

The Papers of James Madison. Secretary of State Series, Vol. 10.

By James Madison. Edited by Mary A. Hackett, J. C. A. Stagg, Anne Mandeville Colony, Katharine E. Harbury, and Mary Parke Johnson. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2014, 764 pages, \$85.00 Cloth.

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This volume, covering the dates of 1 July 1805-31 December 1805, is the tenth in the *Secretary of State Series* of *The Papers of James Madison*. It deserves a place in the American history collection of any research library not only as part of the definitive edition of Madison's writings, but also for the insights it sheds on the institutional development of the State Department and American foreign policy during the second Jefferson administration.

Those interested in the history of science and medicine will find much of worth in the volume. In a circular letter addressed to American consuls and commercial agents, Madison requested that they forward to his attention any information they might come across in the course of their duties on the subject of "epidemical disorders" and their containment in order to promote "the protection of our country from disease, and that the means practiced in other countries for its cure may be added to the existing stock of knowledge" (2). Madison's interest in public health generated a number of interesting replies: the reader will find reports on quarantine practices in Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Germany, and Russia.

The volume also includes information about domestic medical issues, ranging from anecdotal reports of yellow fever in Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere, to the more detailed account of Dolley Madison's treatment for a severely ulcerated knee. At the end of July, the couple traveled to Philadelphia to consult with Dr. Philip Syng Physick (1768-1837), a well-regarded surgeon with a reputation for innovative treatments that produced positive results. Although the Madisons initially hoped to be in Philadelphia for only a few weeks, complications with Dolley's recovery prolonged their stay through nearly the end of the year (Madison returned to Washington 23 October; Dolley followed approximately a month later). During the period of her treatment, Madison was preoccupied by his wife's health; despite the serious matters facing his office, nearly all of Madison's letters include references to her ailment and course of treatment. Even more intriguingly, after he returned to the capitol, Dolley wrote frequently about the activities she was undertaking in order to regain strength in her limbs—what would in modern terms be her “physical therapy” assignments. Taken together, these offer an intriguing glimpse of healthcare in the early nineteenth century.

During their month-long separation, Dolley asked James to “indulge me with some information respecting the war with Spain and disagreement with England” (491). Although she made light of her interest by describing herself as “not much of a politician,” she confessed to being “extremely anxious to hear (as far as you may think proper) what is going forward in the Cabinet” (491). The easy tone of both her request and James' reply suggest that such discussions about his work and the business of the new nation were not unusual between them, for Madison was no less frank with her about the frustratingly mercurial nature of the situation than he was with Monroe or Jefferson. He ends, however, by reminding her that whatever his sense of the matter, “the power however of deciding questions of war—and providding [sic] measures that will make or meet it, lies with Congress, and that is always our answer to newsmongers” (502). How quintessentially Madisonian to draw attention, even in this most intimate of correspondences, to Constitutional structures and limitations—and all the more so if, as his comment about “newsmongers” implies, the true audience was not Dolley but rather her social circle in Philadelphia

who would be expecting her to act as an unofficial mouthpiece for the administration's position.

These glimpses of Madison's personality are all too rare as the bulk of the correspondence in the volume consists of letters and reports sent to Madison in relation to foreign affairs. The specter of European affairs looms over the whole volume, as indeed, it must have for Madison and his contemporaries. Reading the reports of territorial officials about their difficulties in establishing American institutions and law in the Michigan and Louisiana Territories, one is reminded of the extremely precarious position of the United States as a nation still very much among nations in the early national period, surrounded by the remnants of European colonization and still dealing with the aftermath of their use of the land and dealings with the native population (see, for example, 146-148; 237-240; 304-306). Likewise, the reader is confronted with multiple accounts of the impact of European hostilities on American commercial interests, ranging from discussions of the problems of insuring goods and ships under such conditions, to requests for government redress on their behalf from individual shipowners and crewmembers.

Sprinkled throughout this very pragmatic collection of materials are references to Madison's more philosophical research on the question of the trading rights of neutral nations in times of war. The British assertion that "a trade not open in peace is not lawful in war" incensed Madison: it was tantamount to an attack upon the interests of neutral nations, a "principle that threatens more loss and vexation to neutrals than all the other belligerent claims put together" (323). Characteristically, he turned to a scholarly pursuit of both historical and theoretical sources to demonstrate not only the novelty but also the injustice and hypocrisy of the policy (some of Madison's notes, as well as synthetic research reports solicited from Peter S. Du Ponceau are included; see 36-41; 68-74; 106-24; 325-336). Writing to James Monroe about his project, he observed the notion was not only "against the law of nations, but one which G. B. is precluded from assuming by the most conclusive facts and arguments derived from herself" (366). To Jefferson, Madison suggested that the publication of his findings would "present [British] selfishness and inconsistencies [sic] in a light, which it would be prudent in her to retreat from" (411). Although the editors inform us that Madison did eventually publish his findings as

An Examination of the British Doctrine, Which Subjects to Capture a Neutral Trade, Not Open in Time of Peace (1806), that pamphlet—which is not included in this volume—did not have the salutary effect on British policy that Madison hoped it would. It may, however, have proven useful for persuading Congress of the propriety of supporting the administration's proposed embargo, a policy which Madison appeared to believe necessary, but potentially outside the strict limitations of the executive's authority (see 322). What is ultimately of greatest interest in this volume is the way in which it illustrates Madison's ability to integrate theory and practice in his statesmanship, and the self-conscious reflection he brought to bear on the matter.