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*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962. Pp. xlii+344; xix+344. $10.00, $10.00.

The papers of James Madison will ulti-

mately consist of some twenty volumes. The first two volumes are copiously annotated, and each contains a separate index and Madison chronology.

Included in this edition are "all extant writings of Madison which appear to have been wholly or in large degree the product of his mind" (I, xxxiii). This standard of selection, however, will be difficult to interpret, especially during Madison's years as secretary of state and president. Even in the earlier periods covered by these volumes, some manuscripts are omitted as unimportant, although they are in Madison's handwriting, while others are included if they are addressed to him and "known to have received his careful attention" (*ibid.*). Thus, numerous letters which have already been published, from Thomas Jefferson, for example, reappear in this collection. In subsequent volumes, we are told, letters to and from Dolley Madison will also be included. Extensive annotations explain editorial problems as they arise; sometimes there is even a heading, "Letter not found" (II, 9), giving the reasons why it is assumed that such-and-such an unknown letter was actually written.

The editors are William T. Hutchinson of the University of Chicago and William M. E. Rachal, editor of the *Virginia magazine of history and biography*, who is associated with the Virginia Historical Society and is on loan to the University of Virginia for work on the Madison papers. The project is the result of many years of co-operation by the above-named persons and institutions, and is further supported by grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and by biennial appropriations of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia. There is an advisory board which includes Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., chairman; Irving Brant, Madison's biographer, Julian P. Boyd, editor of the *Jefferson papers*, and Dumas Malone, biographer of Jefferson.

The mass of materials is prodigious, and the files of the project "include photocopies of manuscripts from approximately 250 different sources" (I, xxvii). The most important sources are the Library of Congress and the National Archives, but many of the papers remain in the hands of collateral descendants of James or Dolley Madison, or of collectors, libraries, historical societies, and so forth. The wide distribution of these papers is in part the work of Madison's "extravagant" stepson who "sold portions of his stepfather's papers in order to satisfy the claims of his insistent creditors" (I, xx)—thereby disarranging the labors of Madison's last years, during which he made an extensive collection of his public papers and secured the return of many of his letters from former correspondents. Dolley Madison's faithful, but misguided, efforts to edit her husband's papers also added to the present editors' problems. All collections of Madison's works to date have been inadequate.

Sometimes it is said that until recently Madison has been overshadowed by his mentor, Thomas Jefferson. Probably, Madison will always be overshadowed by Jefferson. Despite the clarity of Madison's writing, and the brilliance of his political perceptions, there is little in these volumes that could be called wit, and almost nothing of humor. The kind of human interest that lights up so many pages in the writings of Jefferson, and still more of Franklin, is lacking here—though Madison's relationships were sincere and his friendships were warm. One of the few light touches in these volumes is a letter signed by Madison and William Ellery jointly, but almost certainly the latter's work. A committee of congress, it seems, was drafting instructions for the disposition of wine and other liquors from captured vessels. The letter, dated "In Congress, May 5th, 1780" begins: "Ye poor devils! shivering on the bleak hills of Morris, how we pity you! Ho! soldier with your canteen!" and it concludes thus: "You will be pleased to consider soberly the business you have undertaken, and the expectations of Congress, and not drink more than three glasses of wine at dinner, and six at supper; and whenever you write to us, do it before breakfast" (II, 17–18). The editors explain that Madison had been in congress less than two months at this time, and add: "JM's natural reserve increases the probability that he did not draft the letter."

Collected papers of this sort, of course, are more for reference than for reading, but there are pleasant surprises and illuminating passages throughout, and the scholarship is impeccable. This reviewer was interested in Madison's role in publishing the doleful Indian lament, ending, "Who is there to

mourn for Logan? Not one" (I, 136). The reaction of well-informed contemporaries to Benedict Arnold's treachery can also be followed here. And it is interesting to find a Virginian arguing cogently for the abolition of slavery: "It wd. certainly be more consonant to the principles of liberty which ought never to be lost sight of in a contest for liberty" (II, 209).

In general, the first volume includes Madison's letters to his family and his friends at Princeton, and his activities in the Virginia Convention of 1776 and the Virginia council of state. The second covers his early service as a member of congress, with considerable detail on relations with Spain and the navigation of the Mississippi River. Since Madison was not a major figure during the Revolutionary War, the importance of the collection will increase as Madison himself plays a larger part. Yet it is the clarity of his thinking on abstract subjects which has always been his greatest contribution to American political history.

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