

Thomas Jefferson to Andrew Ellicott, November 1, 1806, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO ANDREW ELLICOTT J. MSS.

Washington, Nov. 1, 1806.

Dear Sir, —Your letter of Aug. 18 with the account of the eclipse you were so kind as to inclose, found me at Monticello & I meant to have acknowledged it immediately on my arrival here, but I found on my return such an accumulation of business, that altho your letter has continued on my file of *those to be answered*, I have not been able to get to it till now. I thank you for the communication of your observations of the eclipse. Fortune seems to have favored every other place but this with a fair view of it. This spot was covered by a dense cloud through the whole of it's duration, & for some time before & after. I hope the great extent of the path of this eclipse round the globe, & especially thro' our states will furnish many useful corrections of our longitudes. Capt. Lewis will bring us a treasure in this way.

Your opinions of intolerance are mine. When I entered on office, after giving a very small participation in office to republicans by removal of a very few federalists, selected on the very principle of their own intolerance while in office, I never meant to have touched another, but to leave to the ordinary accidents to make openings for republicans, but the vindictive, indecent & active opposition of some individuals has obliged me from time to time to disarm them of the influence of office. But that such a spirit of intolerance should arise between the different sections of republicans, furnishes a poor presage of future tranquility. Of the unhappy effects of the schisms in Pennsylvia and N. York, you see the

Library of Congress

fruit in the state lying between them, where the federalists have recovered a majority in one branch of the legislature, are very near it in the other, & as soon as they shall reach it, they place the executive & every office under it in federal hands. If the two sections of republicans were irreconcilable, still the minor one should not have coalesced with, and voted for federalists. If on the contrary they would keep

themselves independent & set up their own ticket, their whole body would come forward & vote, which would give them the benefit of that part of their force which kept back because it could not support federalists, and the federalists themselves having no hope of bringing in men of their own would have to chuse between the two republican tickets that least disagreeable to themselves. This would only bring into the public councils the different shades of republicans so that the whole body should be represented.

For my part I determined from the first dawn of the first schism never to take part in any schism of republicans, nor in distributing the public trusts ever to ask of which section a party was. The port of retirement is now within sight, it is viewed with longing eyes, and my greatest consolation in it will be the undivided approbation of those with whom, & for whom I have labored. Accept my friendly salutations & the assurances of my respect.