

mend by vote "the institution of a Congress of Nations for the purpose of framing a code of international law."

Your petitioners believe that the law of nations is capable of being definitely settled on many points, on which it is still unsettled, and that
 *190 * the good of the civilized world demands its early establishment and codification, so far as practicable. We reflect with alarm on the admitted fact, that the points of international law, on which opposing views led to our last war with Great Britain, still remain unsettled, and may involve us anew in hostilities with any future belligerent European power. We believe that the present interval of peace and amicable relations between the great powers of Christendom generally, would be eminently favorable to the prospective settlement of the possible grounds of future discord and hostility. We cannot but think, too, that the same disposition, which has led the principal powers of Europe, in repeated recent instances, to adjust, by amicable negotiations, or by arbitration, disputes which, a quarter of a century ago, would have inevitably issued in sanguinary wars, would induce them to accede to any proposal, emanating from a source entitled to the highest regard and deference, for the establishment of a code of international law.

It is mainly in this view that we petition your honorable body to take into mature consideration the subject of a "Congress of Nations." We would respectfully submit the question, whether it be not practicable for a body of accredited delegates from the civilized governments of Europe and America to be convened for the establishment of certain leading points of international rights, usage and intercourse. In proposing such a measure, and urging its practicability, we do not propose and urge an unprecedented measure, or one which requires any unwonted form of negotiation, in order for it to be carried into effect. We are, perhaps, unfortunate, in having given to this, our favorite measure, a new name. There have often been three or more parties to an international treaty; and such treaties have always been negotiated by a "Congress of Nations," that is, by a convention composed of the accredited representatives of the several high contracting powers. Moreover, individual points of international law constitute a part or the whole of the subject matter of every treaty between two or more nations; and by every treaty, such points are settled for a season between the parties to the treaty. The measure, in behalf of which we yet hope to see the influence of our government exerted, is the negotiation of a treaty, to which there shall be as many parties as there are civilized and Christian governments, and which shall embrace all the points of international law which accumulated precedent and authority furnish the means of establishing to general satisfaction.

We look forward to the establishment of a system or law of arbitration for the settlement of future international disputes, as an ulterior result of
 * 191 the convening of such a "Congress of Nations," as would be * held for the purpose aforesaid. What that system or mode of adjustment would probably be—whether by the renewal from time to time with judicial functions of the Congress originally convened for legislative purposes (to which we are well aware that there are sound and weighty objections), or by defining, by