An hon. member from N. Jersey, whose motives no doubt are correct, (and here permit me to say what I trust will always be found correct, that I consider the motives of every gentleman to be correct, and will always suppose them so, and endeavor to shew that they are mistaken in practice)—has said this is a sickly place. I pray you where is the authority for the assertion? Have gentlemen that information which every one ought to have before he pronounces on its sickness or health? There is no place possessing a population so thin, in which more instances of longevity can be produced. Those who come from different parts of the Union with the seeds of disease in their frames can not exist longer here than in their native clime. It is I know ridiculous to make comparisons, but I undertake to say that this city has been as remarkable for health as any spot in the United States. I will go farther and say from my own knowledge of the fact that there is not in the United States an instance of greater longevity or more health of natural born subjects or citizens than within this district. Did the gentleman's observation flow from the case of his late colleague? The gentleman must have been thus alarmed and had his fears thus excited by his regret for his friend. But I will venture to say, that in a congregation of any given number of gentlemen in the same stage of life as those here convened, that there is no portion of country where an equal number of deaths may not be expected as have taken place from this body in preceding years. The gentlemen convened here are not in the flower of youth; they are gentlemen sent here from their experience & whose regularity at home is changed by their occupation here, being deprived of their regular habits and prevented from taking that exercise to which they have been accustomed. And take the population of the city and I will undertake to say and prove that there never has happened a proportionate number of deaths to those which usually occur in other situations. But, granting the assertion made, should we better our situation by removal? Look at the times, at the crisis at which it is thought proper to propose a removal—a possibility of impending war, in which case may occur a summer session of Congress; and will any gentleman say that the disorder prevalent in that city in the summer months (whether native or not, is not necessary to enquire—it is sufficient to know that it exists) does not leave a greater chance for ill health than the general salubrity of this place? No man can say that the prospect of sickness would be diminished by a removal to Philadelphia; by comparison it would be increased.

This measure ought to be shewn to be politic. After seven years stay in this place, what at this moment calls for a removal? Is it the crisis of our political affairs? Is there not as much safety here as at Philadelphia? Doubtless. If no imperious necessity calls for a removal, I hold a better opinion of the heads and hearts of the gentlemen composing this honorable body, than to suppose they will hesitate when they look at the subject. I am convinced that they would not sacrifice to personal inconvenience the welfare of ten times their number, that they might be fed on more dainty food, see more company, or enjoy somewhat more of personal gratification. They would not by a removal consult mere personal accommodation at the expence of those so greatly to suffer.

But are we at liberty to remove ourselves? Can we remove the seat of government? Is there no doubt on the constitutionality of a removal? Does not this proposition contemplate a violation of the public faith, which impetiously calls upon us to respect the honor of our country! The faith of our government like Cæsar's wife must be preserved not only inviolate, but unsuspected. How came we here? By the wisdom of the convention which framed the constitution. The framers of our constitution selected a district of ten miles square, to be under the immediate and exclusive jurisdiction of Congress; they engrafted it into the constitution, authorised the acceptance of a cession of this territory from one or more states; for what? For a temporary seat of government? However it may be the fashion of the present day to cherish this changing disposition, those patriots who framed this instrument never did suppose that this was not to be the permanent seat of government. This district of ten miles square was intended when selected to be the permanent seat of government, the depository of the national archives. This spot was selected. By whom was the whole projected? By him who was inferior to no man living; by him whose judgment will be venerated till the foundations of liberty are sapped and gone. In the maturity of his judgment, experience and attachment to his native land, he called the constitution into effect by placing the seat of government on this spot, from its central situation, its health, its convenience to the Atlantic and its easy access to the western waters—for all these causes combined together I hold the most profound respect and place the most implicit confidence in his judgment. And appealing from his judgment, we are called upon to move from here before we are scarcely warm in our seats, from no better consideration than a little personal inconvenience without considering the merits of the question on public policy.

The resolution on your table contemplates a limited fixture at Philadelphia. It is well known and calculated upon that the population of Philadelphia may do things which this poor place cannot. They calculate upon the superior talents and overbearing wealth and influence of Philadelphia, to retain the seat of government there not for a few years, but as long as government exists. Expediency and the public good, a man must be hood-winked who cannot look under the curtain and see what these words mean.

I am for retaining the government here where it was originally fixed by the sage whose name it bears, and the establishment of which may almost be considered as an act of the constitution, because the act was done by a law emanating from and carrying into effect a provision of the constitution. The erection of a permanent seat of government was the only mode on earth by which the constitutional provision could have been fulfilled. Did our predecessors consider this as a temporary seat of goverment? Every word of the law which they enacted, and which was considered as an interpretation of the constitution, expresses the reverse. Refer to chapter 28, vol. 1, of the laws of the U. States. Let us see the cotemporary construction given to the constitution by the members of that Congress, some of whom were members of the convention who framed it, men distinguished for their vigilance in guarding the constitution. "That a district of territory, not exceeding ten miles square, to be located as hereafter directed on the river Potomac, at some place between the mouths of the Eastern branch and Connogocheague, be and is hereby accepted"—for what? "for a permanent seat of the government of the U. States," &c. And in succeeding laws on this subject the same language is repeated. No man living ever construed that instrument to give exclusive jurisdiction over a certain territory for a temporary seat of government. We all know the disadvantages attendant on a temporary situation; there are gentlemen within the hearing of my voice who know the contests which arose whether it should be held at Philadelphia, New York, or elsewhere, previous to its being made stationary. Neither the framers of the constitution, or the legislature who carried it into effect, ever did dream that this was to be any other than the permanent seat of goverment. The expences incurred here also incontestibly demonstrate that to have been the intention of the legislature.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that I am mistaken in the constitutional requisition; and that the fixing the seat of government was a simple legislative act as all other acts, and predicated not upon the constitution but upon expediency. Reflect, and say, whether in consequence of that act you would not by removal violate the public faith. I mean not by this to say that any gentleman on this floor has less respect for it than me, or that any one would wantonly concur in violation of it; but it is fair argument. When the cession of the territory was accepted, and the city of Washington designated as it was to become the permanent seat of government, I ask the honorable members of this House, being then a wilderness, whether on the faith of its being permanently the seat of government, individuals did not come forward and invest vast property in lots and improvements on it? Did you not by law solemnly say that this should be the permanent seat of government, and invite numbers of persons to come here, to build houses and make improvements which necessarily grew out of that law? Was not the investment of their property a legitimate act in pursuance of a public law? Unquestionably it was. If you remove hence, what will be the consequence? Are the people who have reposed their confidence in the faith of a public law to be sacrificed? Have they no right to complain of a violation of the national faith by a removal, if agreed to? I ask if this law did not hold out to them a permanency? And if after a lapse of seven years the seat of government is removed, if that act has not been a decoy to all those people who, confiding in a public act, have settled in the city? Say that we are capable of repealing that law; if we do it, is not the repeal an infraction of good faith and contract with those who advanced their money? Is it less a breach of contract to induce a man to come here in hopes and confidence in the permanency of the government here, than it would be to borrow money on the faith of the nation, and by a simple act of legislation to wipe away the obligation to repay that money? Foreigners were by law competent to hold real estate—large sums were by these men vested in the property of this city, relying on the faith of the U. S. How so? Here's the law, I hold it in my hand, fixing a permanent seat of government. If persons embark their property in this stock, on what do they do it? On the faith of this law. Repeal this law, remove the seat of government, and our faith is gone in Europe; for those nations who hold stock in our funds will as soon expect that the obligation to pay that shall be cancelled, as that we should violate our faith by repealing a law in which it is pledged. Take the question in this view, and it is all-important.

An honorable gentleman, whose liberality I approve, has no idea that ample compensation for these losses should not be made. If this measure should carry, he would not find many seconders of that motion; more especially at this time. Do gentlemen believe that compensation is seriously intended? No such belief can be cherished. Gentlemen will not feel themselves bound to attend to the dictates of conscience when they disregard the obligations of a law. They will not leave the people as they found them: they will leave them ruined by coming forward with their property to furnish those accommodations which we now enjoy. I trust, however inconvenient or dispersed the situation of our places of residence, however indifferent our accommodations, that these minor and petty considerations will be thrown out of view when gentlemen consider the situation of those who have a right to be remembered when this measure is considered.

I do most ardently hope, that this question, when once agitated may forever be laid to rest, so that a confidence in the permanency of the government, may inspire persons with a disposition to settle here and better our accommodations; for, so long as this question is agitated, so long proportionably will confidence be diminished and hope extinguished—accommodations will grow worse from year to year, and at length be made a pretence for removal. From year to year you will prevent others from making improvements, and then easily make it a pretext for complaint against accommodations. The House, I feel convinced, will not do this; they will act differently; they will encourage and promote this place from its peculiar situation; for nothing has yet been said to justify an act pregnant with such mischievous consequences to the people and the nation.

But, says an honorable gentleman, you wish to stifle enquiry. I ask for discussion, for information; for calculations; and if any honorable member will convince me that it is constitutional and proper, and that it is demanded of us by the public good, I myself, for public good must be preferred to private feelings, will vote for it. But the case is so plain that he who runs may read. If the affairs of government be not better transacted here than at Philadelphia, they will not be worse. Shall we gain by going to Philadelphia in preference to staying here? Shall we gain by removal to a large commercial town, whose capital and interests are much in the hands of foreigners domiciliated amongst them, a motly crew, a heterogenous mixture, coming from every portion of the globe? Are we likely to increase in our attachment to republican habits, by such a change? Certainly not.

On another account I should object to a removal to Philadelphia, if no other objection existed. Honorable and independent men may be influenced and biassed by external objects without themselves knowing it; and this would be greatly promoted by going to a large commercial town. Shall we acquire more local information there? No. Can a member from Georgia there procure better information in relation to his duty, to his constituents, than he can here? No. Information they he can give you none, except it be to prejudice you in favor of commerce, for which reason it is the worst place you can go to, as it may insensibly induce you to sacrifice agriculture at the shrine of that commerce now jeopardizing the best interest of the country, and leading us to war. These are evils likely to grow out of a removal; I do not say they will, but is it right to consider what may possibly exist in the one place, and which cannot exist in the other. I do verily believe from my soul that was it not for the single circumstance of obtaining information from Europe, with greater ease, that the National Legislature should sit in the heart of the agricultural interest instead of running into cities. A removal into a large commercial city, where all the inhabitants would give us good dinners and handsome entertainments, operating on our prejudices and taking advantage of unguarded moments, would insensibly bias our better judgement. The agricultural and commercial interests are no the same. Agriculture can never amalgamate with commerce, but commerce may involve agriculture in the expence of a war. There is nothing under Heavens to induce me to remove to Philadelphia. If the seat of government must be moved, take it to any considerable inland town, where honorable gentlemen may long enjoy great health. If you wish for good health and living, go to Lancaster. But as in my heart and soul I believe that almost all the benefits are enjoyed here that could be enjoyed in any other place, and as this is fixed as the permanent seat of government by the law and the constitution, I think it most unwise on any consideration to attempt a removal, supposing no individual injury to result from removal.

An honorable gentleman from New-York (Mr. Gardenier) supposes that the motion of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Lewis) was intended to stifle discussion. I would not for a moment jeopardize the property of the citizen, or give rise to a supposition that we had an idea of violating the constitution or the laws. Does the gentleman suppose the minority could be convinced by reason or argument? I never yet saw a minority which could. The gentleman says if we now strike it down, it will be brought forward next year. If there be a minority they will no doubt bring it forward next year, if they have the whole session now allowed for discussion. It is neither improper or impolitic at this time to decide it.

The gentleman from New-Jersey has mentioned society. If we remove to a place where there are abundance of ladies and good cheer, it is likely we shall now and then be remiss in our duty. That might be a reason why this of all others is the place to sit in. If ever you want men to do their duty, I have found it a good thing to place them where they have nothing to take off their attention; and rely upon it, wherever you encrease tempation, you encourage neglect of duty.

I have no doubt that the honorable member who made this motion has given the sense of his constituents; but something of local interest is to be given up to a government of compromise like ours; much was given up in its origin and much must be surrendered now. If I am not mistaken Philadelphia herself is now tremblingly alive, watching the direction of a great western road which is contemplated to lead to Baltimore, and by which she will feel herself injured. The honorable gentleman who feel it their true interest to have communication with the western country by any road which shall terminate at Fort Cumberland, are, in the true spirit of commerce looking for pecuniary advantage over each other. I see the honorable gentleman smile. Let Philadelphia yield her rights to where they are better placed for the national security. This road is the great connecting link between the western country and the Atlantic waters; and the struggle is to remove it so as to go nearer to Philadelphia. The same objection which applies to Philadelphia applies to Baltimore. No great commercial town is suited for the seat of government. The honorable members of the House duly weighing this question will certainly find it their duty to give faith to a law which they themselves have enacted.

(Debate to be continued.)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8.

Mr. Mumford presented the memorial of certain Yazoo claimants in the city of New York, praying a consideration of their claim. Referred to the committee of the whole to whom was referred the memorial from the legislature of Massachusetts on that subject.

Mr. Samuel Smith presented the memorial of a number of inhabitants of the county of Erie, Pennsylvania, praying for an enquiry into the defect in the law or administration of the law for the punishment of treason; which was referred to the committee on that part of the President's message which relates to enterprizes against the public peace.

Mr. S. Smith also presented a petition from the inhabitants of the same county, representing their unprotected and dangerous situation in case of a war as apprehended; and praying the attention of Congress to their situation. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Burwell presented the following resolution:

Resolved, That the committee on our military and naval establishments be instructed to enquire into the expediency of authorising the President of the United States to procure as soon as practicable thousand stand of arms.

Mr. *Burwell* hoped the House would agree to the resolution, that it might go to the committee that they might report a bill. It would be recollected that a colleague of his had a few weeks ago submitted to the House some resolutions for the purpose of arming the whole militia in the U. States. This gentleman, said Mr. B. is at this time so much indisposed as to be unable to attend, and possibly the nation may not at this session receive the benefit of any such plan. If, however, the resolution which I offer, shall become the foundation of a law, & the House appropriate a sufficient sum to purchase fifty or an hundred thousand stand of arms, it will not interfere with that object, if it can be accomplished; but, if procured, they might be so disposed as to arm the militia or regular force according to the future determination of the House. It is scarcely necessary to call the attention of the House to the situation of the U. States; every man must be impressed with it; our commerce attacked in every part of the globe, our peace menaced by the most powerful nations in the world. Although there may be in the United States an indisposition to protect commerce at all hazards, yet whenever it is necessary (no man can tell what is to happen in the present state of things, we should therefore prepare for the worst) to prepare for defence against attack on land but one opinion can prevail. I have offered this resolution because the procuring arms will be indispensibly necessary to enable us to defend the country. I am one who believe that if this country is possessed of a sufficient number of arms, we are perfectly safe against the world. I for one feel no sort of alarm; I feel indifferent to any combination however extensive or formidable. It is impossible to conquer this country; it would require a corporal and a guard for every man. Let us have arms and I fear not any mischief from combination of any kind against the country. I hope the resolution will be agreed to and referred to the committee I have mentioned.

Mr. *Bacon* thought this a resolution of considerable importance, which need not be adopted at a moment's warning. He wished further time to consider the subject, and moved that it be referred to a committee of the whole.

Mr. *Dawson* said that the committee on our military and naval establishments had made the enquiry contemplated by the resolution. They found that the United States were now in possession of 130,000 stand of arms, and annually manufactured thousand in addition. Upon this enquiry they had thought it unnecessary to enquire into the means of procuring an additional supply.

Mr. *Marion* said it was indifferent to him what course this resolution should take, though he was anxious that the House should come to some determination on the subject. Early in the session a committee had reported a resolution for loaning or selling arms to the several states, which resolution had lain on the table. Several legislatures had since been in session and appropriated money for procuring arms. But as long as these motions were pending in this House, and Congress had the subject under consideration, they knew not how to act. If Congress will purchase arms, said Mr. M. it is unnecessary for the states to do it; if Congress will sell them, the states will purchase them. I myself have been applied to by a state authority to know what success they would meet in an attempt to procure arms in the United States. It is impossible to purchase them in the United States; the armories and manufactories are in contract with the United States or with the states for all that can be manufactured, and it is impossible to procure them except from foreign nations. If this resolution were adopted, the details from the committee might furnish some mode of procuring them. It is desirable that something on this subject may be done, and this course may produce the most speedy decision.

Mr. *Ely* thought it a truly desirable object that the U. States should possess more arms than they do at present. One hundred and thirty thousand were not half the number that the United States ought to possess. He should be willing to adopt the resolution if the gentleman from Virginia or any other would shew the means to carry that object into effect, that arms could be procured; but until it could be shewn that there were arms in the U. S. which could be purchased, it was unnecessary to trouble the House with a discussion on the subject, as it would have a tendency to prevent the states from arming. Now if the gentleman who proposed the resolution could shew where 50,000 stand of arms were to be had, he would adopt any measure for procuring them. He did not think 100,000 stand would be one musket more than the United States ought to have in addition to their present supply; but he would not be willing to adopt the resolution except it were shewn where they could be purchased. The political world was now in such a state that arms could not be procured from foreign nations: he should be glad that some way could be demonstrated. He wished to know before they committed the subject, that the resolution embraced an object within their reach.

Mr. *Bacon* withdrew his motion for commitment, and moved that it lie on the table.

Mr. *Burwell* assured the gentleman just set down, that he had not introduced the resolution to promote useless discussion. [Mr. *Ely* explained that he had not meant to express an idea that he had] It was no part of his object. It appears to me, said Mr. B. that nothing can be more evident than that every country which anticipates attack should possess more arms than necessary to arm any particular number of men that are likely to be called out at one time. Let us suppose that by whatever event a part of our arms should be destroyed. Is it not necessary that there should be a certain deposit whence they can be immediately supplied? I presume that there should. As to any particular place where any quantity of arms can now be procured, I cannot designate any. The resolution contemplates vesting a power in the government to purchase them if they can be had. There are no doubt, some few in the seaports. Government may purchase them. Although we cannot import them at this day, we may in a few weeks or months, in which time the state of things may be so far changed as to put it in the power of the President to procure them. With respect to the number of arms already belonging to the U. States, it will be considered that we have an exposed frontier, liable to the attack of nations on our borders, and it is indispensably necessary that the inhabitants on our frontier should be armed. The petition this day presented by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Smith) sufficiently evinces that the United States are not amply provided with arms.

Mr. *S. Smith*, deemed it his duty to state that the fears of the petitioners just alluded to were not chimerical; he personally knew their situation, and was anxious that some thing should be done for their relief.

Mr. *Burwell* having expressed a consent that it might lie on the table.

The resolution was so disposed of, 42 to 34.

Mr. G. W. Campbell, from the committee of Ways and Means, reported a bill for carrying into effect certain Indian treaties. Read twice and referred to a committee of the whole.

Mr. W. Alston moved that the unfinished business of the last sitting [Mr. Blount's renewal of Mr. Sloan's motion for the removal of the seat of government] be postponed indefinitely. He presumed every gentleman must be convinced that sufficient time had been occupied by it.

Messrs. Sawyer and Tallmadge opposed this motion and advocated a removal of the seat of government, at great length.

Mr. W. Alston withdrew his motion, as he had not intended to cause a discussion by it; he had moved it for the purpose of getting rid of the subject altogether.

Mr. Quincy rising to speak under a belief that the question on the passage