

replied, that if the question of right, which was the only one which concerned Portugal's honour and dignity, could not be referred to an arbiter, she would not accept an award upon a mere pecuniary question.

Thus Portugal, not because she felt she was wrong, but because she knew she was weak, yielded to the demands of France, as to any other exigency. France tried to save her honour, and lost it; for she showed the spirit of a bully, and forgot that Portugal's honour was also concerned. Portugal paid the claims, but in such a way that, even if her officers were wrong in the seizure and condemnation, the very yielding as she did to necessity did her honour.

THE "ALABAMA" CLAIMS.

Our subsequent claims on England are too well known to need any explanation. Mr. Adams, in 1863, proposed to refer them to arbitration. Earl Russell wrote to Mr. Adams, August 30, 1865 :—

"In your letter of October 23, 1863, you were pleased to say that the Government of the United States is ready to agree to any form of arbitration. Her Majesty's Government have thus been led to consider what question could be put to any sovereign or state to whom this very great power should be assigned. It appears to her Majesty's Government that there are but two questions by which the claim of compensation could be tested. The one is—Have the British Government acted with due diligence, or, in other words, with good faith and honesty, in the maintenance of the neutrality they proclaimed? The other is—Have the law officers of the crown properly understood the Foreign Enlistment Act, when they declined, in June, 1862, to advise the detention and seizure of the "Alabama," and on other occasions, when they were asked to detain other ships building or fitting in British ports? It appears to her Majesty's Government that neither of these questions could be put to a foreign Government with any regard to the dignity and character of the British crown and the British nation.

"Her Majesty's Government are the sole guardians of their own honour. They cannot admit that they have acted with bad faith in maintaining the neutrality they professed. The law officers of the crown must be held to be better interpreters of a British statute than any foreign Government can be presumed to be."

For these reasons the offer to arbitrate was declined.

President Johnson, in his first Message to the present Congress, says that the United States did not present these claims as an impeachment of the good faith of England, but as involving questions of public law, of which the settlement is essential to the peace of nations; and declares his opinion that the grounds