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. Vol. I: xlii + 344 pp. Vol. II: xx + 344 pp. Illustrations, facsimiles, notes, and indexes. $10.00 per volume.)

This new edition of the papers of Madison, published under the joint sponsorship of the University of Chicago and the University of Virginia, is being done in the grand manner by the most exacting standards of superlative scholarship. Julian P. Boyd's "unusually close" association with the project is gratefully acknowledged by the editors, who deserve the highest compliment: they are disciples who have become peers of the master.

The papers of Madison as here presented and usefully indexed include all extant speeches and writings *by* him or which "appear" to have been "in large degree the product of his mind." That seems to mean any document with which Madison was associated, such as petitions not composed but merely signed by him along with many others. Also included are all extant letters *to* him and other papers to him which received his "careful attention" —a "test" which (the editors say) will exclude form documents such as commissions or passports and routine dispatches received by Madison as Secretary of State or President. The present edition of Madison's papers, in other words, aims to be complete, whereas the four previous editions included only 1,020 or about one sixth of his own compositions and merely an "insignificant fraction" of the fifteen thousand letters addressed to him. Every item in the present edition will be printed in full, faithfully duplicating the original down to the last comma, misspelling, or variation in wording. In addition, there are fantastically meticulous annotations explaining each document's historical context and significance as well as identifying the persons, places, events, and literary allusions mentioned.

The first two volumes of the series, which will total "some twenty volumes," cover Madison through his thirtieth year, as a college student, member of his county's committee of safety, delegate to the Virginia Convention of 1776, member of the Governor's Council, and delegate to the Continental Congress. Madison appears here, in the words of a contemporary, as a "gloomy, stiff creature" of rather conventional opinions. Even when his youthful interests were belletristic, he found the British reviews "loose in their principals [and] encourage[r]s of free enquiry even such as destroys the most

essential Truths, Enemies to serious religion" (I, 101). "I do not meddle in Politicks," he wrote at the close of 1773. But, the "diabolical Hell conceived principle of persecution," even more than tax disputes with Britain, soon lured him from "amusing Studies," and he became a sober young revolutionist lamenting the weaknesses of the Confederation, inflationary measures, military reverses, and the inadequacies of troop supply. The greatly libertarian and judicious spirit of later years had only begun to emerge. Religious liberty was his first serious concern, and although his ideas on separation of church and state were too advanced for 1776, he was instrumental in securing a guarantee of the "free exercise" of religion, rather than mere "toleration," in the Virginia Declaration of Rights (the subject of an excellent editorial essay). In 1780, when hearing of a plan to offer slaves as bounties, he asked: "would it not be as well to liberate and make soldiers at once of the blacks themselves as to make them instruments for enlisting white Soldiers? 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). But when Tory sedition was concerned, Madison possessed a strong tinge of the vigilante spirit (I, 147, 161-62, 190-91) and even suspected Franklin's loyalty on the basis of mere rumor ("the bare suspicion of his guilt amounts very nearly to a proof of its reality" [I, 151]).

The review of a new edition of the papers of a major statesman tends to follow a ritualized formula—expression of gratitude for the editors' contribution to the American heritage and historiography, of praise for their scholarship and conscientious dedication to exacting tasks, and of appreciation for the importance of their subject's life. Since these volumes undoubtedly deserve and will receive the ritualized treatment elsewhere, and in abundance, I prefer to conclude on a note of dissent.

I object to the editorial imperialism and compulsiveness that characterize these volumes. The editors have the collecting proclivities of a pack rat and promiscuously include just about everything—except Madison's laundry tickets, which presumably could not be located; and they treat every item, even the most trivial, to lavish editorial annotations which frequently amount to pedantry. Who really cares whether Madison advertised for a lost horse (I, 310-11; the elaborate annotation is so absurd as to be comical) or that his landlady was involved in a lawsuit over her furniture (the annotation to which exceeds that given to Madison's long, brilliant essay on "Money," the one and only essay by him in these volumes)? Why waste half a page on a "Letter not found" from the Virginia Board of Trade to the Virginia delegates in Congress (Madison was a delegate and all missives to and from the delegation are included), when it is not even certain that the dispatch was ever sent (II, 9; see also II, 70, 95)? Why publish fifteen items, rather than one sample, from the Board of Admiralty papers of the Continental Congress (each with notes as lengthy as the documents), for the brief period of his

membership on the board, when they have been published elsewhere and Madison admittedly wrote none and contributed little, if anything, to any; and why republish so very many Council of State papers when there is no evidence that Madison shared the composition of any? What is the importance of the two-line receipt (I, 48) or the two-line authorization of payment (II, 78), the former with twenty-eight lines of footnotes giving biographical sketches of the nonentities borrowing money and the latter with forty lines of footnotes, mostly identifying the state auditors? Why devote a five-page editorial headnote (admirably done) to the problem of the cession of western lands, when Madison merely made a perfunctory second (not published) to a motion (published) made by a colleague?

Given the number of pages per volume, they are overpriced compared to other "Papers" being published. They are padded with many barely relevant and often piddling documents laboriously glossed. The editors substitute an overabundance of industry for a sense of proportion. At the present pace, the promised twenty volumes will probably become many more than that, for Madison lived until 1836 (56 years yet to go), the volume of his correspondence and essays prodigiously increased, and the most important stretches of his public career lie ahead. Considering these volumes, much can be said for the old-fashioned "Selected Papers of," the use of a calendar of unimportant papers, and a more spartan employment of annotations; the prodigious talents of the editors should be reserved for the really significant documents. These two volumes deserve to be reviewed by a Frank Sullivan, whose "Garland of Ibids," a devastating parody of Van Wyck Brooks's use of footnotes, should be read by the editors.

Brandeis University LEONARD W. LEVY