Florida for work in a larger field, the Historical Society feels a loss equal to that of the State College for Women, and the results of his five years' work there are abundantly evident now and must be discernible for a long time to come. The people of Tallahassee seem to have a more general interest in the State's history than do those of any other section. A part of this interest was aroused by the Centennial Celebration, and part because it is the capital city ; but to Dr. Knauss's efforts a portion of that awakening is due. His interest in the Society has been fruitful for the body. His article, published in the Quarterly last year, *The Importance of Historical Societies* was helpful, and he has lent assistance in other ways. But of more lasting value is his constant teaching, felt far outside the circle of his classes, that the materials remaining for the writing of Florida's history must be searched for, brought to light, and preserved now before it is too late. His own efforts towards the accomplishment of that work have been a stimulus to the rest of us.

Dr. Joseph Y. Porter, State Health Officer (Florida) 1889-1917, now President, Chamber of Com-

merce, Key West, has issued ***Looking Backward Over Fifty Years of Health Work in Florida***. This is a series of reminiscences and notes first published in ***Journal of the Florida Medical Association***, July, 1925-January, 1926 ; and now reprinted complete. Mention was made here, last year, of Dr. Porter's valuable **services** to the State. From the time of its establishment, in 1889, for more than a quarter of a century he was State Health Officer, and was in fact the leader of public health work in Florida ; hence his volume is of the nature of a history of the work of the health department of the State government; and as the period covered several yellow fever epidemics and the occurrence of other dangers to the general health of the State, his narrative is exceedingly interesting.

A. D. Powers, of St. Petersburg, has issued a pamphlet of sixteen pages, ***The Dade Massacre and Dade Memorial Park***. This is illustrated with sixteen half-page half-tone engravings of scenes in the park showing all the monuments, the log breastwork, and other features. Mr. Powers's interest in the battle and in the park has prompted him to publish this sketch. He says

But the Commissioners¹ who have done so well, must have an annual appropriation to keep this beautiful park up to the standard to which it was established. If this little book can in a wee mite help to get the proper recognition of Dade Park, and even a modest support for maintenance of the memorial, I will feel well paid for the effort of issuing it. This park is well worth a visit to Bushnell.

¹J. C. B. Koonce, of Tavares; Frederick Cubberly, of Gainesville; and Mrs. A. M. Roland, of Bushnell.

The American Historical Association must not be looked upon as in any way a parent to the Florida Historical Society and the like societies of other states - rather, it is a big brother ; and is such a brother in all which that implies. Its growth and a broadening of the work it is carrying on - a work of genuine public service - must be of substantial benefit to our own Society, and to what we ourselves have set out to do. Its journal, the *American Historical Review*, is pre-eminent. Its activities are vital, but necessarily restricted ; hence, the need of an endowment is evident. A Committee on Endowment has undertaken to supply this need, with Solon J. Buck, Columbia University, New York, as secretary. Membership in the Association is by election, but only application is necessary ; the assistant-secretary is Patty W. Washington, Woodward Building, Washington, D. C.

Roger Perrine DeLano has become a Life Member of the Society. He is a descendant, of the fourth generation, of Dr. Henry Perrine, is nine years of age, and a resident of Miami. We are especially pleased to add to our membership one of his name and lineage, and trust that his interest in the Society and its work will grow and equal that which his ancestor so clearly showed in the State of his choice.

The appeal for Contributing Members, in the last number of the Quarterly, has been without result.

During the past quarter the following have become members of the Society, their interest and support is highly valued -

Life Member

Roger Perrine DeLano Miami

Active Members

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University of Florida Library	Gainesville
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Donations-

From Joseph Y. Porter, the author,
**Looking Backward Over Fifty Years of Health
Work in Florida.**

From A. D. Powers, the author,
The Dade Massacre and Dade Memorial Park.

From W. S. Cawthon
**Sonder-Abdruck aus den Gottingschen Gelehrten
Anzeigen unter der Augsicht der Gesell
schaft der Wissen schaften.**

From Moses Folsom
Deland, **Florida Days.**
Winter, Florida, **The Land of Enchantment.**
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