

**James Madison to Henry Clay, March 22, 1832.  
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**TO HENRY CLAY. MAD. MSS.**

Confidential. Mar. 22, 1832

Dear Sir I have duly recd yours of the 17th. Altho' you kindly release me from a reply, it may be proper to say, that some of the circumstances to which you refer were not before known to me.

On the great question before Congs. on the decision of wch. so much depends out of Congs. I ought the less to obtrude an opinion as its merits essentially depend on many details which I have never investigated and of which I am an incompetent Judge. I know only that the Tariff in its present amount & form, is a source of deep & extensive discontent, and I fear that without alleviations separating the more moderate from the more violent opponents, very serious effects are threatened. Of these the most formidable & not the least probable wd. be a Southern Convention; the avowed object of some, and the unavowed object of others, whose views are, perhaps, still more to be dreaded. The disastrous consequences of disunion, obvious to all will no doubt be a powerful check, on its partisans; but such a Convention, characterized as it wd. be by selected talents, ardent zeal & the confidence of those represented wd not be easily stopped in its career; especially as many of its members, tho' not carrying with them particular aspirations for the honors,

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&c &c presented to ambition on a new political theatre, would find them germinating in such a hotbed.

To these painful ideas I can only oppose hopes & wishes that notwithstanding, the wide space & warm feelings which divide the parties, some accommodating arrangements may be devised that will prove an immediate anodyne, and involve a lasting remedy to the Tariff discords.

Mrs. M. charges me with her affece. remembrances to Mrs. Clay, to whom I beg to be at the same time respectfully presented, with reassurances to yrself, of my high esteem & cordial regards.