

The Papers of Woodrow Wilson. Volume II, 1881-1884. Edited by Arthur S. Link. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967. Pp. xvi, 680. Notes, illustrations, index. \$15.00.)

This, the second volume of Woodrow Wilson's papers, encompasses a formative period in his life, from January 1, 1881, to January 31, 1884. During these years Wilson tried and abandoned the practice of law, fell in and out of love with his cousin, Harriet Woodrow, met and won his future wife, Ellen Louise Axson, and decided (ironically, almost by chance) to pursue his yearning for literary-scholarly-political distinction via graduate study at the Johns Hopkins University. Nearly half of this volume is devoted to the last six months of 1883, when Wilson's two most important goals, acceptance by Miss Axson and return to "those subjects whose study most delights me" (p. 357), were realized. Even if one repudiates the importance assigned to these years by Bullitt and Freud's collaborative catastrophe, the documentary record presented here in full, fascinating detail is of tremendous value for understanding Wilson the public figure and the private man.

This volume is continued evidence that *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, under Arthur S. Link's skilled editorship, is a historical accomplishment of the first magnitude. It demonstrates that necessary fusion of subject and editor which, unfortunately, is so rarely achieved. One might wish that certain of Wilson's replies to missives from friends and relatives had been preserved; one could raise gentle objection to type choice or to place of insertion of editorial notes. But these quibbles do not detract at all from the volume's excellence.

Notably, this volume contains many heretofore unpublished documents, especially the remarkable exchange of letters between Wilson and Miss Axson. Their letters reveal two young adults expressing, not some abnormal condition of mother or father substitution, but healthy attachment and growing, deserved respect for each other's ideas and aspirations. The thoroughly-entranced "Woodrow" who wrote such epic, fervent letters may have been somewhat priggish and hypersensitive, but he did not lack the ability (occasionally) to laugh at himself or even (at times) to throw off his hopeless didacticism. Wilson's descriptions in these letters of his first term in Baltimore, supplemented by notebooks and other writings, provide useful information about his participation in and reaction to the changing, "experimental" academic environment then taking hold at Johns Hopkins.

Above all, the man Wilson was and was to become stands revealed in the record of these years. It shows, for example, how much of a southerner he was in background, interests, and outlook. The later influence of this factor is obvious from reading—in context—"Stray Thoughts from the South," "Culture and Education at the South," and other writings. Finally, one finds ample expression of Wilson's awesome ambition, that daemon which was driving him to satisfy his "love for composition . . . keen desire to become a master of philosophical discourse and of the art of public speech," with the ultimate purpose of making himself "an outside force in politics" (pp. 357-58). Volume II demonstrates with what ardor and unbending determination Wilson set these goals for himself and began to make his way toward their attainment.