

ing Dr. Priestley to take care that Mr. Adams should not mistake my politics. In consequence of this conversation, Dr. Priestley wrote the following letter; not a few months, but above two years ago.

August 12, 1797.

Dear Sir:—It was far from being my intention or wish to trouble you with the request of any favors, though it is now in your power to grant them; and it is not at all probable that I shall ever take a second liberty of the kind. But circumstances have arisen which I think call upon me to do it once, though not for myself, but a friend. The office of agent for American claims was offered, I understand, to Mr. Hall of Sunbury, and he has declined it. If this be the case, and no other person be yet fixed upon, I shall be very happy if I could serve Mr. Cooper, a man I doubt not of equal ability, and possessed of every other qualification for the office, by recommending him. It is true, that both he and myself fall, in the language of our calumniators, under the description of Democrats, who are studiously represented as enemies to what is called government, both in England and here. What I have done to deserve that character, you well know, and Mr. Cooper has done very little more. In fact, we have both been persecuted for being friends to American liberty, and our preference of the government of this country has brought us both hither. However, were the accusations true, I think the appointment of a man of unquestionable ability and fidelity to his trust, for which I would make myself answerable, would be truly such a mark of superiority to popular prejudice as I should expect from you. I, therefore, think it no unfavorable circumstance in the recommendation. That you will act according to your best judgment, I have no doubt, with respect to this and other affairs of infinitely more moment, through which I am persuaded you will bring the country with reputation to yourself, though in circumstances of such uncommon difficulty, perhaps with less ease and satisfaction than I could wish. With my earnest wishes for the honor and tranquility of your presidency, I am, etc.,

Joseph Priestley.

This letter was accompanied by the following from myself.

Sir:—On my expressing an inclination for the office which Mr. Hall has declined, Dr. Priestley was so good as to offer his services with you on my behalf.

Probably the office will be filled ere this letter can reach you. Probably there may be objections to nominating a person not a native of the country. Probably the objection mentioned by Dr. Priestley may reasonably be deemed of weight in my instance. Be all this as it may, I see no impropriety in the present application to be appointed agent of American claims, for it is still possible I may suppose more weight in the objections than they will be found to deserve. If it should so happen that I am nominated to that office, I shall endeavor to merit the character the Doctor has given me, and your esteem. I am, etc.,

Thomas Cooper.