

## Publisher's Gallery



—Drawn from life by Norkin.

### V: Charles Scribner

THERE never was any doubt what Charles Scribner, chief of Charles Scribner's Sons since 1932, was going to be when he grew up. He doesn't recall the subject being bandied in household discussions, but "the influences were all there." So, with an A.B. from Princeton (1913) in hand, he turned up matter-of-factly at the family firm (Grandfather Charles partnered its founding in 1846, Father Charles and Uncles John and Arthur renamed it in 1879) and went to work.

The present Charles Scribner regards the business "as a trusteeship" to be handed down with the hallmark intact: hewing to the belief "publishing is a profession, a career"—"my grandfather and father would whirl in their graves to hear books called merchandise"—, not making sheeps' eyes at rental libraries. Any aura of excessive traditionalism is dissipated by a warm voice, radiant good nature, self-deprecation—"they say it's a good thing to let brains lie fallow for a generation; my father was the family genius [star-spangling the trade list with Barrie, R.L.S., Henry James, Galsworthy, Santayana, Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe] and my son [Charles, Jr., salutatorian Princeton '43], our advertising manager, is a Phi Bete."

Mr. Scribner has elephantiasis of the memory, says an ex-employee. He works in town two evenings a week—"no literary teas, no cocktail parties, no publishers' meetings; I figure other publishers are competitors, so I'm a lone wolf, but a friendly one"—, gladly leaves his native N. Y. for Far Hills, N. J., other nights. He is a Republican, but "not political," a tennis player, a rider to hounds (*Mrs. S.* is joint master of the Essex Fox Hounds), a raiser of Cairns. He hasn't time for reading—"except mss. of all my friends!" —E. P. H.

job, or you can make a lot of money. I don't think you're the kind who will go for the money. But remember this, the test is if you hesitate. Unless you say 'No' right off, the first time an offer comes your way, you're gone." All his life, La Guardia never hesitated. But before he reached Congress, he had an extraordinary education in the ways of men who didn't say "No."

There was the judge who congratulated him on the presentation of his case, but still decided against him. When La Guardia asked why, the judge replied that he'd give him "a break" some other time. "What a hell of a way to dispense justice," La Guardia comments. "This same judge is now on the bench of the New York Supreme Court." Then there was the judge who called over the lawyer for a trolley line and said, "Was it all right, Joe? Don't worry. If they bring in a verdict against you I'll set it aside."

After experiences of this sort, La Guardia studied the system by which judges were selected for nomination, and found that most of them were hand-picked by politicians. When he was mayor he tried to correct the situation, "but did not get much help from the Bar Association."

When he was deputy attorney general of New York, La Guardia brought a case against some large packing houses for violation of a new weights and measures law. When the case was called, State Senator James J. Walker, later Mayor of New York, appeared for the defense. Walker told the court he was author of the law, and knew it was not intended to apply in such cases. Afterwards, when the case had been dismissed and Jimmy and the judge had genially invited him to have a drink, La Guardia asked Walker how he could come into court to defeat his own law. Jimmy replied:

Fiorello, when are you going to get wise? Why do you suppose we introduce bills? We introduce them sometimes just to kill them. Other times we have to pass a bill. Why are you in the Attorney General's office? You're not going to stay there all your life. You make your connections now, and later you can pick up a lot of dough defending cases you are now prosecuting. The Judge, La Guardia adds, "acquiesced in all that."

La Guardia first got on the Republican ticket for Congress because the leaders in his district had no one else they cared to run. He almost got elected, without their help. But although he deserved the nomination again two years later, he found that a young outsider was slated by the leaders to get it. The fortunate young man's friends had promised a substantial contribution to the party if he was nominated. The young man

was Hamilton Fish, but La Guardia was adamant and insisted on making the race anyway. He organized his own campaign and his own watchers, and he won. He got in by 357 votes, and his final disillusionment came when he got back to Republican headquarters and overheard an official there apologizing to the Democratic precinct leader and assuring him they had done nothing to help La Guardia. "An apology for my victory instead of congratulations! Those are just some of the little things that have made me an incurable insurgent," relates La Guardia.

And he found no improvement, as he went higher up the ladder.

[In Congress] "I saw how easy it was to exploit public office to get law business. . . . Even lawyers tried to retain me to appear in Government cases or before Government departments. Members of Congress, of course, are forbidden by law to engage in such practice. However, strangely enough, a great deal of it was going on during the seven terms I served in the House of Representatives."

La Guardia arrived in Washington in time to hear Woodrow Wilson deliver his war message, and his story of it is a vivid one. In uniform himself, before his first term was over, the new Congressman obviously enjoyed cutting Army red tape right and left and promising to pass a law if anyone made trouble about it. He has scathing words for the Liberty Motor scandal and equally scathing jibes at the Army medical service.

La Guardia's book should be required reading in every political science course, and in every law course. It is disillusioning, but it demonstrates what one determined individual can do against the system, both by way of personal advancement and in cleaning things up.

Originally scheduled for publication on May 12, "The Making of an Insurgent" is to be published on May 19.

## If to the Aconites

By Christine Turner Curtis

AND IF to the aconites, other noons  
Bring other lovers, leaning in awe  
above those cylices of gold,  
ribbed with faint viridian veins;  
and other voices, two by two,  
marvel at that burning ore  
minted from mounds of snow . . .

well, it is obvious, is it not  
that clockwise the sure seasons move;  
the hours from ice to aconite  
only the shadows can compute;  
petals catch fire, and petals drop;  
and bitter or sweet, the cup of love  
is rudely dashed from the lip.

*The Saturday Review*

## Seven Years with U.S. President No. 4

JAMES MADISON: THE NATION-ALIST, 1780-1787. By Irving Brant. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1948. 484 pp. \$6.

Reviewed by L. H. BUTTERFIELD

CERTAINLY one of the ablest among American statesmen, James Madison is just as certainly one of the least colorful. Though he did much and said much that counted during a long career in posts of responsibility, he neither did nor said nor suffered anything that caused the American people to take him to their hearts and, therefore, to be curious enough to read about him as they do about some of his lesser contemporaries, say John Paul Jones. But Madison was not a dull or prosy person. He said and did some exceedingly memorable things—that are not remembered. The answer to this puzzle may lie in the fact that he was so constantly in the company of people of more pronounced traits of mind or personality, traits that could be taken hold of by hostile or friendly journalists and later by anecdotists, biographers, and the writers of textbooks. Around Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Patrick Henry, and even Dolly Madison folklore has accumulated. But I know of none associated with James Madison except as Dolly's husband.

All this may merely be begging the question. At any rate Mr. Brant started his researches years ago on the correct assumption that Madison's contribution to his country's establishment and growth was ill-recognized. The first fruit of his efforts was published as "Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist," in 1941, covering his subject's family background, education at Princeton, and fledgling years in Virginia Revolutionary politics. The present volume, opening in March 1780, when Madison arrived at Philadelphia to take his seat as a Virginia delegate in Congress, extends to the eve of the Federal Convention in the same city seven years later. This is a long volume for a seven-year span in the life of a legislator. In it the biographer has conceded nothing to popular taste. The treatment may fairly be called exhaustive.

The first four of these seven years Madison spent in Congress, where he achieved a record for continuous attendance that should have shamed the other members of that dilatory body. Mr. Brant devotes the first three-quarters of his volume to these four years. A vast variety and quantity of the work of Congress came Madison's way, for he had two qual-

ities that were recognized by everyone: integrity and a willingness to pull the laboring oar in all kinds of weather. The present chapters on some of the tangled issues of the Confederation period, such as the public lands question ("Heritage or Spoils"), the instructions to our peace commissioners, and the multifold problems of a Federal revenue, are among the fullest and most lucid expositions of their respective subjects that have been written. Under the exasperating restrictions of the Articles of Confederation, in "a Federal union," as Mr. Brant says, "where a titmouse equaled an elephant," Madison labored with dignity and considerable success for the cause of national unity. He believed fervently that

the citizens of the United States are responsible for the greatest trust ever confided to a political society. If justice, good faith, honor, gratitude, and all the other qualities which ennoble the character of a nation, and fulfill the ends of government, be the fruits of our establishments, the cause of liberty will acquire a dignity and luster which it has never yet enjoyed; and an example will be set which cannot but have the most favorable influence on the rights of mankind.

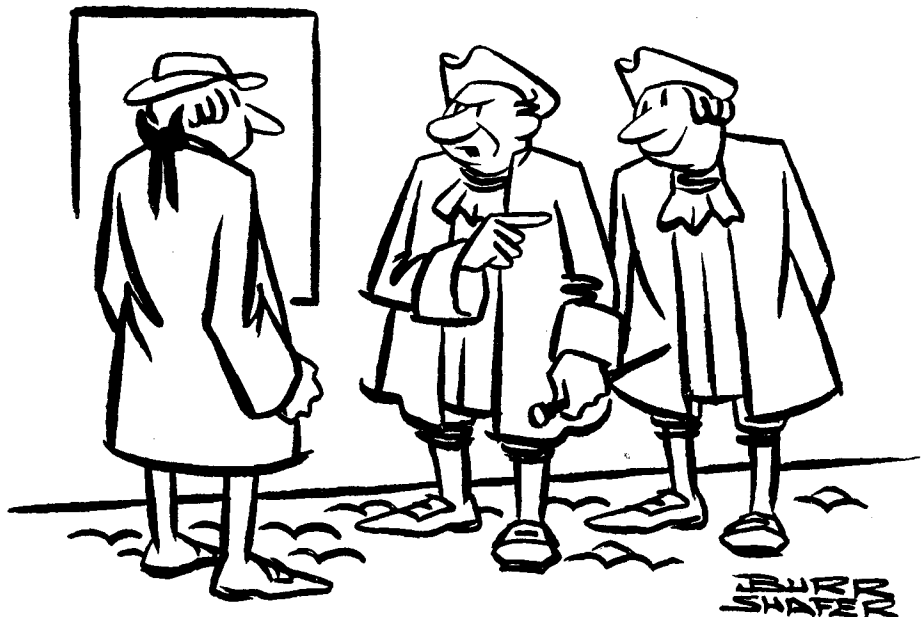
But should the contrary occur,

the great cause which we have engaged to vindicate will be dishonored and betrayed; the last and fairest experiment in favor of the rights of human nature will be turned against them, and their patrons and friends exposed to be insulted and silenced by the votaries of tyranny and usurpation.

This, from Congress's address to the states pleading for support of the revenue plan of 1783 (which was also drawn up by Madison), is a specimen of how memorably Madison could write. It is a great state paper lost in the arid stretches of "The Journals of the Continental Congress."

Holding fast to this belief, and rigorously schooled in both the literature of government and the methods of parliamentary infighting, Madison entered the Federal Convention superbly equipped for the work which was to prove his greatest achievement.

He had, meanwhile, done effective work in the Virginia Assembly in carrying forward Jefferson's reform program, most notably in securing the passage of the Bill for Religious Freedom; he had attended the Annapolis Convention of 1786; and he had persuaded George Washington to join the Virginia delegation to the Federal Convention that had sprung from the seemingly abortive meeting at Annapolis. Madison even had a little personal life during these seven years—farming, studying natural history, and traveling with Lafayette to a conference with the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix. One short chapter in this book tells more than has hitherto been known about a broken love affair in 1783. This episode is all the more poignant in its incongruity with the surrounding chapters that detail the work of a "committee to whom was referred the report of a committee." In this careful study Madison appears, as before, but more clearly and impressively, as the scholarly and devoted public servant, more the American than the Virginian, and the most constructive statesman of our critical period.



THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH  
"And I can prove it by Baron Munchausen here!"