

answerable arguments of former petitions on this subject, and they lament that the short duration of the last session of Congress prevented the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to whom their own, and many other petitions on the subject were referred, from making a report on the answer of your petitioners, and others from different parts of the Union, to the objections to this great and benevolent enterprise, which were brought against it by the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the preceding session of Congress. The Committee were probably so much occupied with the many important topics brought before them during the short session of Congress, that they had not time thoroughly to examine the subject. If they had examined it, they probably would have come to the same result with the Legislature of Massachusetts, who two years ago almost unanimously recommended the subject to the attention of Congress, by a report and resolves sent on last year to the President of the United States, which want of time probably prevented him from laying before Congress.

The question of our north-eastern boundary is still unsettled and is likely to remain so for years to come; and may bring on a war between two of the most enlightened nations in the world,—a war, which so far from settling the question, would only encumber it with new difficulties to be settled by another umpire, whose decision would be as liable to be rejected as the last; and thus it may continue to be the bone of contention between the two countries, until they see the futility of expecting an individual, however learned and discriminating, to settle a question which may require the united wisdom of a high bench of judges, long used to weigh conflicting evidences in the scale of justice; and, from their exalted situation, elevated above all national and political feelings, able not only to give a right decision, but to make that decision plain and satisfactory to the parties concerned, and to the world at large. The opinion has been expressed by some of the ex-governors of the State of Maine, that had such a Court of Nations as that which we contemplate existed, the difficulties of our north-eastern boundary would long ago have been settled to our entire satisfaction.

The plan proposed by your petitioners is two-fold. One part consists of a Congress of Ambassadors from all those Christian and civilized nations who may choose to be represented there, for the purpose of settling such points of the law of nations, as they may be able to agree upon, in a mutual treaty between all the powers represented, which, like any other treaty, might be ratified or rejected by the nations concerned. The other part is the organization, by that Congress, of a Court of Nations for the adjustment of such cases of international difficulties as might be brought before it by the mutual consent of any two or more conflicting nations, without resort to arms. This is the outline of our plan. The details may be filled up by the wisdom of the present and succeeding ages. The whole plan may be adopted, or either part of it; for one is not necessarily dependent on the other. They may exist separately, or both together, as should be thought best. But the two great objects should never be lost sight of, viz., 1st. The settlement of the principles of international law by compact and agreement after mature deliberation; leaving them no longer to be decided by the