

1840

judgment may be proper. The representatives were desired to app-

tain the 500 copies of the statement referred to among our Quarterly Meetings.

"To the Yearly Meeting, now sitting:

The committee on Indian concerns report—That since our last Yearly Meeting, they have endeavored to avail of every opportunity to promote the object of their appointment, and have, in conjunction with our brethren of Genesee, New York and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, afforded such assistance and advice to the Seneca Indians residing in the western parts of the state of New York, as circumstances have enabled them to afford.

The deputation of Friends from our meetings which last year attended our Yearly Meeting on their way to Washington, for the purpose of endeavoring to prevent the expulsion of the Senecas from the reservations in the state of New York, having invited the co-operation of our committee, it was after due consideration, believed that it would be right for us to unite with them, in the efforts they were then making. This committee accordingly appointed several of its members to co-operate with these Friends in the capacity of a general committee, and to take such measures as might be deemed expedient for the benefit and protection of these Indians.

The Friends thus appointed, have given their active attention to the subject in conjunction with the general committee. A council was held with the Indians at Farmington, in which these greatly injured people fully explained the grievous wrongs they had suffered, and after stating the many difficulties which now surround them, they earnestly solicited the advice and aid of Friends. In reply to these communications, the following address was delivered and interpreted to them, viz:

"To the Seneca Nation of Indians in the State of New York. Brothers! At our meeting the day before yesterday with the delegates of the Seneca Nation, they informed us that they wished to have our advice in relation to their present distressing circumstances—

"Brothers! The Friends you see before you, are a delegation from the four Yearly Meetings of Genesee, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Many of us have travelled several hundred miles to come & see you and to talk with you, and to confer together with prayer, that the Great Spirit might give us wisdom and light, that we might find out and see plainly the right path for us and you to walk in."

"Brothers! We have considered your request that we would give you counsel and advice. We have looked all around us for a right way and safe path for the Indians to walk in, and we now give you our advice. You say that the Seneca Nation has not sold its lands. You assure us that the treaty lately ratified by the Senate of the United States, was not executed according to the conditions solemnly adopted and prescribed by that body. You say that it was not signed by a majority of your chiefs. You have told us that many who did sign it were bribed by large sums of money, to induce them to act contrary to the will of your people; you also tell us that some of the names signed to that treaty are forgeries; and that under these circumstances you are not willing to leave your lands, which the Great Spirit gave you, and which the Government of the United States, by treaties with your people, have assured to you in the most solemn manner.

"Brothers! We have understood, that notwithstanding all you say, and which we believe to be true, the Senate of the United States has ratified the treaty, and the President has proclaimed it the law of the land.

"Brothers! We cannot advise you to resist by force, even an unjust decree. To do so would be wrong. That path is a bloody path; it is strewn with the dead and the dying. The Great Spirit leads none of his children into that path.

"Brothers listen! The Great Spirit loves quiet, peaceful children, and when they walk in his path, he is always near to them,—he hears all their crying,—he sees all their affliction and distress, and in his own time which is the best time, he sends them relief in his own way which is the best way.

"Brothers! We think it best for you at this time, to remain peaceably and quietly on your land, keep as much as possible at your homes, till your ground, take care of your stock, provide for your families, let your children be taught useful learning. As much as possible live peaceably with all men.

"Brothers! The Society of Friends have felt much sympathy with your people—we have heard with great pain the wrongs and injuries which have been heaped upon you. We have seen your tears and have wept for you. We have remembered the kindness of your fathers to our fathers when you were a strong people, and we were few in number and very weak; and we now wish to do all we can to help you. We have at this time concluded to address the governor of Massachusetts, the governor of New York, and the House of Representatives of the U. S. on your behalf.

"Brothers! We now bid you farewell, and in doing so wish to inform you that we will not forget our Red brethren, but intend, with the help of the Great Spirit, to continue our aid, and to promote their present and future welfare."

In accordance with the assurance here given, the committee addressed memorials to the Congress of the United States, and also to the authorities of New York and Massachusetts, soliciting protection to these Indians as far as it could legally be extended to them, and the committee also addressed the following communication to the President, viz: "To Martin Van Buren, President of the United States. "Under the circum-

stances in which the Society of Friends, who for many years past had extended aid to the Indian nation residing in the western parts of the State of New York, now find themselves placed, both as regards their existing relations with those Indians, and their position towards the General Government, the undersigned on behalf of the committee who heretofore addressed the President of the United States, deem it respectful to the President, fully to acquaint him with the measures taken by the Friends in reference to these people, since the amended treaty with them was declared by the Senate to have been ratified, and has been proclaimed.

"On the announcement to the Indians of this result, consternation and gloom were every where spread over their villages. Relying upon the protection of the government and the justice of their cause they were not, after the disclosures that had been made of the means employed to obtain that treaty, prepared for the issue, and on being apprised of it, they manifested the deepest distress. In the pathetic language of one of their chiefs, addressed to us, 'their women were seen on all sides weeping in their houses, along the roads as they passed to their occupations, and in the fields whilst employed in their labors.'

"As soon as they had time for reflection, a general council was called for the purpose of taking into consideration their situation, and, after much deliberation, they came, as we are informed, to the conclusion, that whatever might be the consequences, that they would in no event, voluntarily remove to the country allotted for them, west of the Mississippi, and that if driven off by violence they should accept the invitation they had received to join their friends in Canada, and remove there.

"Before dissolving the council, they agreed again to memorialize the executive of Massachusetts and also of New York, and to petition Congress with the view of once more stating their grievances, and imploring relief so far as either of those authorities might yet be able and disposed to extend protection to them. They also solicited an interview with Friends which was granted to them, and several of their chiefs, by arrangement, met our committee at Farmington, in the state of New York, on the 17th of last month, where after making a full and unreserved disclosure to us of their present difficulties and purposes, they earnestly solicited our assistance and advice.

"On this occasion they reiterated their statements in regard to the means that had been taken to inveigle them out of their lands—their objections against removing to the country that had been designated for their residence beyond the river Mississippi, their intention never to abandon their present homes, unless compelled by force to do so, and their conclusion, should this be done, to retire into Canada and join their nation there.

"The committee, after due consideration of the objections urged by the Indians to removing upon the lands that had been appropriated for them in the West, believing, as they did, that these objections were well founded, could not advise them to go there, and for many grave reasons they could not advise them to go to Canada; they therefore declined recommending them to do either the one or the other.

"The committee are sensible of, and duly appreciate, the very respectful attention which their applications to the President on behalf of these Indians have received, and they feel it due to the President to give him such information as they possess, and a full statement of the part taken by them in regard to this matter. They have witnessed the heart-rending distress of these greatly wronged people, and have sympathized in their afflictions, and under an apprehension that it was their duty to assist them, they have extended such aid as they were enabled to afford them, consistently with our well known pacific and non-resisting principles. Under these views and impressions, the Society of Friends have faithfully made known their case to those who had the power to protect and to do them justice. Whatever, therefore, may be the consequence of the measures, that have been or may hereafter be pursued towards these injured people, the committee trust, that the responsibility may not attach to us.

"The condition of this small remnant of a once numerous and powerful nation, is calculated to awaken the commiseration of every benevolent mind—after being hunted down and oppressed as the race has been from generation to generation, they now find themselves about to be dispossessed of the last pittance of their once widely extended domain, and driven into a distant country, which they fully believe is altogether unsuited to their condition and habits, and where they apprehend that poverty, disease, and misery, await them. Many seem to desire that death would at once terminate their sufferings, rather than that they should, by a compulsory removal, be forced into a barbarous and remote country where they must sink under the lingering miseries which they believe will there follow them.

"Under these circumstances, it is most respectfully suggested to the President, whether, instead of forcing them to a place against which they feel such strong objections, or perhaps driving them into a neighboring colony, where, under some circumstances they they might become very dangerous neighbors, it would not be best, if these people must be removed, to allow them to select for themselves from the vast unoccupied territories of the United States, a residence to which they could be induced voluntarily to emigrate, and where they might reasonably hope to obtain a subsis-

tance, and remain unmolested under the protection of the United States. Should they be able to find such a country, and be permitted to go there, the committee doubt not but that their friends would afford their co-operation in effecting so desirable a purpose."

In reply to this address the committee have received the following communication from the Secretary of War, viz:

"The undersigned has the pleasure to transmit to friends Philip E. Thomas and Benjamin Ferris the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on the subject of their communication of the 30th ultimo to the President. The department will always be disposed to aid the benevolent intentions of the Society of Friends towards the Indians, and will oppose no obstacle to the change of land now proposed. The practical difficulty appears to be, that the Government for obvious reasons cannot consent to place Indians, on lands included in any state or territory, and that it is not possible of large tracts beyond their limits. It will be necessary therefore to select the country the New York Indians would prefer to occupy, and then to ask of Congress authority to purchase the tract from the nation to which it now belongs. It is respectfully suggested that after the selection is made, an investigation be had by impartial judges into the comparative advantages of the country thus preferred by these Indians and that set apart by the United States for their future abode. The real and permanent interest of these people require this measure on the part of their friends, who may rest assured that the Government is desirous of placing them where, with moderate exertions, they may obtain a comfortable subsistence, and that it will guarantee their remaining there, unmolested under the protection of the United States. This department indulges the hope that the Society of Friends will continue their praiseworthy efforts to meliorate the condition of these tribes wherever they may be of once more stating their grievances, and imploring relief so far as either of those authorities might yet be able and disposed to extend protection to them. They also solicited an interview with Friends which was granted to them, and several of their chiefs, by arrangement, met our committee at Farmington, in the state of New York, on the 17th of last month, where after making a full and unreserved disclosure to us of their present difficulties and purposes, they earnestly solicited our assistance and advice.

No recent intelligence has been received from the Shawanoes, formerly under the care of our Yearly Meeting, and it is believed that this portion of that tribe have become so scattered, and broken up, as to leave no reason to expect they will again settle as a body at any one place. Under these circumstances, and there being now few, if any Indians left east of the Mississippi, except the Senecas in the western part of the state of New York, the Committee believe it will be right to unite with our brethren of the several Yearly Meetings, heretofore named, in extending assistance to these tribes, as way may open, and they accordingly propose to do so.

The Committee are aware that there is every probability, that these Indians will at no remote day also be compelled to remove to the west, and it was under this apprehension that they concluded, as the most likely means of permanently benefitting them, to interpose in their behalf with the General Government, and endeavor to secure for them a favorable residence, to which they could be enabled to remove themselves and their property, and continue to receive their annuities; and where they would also be accessible to their friends.

In order that the members of our several Yearly Meetings interested, might have an opportunity of becoming fully informed, of the measures taken by the General Committee, and the actual circumstances and prospects of the Indians, with whom the Committee have been engaged, it was concluded to publish a clear statement of our proceedings, which has accordingly been done, and our portion, consisting of 500 copies are herewith transmitted subject to the direction of the Yearly Meeting.

Signed by direction and on behalf of the committee.
PHILIP E. THOMAS, Clerk.
10th mo. 29th, 1840.

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There adjourned to 10 o'clock the next morning.

27th. of the month 8 3^d of the week

Pursuant to adjournment friends again assembled:—

The subject of making a new apportionment of the Yearly Meeting stock among the Quarterly Meetings claiming the attention of this meeting it was referred to the committee appointed at a former sitting to examine and adjust the Treasurer's accounts, who were directed to report to a future sitting their judgment in the case.—

The meeting having entered into the consideration of the State of Society, and proceeded as far as the third query inclusive, adjourned to 3 o'clock in the afternoon.—

Pursuant to adjournment friends again met.—

The consideration of the State of Society being resumed, and the meeting having proceeded through the remaining queries, the following summary was agreed upon, as containing nearly the substance of the answers sent up from the Quarterly Meetings viz:

Answers to the Queries.—

1st answer. All our meetings have been held, except one at Indian Spring, one at Warrington attended by one friend only, and three within the limits of Fairfax Quarterly Meeting.— They have been attended on first day mornings by the most of our members, but those on 1st day afternoon, in the middle of the week, and for discipline continues to be neglected by a considerable number.— Unbecoming behavior has been generally avoided, and the hands of meeting nearly observed.—

3^d answer. Many friends endeavor by example & precept to educate their