elected to Congress. He was doing well enough in Virginia but decided that even greater opportunities beckoned across the mountains in Kentucky.

Breckenridge had many ambitions but central to all his projects was one ideal: to lead the life of a country gentleman. Moving to Kentucky in 1793 he selected excellent land for his homestead near Lexington, practiced law, taught law, speculated in land, and prospered in politics. As a disciple of Jefferson he guided the resolutions opposing the Alien and Sedition acts through the Kentucky legislature. Later, as United States senator from Kentucky he served as floor manager during Jefferson's first administration—the happy and fruitful part of Jefferson's presidency. Late in 1805 he left the Senate to become Jefferson's attorney general—an office he was to hold only a few months until his death in 1806.

Harrison has told this story adequately but with commendable brevity; he neither exaggerates nor underestimates the importance of his subject. He has successfully met the challenge of all biographers: the proper balance between the man and his times.

Ohio State University, Columbus

Harry L. Coles


Robert S. Maxwell, author of La Follette and the Rise of Progressives in Wisconsin, has used his knowledge to assemble a collection of reading on Robert M. La Follette, Sr. The senator from Wisconsin is presented in three ways: (1) through his own words from speeches and writings, (2) through the eyes of contemporaries who fought with or against him, (3) and through the judgments of leading academic interpreters. This short volume, in a series that also includes volumes on Hitler, Jesus, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Stalin, to date, is obviously designed for use in high school and college classes as a basis for discussion sessions and papers. For those purposes, it is an economical, useful, and well rounded collection of materials.

The book, however, is uneven in tone and quality; and the part that is least successful, strangely enough, is the material selected from La Follette's own words. Neither the intense personality nor great emotions engendered by La Follette are glimpsed in this section; this, of course, is perhaps more the fault of La Follette than of the editor, but the emotional fervor of "Fighting Bob" La Follette simply does not come through. The selection of contemporary writings, however, especially the item by Lincoln Steffens, is extremely strong and presents a fascinating portrayal and some shrewd judgments. Too often one reads only the man's own words or the inevitable pronouncement of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and misses the contemporary
passions that a La Follette evoked. The selections by historians are uniformly judicious, cautious, and dull.

This volume will serve its pedagogical purposes well, but it, of course, does not fill the need for a definitive biography or a published collection of his writings. La Follette, selected as one of the five greatest senators in American history by a senate committee headed by John F. Kennedy, deserves more from the historical profession than has been done.

University of South Dakota, Vermillion

Thomas H. Buckley


The compilers of this anthology introduce their volume with the first chapter of Stampp's The Era of Reconstruction (1965) and group their twenty-two selections from revisionist literature under five headings: "Lincoln, Johnson, and Reconstruction," "The Radical Republicans," "The Freedmen," "Radical Reconstruction in the South," and "The Collapse of Reconstruction."

In the introductory chapter, "The Tragic Legend of Reconstruction," Stampp sets the historiographical stage with a synopsis of the traditional interpretations of the post-Civil War era, an explanation of the origin and acceptance of that interpretation, and an assessment of its principal weaknesses. Stampp's essay contains incisive and valid criticisms of earlier historians of Reconstruction, but this reviewer cannot agree that the interpretation of Claude Bowers "is only a slight exaggeration" of the views presented by William A. Dunning and his followers (p. 5). The studies of the latter, for all their shortcomings, are decidedly more temperate, accurate, sophisticated, and scholarly than the Bowers version.

The selections in this volume are articles and excerpts by such leading scholars as LaWanda and John H. Cox, Richard N. Current, David Donald, W. E. B. DuBois, Eric McKitrick, Vernon Lane Wharton, and C. Vann Woodward. Taken together, these writings challenge earlier works, not by discounting political and economic motives, not by denying that there was greed and corruption, but by acknowledging the importance of humanitarianism, ideals, and ideology, by pointing out the period's constructive achievements, and by identifying civil and political rights of Negroes as either a central or the central issue of Reconstruction. The interpretation that emerges deflates the reputations of the Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson plans for speedy reunion; discredits the contention that the Radical Republicans were simply vindictive, power hungry villains bent upon humiliating and torturing the South; reevaluates and upgrades the attitudes, behavior, and contributions of the black population, scalawags, and carpetbag governments; and offers fresh explanations for the collapse of Radical Reconstruction. Perhaps the most disturbing but nonetheless important contribution of this