

to the injured party:—the general government too had shown an equal disposition to do justice to the Indian tribes; witness the affair of the Cherokees: for as soon as Congress had heard their complaints of an encroachment made on them by some of the people from the frontier of the Carolina, immediate orders were issued for obliging the intruders to evacuate the Indian territory.

But notwithstanding the disposition that prevails as well in the legislatures of those States whose frontiers are most exposed, as in the general government, to cultivate peace and amity with the neighboring Indians, that desirable object is become utterly unattainable in the present posture of affairs:—The frontier Indians have killed a number of whites; the whites, in their turn have made retaliation: both parties are in the highest degree exasperated against each other, and likely to continue so, in spite of every endeavor that can be made to effect a reconciliation: with minds thus irritated, it is vain to hope for peace, as long as they continue in each other's neighborhood; it is therefore necessary to form a strong barrier, to keep them asunder, unless indeed the advocates for a cessation of hostilities would oblige the frontier settlers to abandon their lands:—but by what new-invented rule of right, should the inhabitants of Kentucky, and the other frontier settlers be laid under a greater obligation, than any other citizens of the United States, to relinquish a property legally acquired by fair purchase?—were it even proposed to pacify the savages, by purchasing the lands anew, such a measure would answer no other purpose, than that of procuring a temporary peace, which would soon again be interrupted by a war, that would reproduce the necessity of again having recourse to the same expedient: we should have to purchase the lands again and again without end; by thus squandering the public money year after year, we should only swell the national debt to an amount, that we cannot possibly foresee:—better at once to make a vigorous effort, to act in a manner becoming the national dignity, and to maintain our ground by war, since we cannot obtain a durable or an honorable peace.

Attempts have at various times been made to effect treaties of peace with the Indian tribes, with whom we are now at war:—and although these efforts have constantly proved ineffectual, they yet shew that neither the United States, nor the state of Virginia, were backward, on their part to adopt conciliatory measures, and to do away that animosity which had commenced on the part of the savages at an early period of the late war with Britain, and had continued to break out at intervals ever since. In the years 1783, 84, 85, 87, 88, and 90, offers of peace were made to them: on the last mentioned occasion, when a treaty was proposed at the Miami village, the Indians at first refused to treat: they next required thirty days to deliberate—and in the interim, the inhabitants of Kentucky were expressly prohibited by the President of the United States, to carry on any offensive operations against them; yet notwithstanding this forbearance on the part of the whites, no less than 120 persons were killed or captured by the savages, and several prisoners roasted alive, during that short period, at the expiration of which, the Indians refused to give any answer at all.

On another occasion, the Indians, not content with rejecting our offers of peace, proceeded even so far as to insult us, by telling us, we have lands within the British posts, and asking us, why we did not go and take possession of them?—Will it be said, that we are unable to do it?—Is this language to be used within the United States? No! we are able, abundantly able to do it, whenever we please: and if we would but retrench our expenses in some instances, which might well admit of a reduction, our ability would still increase: our finances are not quite so insufficient as some gentlemen seem to imagine, nor so easily deranged—we are still able to prove that the boasted efficiency of the general government is something more than an empty name—we can yet raise both men and money sufficient to defend the nation from either injury or insult.

It is now too late to enquire, whether the war was originally undertaken on the principles of justice, or not:—we are actually involved in it, and cannot recede, without exposing numbers of innocent persons to be butchered by the enemy: for, though we should determine to discontinue the war, can it be said that the savages will also agree to a cessation of hostilities?—it is well known that they are averse to peace; and even the warmest advocate of pacific measures must therefore allow that the war is a war of necessity, and must be supported: we cannot, without impeachment both to our justice and our humanity, abandon our fellow citizens on the frontier to the rage of their savage enemies: and although the excise may be somewhat unpopular, although money may still be wanted, what is the excise? what is money when put in competition with the lives of our friends and brethren?

A sufficient force must be raised for their defence: and the only question now to be considered is, what that force shall be: experience has proved, that the force employed in the last campaign, was inadequate: it is true the establishment was not complete: but who will venture to assert, that, if it had been complete, it would have been sufficient for the intended purpose? Are gentlemen, who assert this, so well acquainted with the circumstances of the enemy, as to be able to give an accurate statement of the amount of their forces on the frontier? There are higher opinions in favor of an augmentation of the army, than can be adduced against it—opinions, given by men of judgment and experience, who have themselves been on the spot, and are well acquainted with the situation of affairs in that quarter:—these gentlemen, who must be allowed to be competent judges, are decidedly of opinion, that the present establishment, though completed to the last man, will not furnish an adequate force to carry on the war with effect; and that it will be a hopeless attempt to open another campaign, with less than about five thousand regular troops, the number contemplated in the bill.

Nor ought that number to be deemed extravagant, under an idea, that we have only a contemptible handful of banditti to contend with: their numbers were, last year, from authentic documents, stated at about 1200 warriors, from 23 different tribes.—such was the opposition then contemplated,—but it is impossible to ascertain what accessions of strength they have since received, or even what force they had engaged in the late unfortunate action; as the very men, who were in the engagement, do not pretend to form any just or accurate estimate of the number of their assailants: but there is good reason to suppose, that they had previously entered into an association with various tribes, that have not as yet come within our knowledge: the bows and arrows, used against our troops, on that occasion, afford a convincing proof, that they had foes to encounter from distant nations, as yet unacquainted with the use of fire arms—nor does the account of the bows and arrows depend, for its authenticity, on newspaper evidence alone; gentlemen of unquestionable veracity, who were personally engaged in the action, have declared, that they had themselves noticed the arrows flying.

When we consider the warlike disposition of the Indians in general, and the alacrity, with which the victors are ever sure to be joined by numerous allies, we have every reason to expect a much more formidable opposition in the next campaign:—it is well known, that the savages place all their glory in deeds of war; and that, among them, a young man cannot make his appearance in company, till he has signalized his valor by some martial achievement:—when, to this powerful incentive, a new stimulus is added by the trophies obtained in the late action, it is presumable that numbers will crowd to their standard; and it strongly behoves us to prepare in time for a much more vigorous effort, than any we have as yet made against them.

The objections drawn from the increased expense, must entirely vanish from before the eyes of any man, who looks forward to the consequences of one more unsuccessful campaign:—such a disaster would eventually involve the nation in much greater expense, than that which is now made the ground of opposition:—better therefore at once to make a vigorous and effectual exertion to bring the matter to a final issue, than to continue gradually draining the treasury, by dragging on the war, and renewing hostilities from year to year.

If we wish to bring the war to a speedy and a happy conclusion, and to secure a permanent peace to the inhabitants on the frontier, we must employ such troops, and adopt such measures, as appear best calculated to ensure success:—if we delay our determination, until the force of the enemy be ascertained, we can make no provision at all: for the nature and circumstances of the case preclude us from the very possibility of obtaining a knowledge of their strength and numbers:—but are we, mean while, to remain inactive and irresolute, and make no efforts to repel their intended attacks? No! Whatever their numbers may be, prudence calls aloud for provision of some kind: and if experience is to have any weight with us, the example of the French and of the British points out the true mode of securing our frontier, and rendering it invulnerable to an Indian foe: let us occupy posts in the vicinity of the enemy; let them be properly garrisoned, and well provided; and the business is done.

These will afford an opportunity of trading with the friendly tribes, and will prevent all intercourse between the whites and the Indians, except under proper regulations: should hostilities be meditated by any tribes who are not in amity with us, early intelligence of their movements, can be obtained: their marauding parties may be either beaten off on their approach, or intercepted on their return:—opportunities

may be taken of separately attacking the hostile tribes: their old men, their squaws, their children, will be exposed a great part of the year, whilst the others are out hunting:—in short, if fear, hope, interest, can be supposed to have any influence on the Indians, this mode of defence must be allowed to be preferable to any other, as giving the fullest scope to the operation of all those motives.

A different mode has been long pursued in Virginia, and adopted by the inhabitants of Kentucky; but its success has not been such, as to offer any inducement to the general government to follow the same plan:—Rangers have there been employed for a number of years, to scour the frontiers; and those rangers, too, were expert woodsmen, perfectly inured to the Indian mode of warfare: yet notwithstanding their utmost vigilance, the savages still found means to commit all the murders and depredations already enumerated:—'tis true, however, that a frontier militia man, trained up in the woods, may be, in many respects, preferable to a regular soldier, who has not the same knowledge of the country, and of the mode of fighting:—but with equal experience (and proper men, possessed of that experience, may be enlisted on the establishment) regular troops will be found infinitely superior to any militia upon earth.

Every man who has ever seen militia in the field, cannot but know, that a very trifling disaster, or a slight cause of discontent, is sufficient to make them disband, and forget all subordination, so far as even to neglect the means of self defence:—whereas regular troops, under proper discipline, and acting with greater steadiness and concert, are much more to be depended on, especially when the object of attack is distant, and great fatigue is to be undergone. The militia, in whatever mode they may be called out, will hardly furnish men of the proper description:—if large pay be offered, the temptation will equally prevail upon those who are unfit for the service as it will upon good effective men:—besides, some of the states have no militia laws; and even in those states which have such laws, they are gone into disuse: no dependance can therefore be placed on militia, under any laws now existing:—there is, indeed, a general militia law now before the house: but if it ever passes, it certainly cannot be passed in due season to answer the purpose of providing for the immediate defence of the frontier—regular troops must be raised, or nothing effectual can be done:—and if to avoid the expense we refuse the only aid that may prove of any real service, we render ourselves responsible for the consequences of this parsimonious policy, which may be attended with the ruin and destruction of our fellow citizens in the western country.

The Cornplanter's speech was again mentioned, and called for: but, as it had been confidentially communicated by the President, an objection was made to having it read, without clearing the galleries:—whereupon,

An honorable member arose, and mentioned his having read it in one of the public newspapers in the state of New-Jersey.

To this it was answered, that if any gentleman had the newspaper to produce, the speech might be publicly read from that:—otherwise, altho it might be very proper that the speech itself should be read, yet, as it had been confidentially received from the executive, there would be a manifest trespass on propriety and decorum, in having it read with open galleries:—it was therefore wished, that the galleries might be cleared.

The parliamentary etiquette requiring that this should be done by the house, and not by a committee, the committee rose for the purpose; and,

The Speaker having resumed the chair, the motion for clearing the galleries, was renewed.

An objection was here started, by an honorable gentleman in favor of the augmentation, who said, that, as some gentlemen had spoken on the popular side of the question, whilst the galleries had been open, it was unfair to preclude those of opposite sentiments from an opportunity of answering their arguments in the same public manner, and proving to the people the justice, and necessity of the war.

The motion, however, was persisted in, and the galleries were cleared.

[The speakers in this day's debate, were Messrs. Wayne, Goodhue, Boudinot, Livermore, Steele, Parker, Bourne (Rhode-Island) White and Moore—Mr. White and Mr. Moore opposed the motion; they were in favor of the augmentation proposed in the bill—The other gentlemen were in favor of striking out the clause.]

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8.

The Speaker laid before the House a letter from the Secretary of War, enclosing copies of the official communications which have taken place between him and the governor of the state of Virginia, respecting the temporary defence of the frontier of that commonwealth.