severe. In fact, "the temperature was above freezing the entire time except for the last thirteen days of December, eleven days each in January and February, and five days in March" (p. 37). Judged by the standards of the winters of 1976-1977 and 1977-1978, this does not appear bad at all.

A particularly interesting section of the book is that devoted to medicine and health. The problems of shortages of supplies and the conflict between the general hospitals and the flying hospitals were an intriguing story that should have been handled in greater detail.

One sympathizes with the people at Valley Forge. However, the reader wishes that the author had greater skill at bringing the real-life struggle and drama of that experience to life. There are the makings of a really human story in the experience of Valley Forge. Unfortunately, Trussell seems to lack the literary imagination which would have made a highly readable human drama out of this stodgy, though scholarly, work.

On balance, this is a great little book. Unfortunately the promise of the thesis and possibilities of the story are not fully realized by the cramped style and slender treatment they are rendered by this account.

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Satisfied with two hundred years of survival, it is sometimes difficult to imagine the importance of our nation's first federal elections. A few "wrong" moves in the 1780s, however, would have altered our present situation beyond recognition. Jensen and Becker should be congratulated for providing an accessible look into the workings of the victors, as well as at "the murmurs of partial discontent" which might have prevailed.

This, the first of three volumes, contains the material from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. Although Pennsylvania is represented by less material than is Massachu-
settts, it has more than the combined total of New Hampshire and South Carolina.

The material itself is often as interesting as it is enlightening. To be sure, some documents are little more than lists of delegates and of interest to certain specialists only. On the other hand, the following excerpt illustrates not only some humor, but a perennial factor in American politics and life:

I have taken a retrospective view of twenty years past, and find, that whenever all was quiet — no electioneering going forward — no party views in agitation — no public schemes on foot, in which the votes, influence, or contributions of the Germans could be of any service — then, we were ignorant Germans etc. But as soon as our members can be of use in promoting the political maneuvers of any man or party, the newspapers are filled with — the respectable body of Germans — the honest and enlightened Germans etc. And these good souls are much more anxious about our rights, interests and advancement, than we are ourselves (p. 363).

This volume, and the ones that follow, can be highly recommended for historians, as well as for libraries large and small. On a document per dollar basis, it is a bargain!

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This fourth volume of James K. Polk's correspondence covers a gloomy period for the Democratic party. After a hard-fought state campaign in which Tennessee Democrats were far too optimistic about their chances, Whigs swept the legislature, the governorship, and the congressional delegation. Polk could only sit helplessly by while the victorious Whigs ran the state to their liking. His correspondents elsewhere in the nation reported equally disastrous results, as the panic of 1837 took its toll of Democratic officeholders.

Although personally secure in his own district, Polk barely won reelection as Speaker in December 1837, and during the entire next year his divided and dispirited party accomplished virtually nothing in a Congress which it nominally controlled. Polk himself adhered firmly to strict Jacksonian hard-money and antibank ideas in the financial crisis and devoted most of his efforts to steering Van Buren's subtreasury bill through a sea of obstacles.

Faced with the likelihood of losing the speakership to a Whig