The Papers of James Madison. Volume I: 16 March 1751–16 December 1779; Volume II: 20 March 1780–23 February 1781. Edited by WILLIAM T. HUTCHINSON and WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL, with the assistance of RALPH L. KETCHAM, DONALD O. DEWEY, JEAN SCHNEI-DER, and ROBERT L. SCRIBNER. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. xlii, 344 p.; xx, 344 p. Illustrations, indexes. Each, $10.00.)

The editing and publishing of definitive editions of the papers of American statesmen proceeds apace. After nearly two generations of research and

antiquarian hunting, the copious results are now being made available in sumptuous editions, often supported by the foundations. Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Adams, Hamilton, Clay, and Calhoun are among the giants of the past whose every scrap of surviving writing is being printed. The scholar and his students in the future will have unprecedented opportunities to evaluate and understand the thoughts and the deeds of the founders and the epigones. A welcome addition to the growing list of papers is *The Papers of James Madison*, conceived and vigorously promoted until his death by the late Leonard White of the University of Chicago, and supported by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and by the state of Virginia.

The Madison papers are projected to at least twenty volumes, of which the first two are now issued. The book work, it should be said, is excellent. The page is pleasant to read and the editorial apparatus is arranged to be at once as useful as possible and as little bothersome. On the whole, the editing fully measures up to the standards set by earlier arrivals on this modern scene of revival and reverence. As was done with the Jefferson papers, the Madison editors have decided, in effect, to print everything they could find known to have been written by Madison, regardless of its merit, and all the known surviving letters written to him. Thus, it is possible to trace Madison's relationships over many years. His friendship with William Bradford, for example, is well documented in these volumes covering the early years.

There are occasional inclusions and omissions which it may be legitimate to question. In the first volume, for instance, a document of twenty pages entitled "Independence and Constitution of Virginia," entirely in Madison's hand, is only quoted in a long editorial note, presumably because it is in large part a transcript of the work of other men. Yet in volume two, a great many communications of incidental or even trifling importance which Madison signed merely as a committee member in the Continental Congress are given in full. It is, in addition, not entirely clear why a long essay on moral philosophy by Samuel S. Smith, enclosed in a letter to Madison, should be printed here.

In such a book as the *Madison Papers* it is no doubt better to supply more editorial assistance to the reader than is necessary, as against supplying too little. But the editors may wish to guard against excessive repetition as they work their way through future volumes. There are a number of cases in which individual persons are identified more than once, and institutions like Hampden-Sydney are identified and described in two or more places.

It is interesting to compare the record of Madison's word and deed with the account given by Irving Brant in his massive biography which has recently been completed. Brant's interpretations, up to 1780, stand the test of comparison with the record very well indeed. A noteworthy example is the influence of Madison on the freedom of religion article in the Virginia Declaration of Rights. That he only partly succeeded in his efforts to

guarantee freedom of conscience in 1776 should not be allowed to obscure the fact that he was campaigning in this field even before Jefferson drafted the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom. It will be interesting, later on, to consider in the light of the full record some of Mr. Brant's more controversial judgments, regarding Madison's role in the Louisiana Purchase, for example, or his leadership in the War of 1812.

In general, the editors have not allowed themselves to fall under the spell of their subject beyond the bounds allowable to make an interesting book. But in one instance they seem to have permitted enthusiasm to dictate a disproportionate emphasis on Madison's role. This is the matter of the disposal of the western lands under the Confederation. Jefferson's work in 1784 is, of course, justly famous. Monroe's assistance to Jefferson at that time, his western trip in the same year, and his long-time catering to western interests are well understood as having played an important part in building his political base. The reader's interest is thus considerably aroused in volume two of the Madison papers by a long and excellent note on the western lands question suggesting, as it does, that Madison, as early as 1780, had made an important contribution. Unfortunately, no documents are offered to justify the suggestion. Madison seconded a motion by Joseph Jones and participated in some of the discussion regarding western claims of the various states. But there is no hint in any of the papers that he had any sort of vision of the West which might be compared to Jefferson's, or even to Monroe's. Indeed, on this as on other topics discussed in the Congress, Madison shows little of the promise of creative statesmanship which his work in the Virginia Assembly had seemed to warrant.

On the other hand, his powers of observation may surprise those who have thought of him as chiefly gifted in the realm of theory. His correspondence with Edmund Pendleton, invited by the latter, is rich in living reactions to the progress of the war. A passage in a letter of March, 1780, to Jefferson, then governor of Virginia, raises again the tantalizing question of how the Revolutionaries ever managed to win independence, by the blunt and powerful language in which Madison requires his friend, and his readers today, to look at the facts:

> Among the various conjunctures of alarm and distress which have arisen in the course of the revolution, it is with pain I affirm to you Sir, that no one can be singled out more truly critical than the present. Our army threatened with an immediate alternative of disbanding or living on free quarter; the public treasury empty; public credit exhausted, nay the private credit of purchasing Agents employed, I am told, as far as it will bear, Congress complaining of the extortion of the people, the people of the improvidence of Congress, and the army of both; our affairs requiring the most mature & systematic measures, and the urgency of occasions admitting only of temporizing expedients, and those expedients generating new difficulties. Congress from a defect of adequate Statesmen more likely to fall into wrong measures and of less weight to enforce right ones, recommending plans to the several states for execution and the states separately rejudging the expediency of such plans,

whereby the same distrust of concurrent exertions that has damped the ardor of patriotic individuals, must produce the same effect among the States themselves. An old system of finance discarded as incompetent to our necessities, an untried & precarious one substituted, and a total stagnation in prospect between the end of the former & the operation of the latter: These are the outlines of the true picture of our public situation.

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