

**James Madison to James Monroe, March, 1817.  
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ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,  
1900-1910.**

**TO JAMES MONROE. D. OF S. MSS. INSTR.**

Washington, Mar. [Filed March 5] 1817.

Dear Sir, —Altho' your personal and official acquaintance with Mr. J. Graham,<sup>1</sup> be well known

<sup>1</sup> This letter, probably handed to Graham just before Madison left the Presidency, was one of the few letters of recommendation for office written by Madison. Soon after his return to Montpelier he had the following circular letter printed:

The friendship which has long subsisted between the President of the United States and myself gave me reason to expect, on my retirement from office, that I might often receive applications to interpose with him on behalf of persons desiring appointments. Such an abuse of his dispositions towards me would necessarily lead to the loss of them, and to the transforming me from the character of a friend to that of an unreasonable and troublesome solicitant. It therefore became necessary for me to lay down as a law for my future conduct never to interpose in any case, either with him or the Heads of Departments (from whom it must go to him) in any case whatever for office. To this rule I must scrupulously adhere; for were I to depart from it in a single instance, I could no longer plead it with truth to my friends in excuse for my not complying with their requests. I hope therefore that the declining it in the present, as in every other case, will be ascribed to its true cause, the obligation of this general law, and not to any disinclination existing in this particular case;

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and still less to an unwillingness to be useful to my friends on all occasions not forbidden by a special impropriety.— *D. of S. MSS. Applications for Office.*

to me, I can not, on the occasion of my final departure from the public service, satisfy myself, without expressing my sense of his great merit.

Mr. Graham, recommended by my knowledge of his public agency abroad, and of his private virtues, was invited into the Department of State, as the chief under the Head of it, whilst the Department was in my hands. It was my wish, more than his own that was gratified by the appointment. And I have always considered it as the effect of an honorable desire to serve his country, combined with his personal & political feelings, that he remained for so long a period, in a station, without the attractions, which could otherwise have detained him in it.

On these grounds, & from continued & varied opportunities of being intimately acquainted with Mr. Graham, I not only take a pleasure, but feel an obligation, in saying that I regard him as among the most worthy of men, and most estimable of citizens; as adding to a sound & discriminating judgment, a valuable stock of acquirements adapted to public affairs; and to both, a purity of character, a delicacy of sentiment, and an amenity of temper & manners, exceeded in no instance to which I could refer.

With this view of his capacity to be useful to his country and the principles guarantying a proper exertion of it, I can not but hope that suitable occasions may present themselves for preventing a loss to the public of the services of a citizen, so highly entitled to its confidence.

With the highest consideration & regard, I remain

Yours.