

The Papers of James Madison. Volume II, 20 March 1780-23 February 1781. Edited by William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1962. Map, illustrations, notes, and index. Pp. xix, 344. \$10.00.)

Covering a brief one-year period, ending with the ratification of the Articles of Confederation in 1781, this volume deals with a country at war. Madison, a delegate to the Continental Congress, viewed the war from Philadelphia; his correspondents viewed it from Virginia. From either place the view was dismal (and frequently wrong; rumors abounded almost in the same hopeless volume as the currency). Military supplies and troops were hard to procure. The Spanish government seemed reluctant to grant rights which Americans claimed in the Mississippi region, a topic which includes some of the better of

Madison's writings in this volume. The reader, of course, recognizes that prospects are soon to brighten; he finds increasing mention of Cornwallis and military operations in the Carolinas. Then, too, Maryland's ratification of the Articles is to instill new hope for more effective union and provide a broader stage for Madison's political talents.

As a delegate to a frequently ineffective Congress, Madison appears as a diligent, competent, and hopeful patriot, working hard in an unrewarding job. No lightness touches his letters. His "natural reserve" is evident throughout. Some of his correspondents—Edmund Pendleton, for example—impress the reader as persons; Madison impresses the reader as a delegate to the Continental Congress.

As in Volume I, the editorial work is thorough and impressive. To ask for less may be a disservice to those scholars who will be grateful for one or another of the extended annotations. Yet the over-all effect is one of being blanketed by editorial commentary. That "the sea god Proteus assumed many different shapes to avoid capture" may clarify Pendleton's reference to "Proteaus." But why bother?

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