

decide whether their affairs shall be conducted by those whom they have selected for that purpose from among themselves, or by the agents of a foreign power: Whether that power under pretence of a treaty, which it asserts an exclusive right to expound, and claims the privilege of violating as often as its operation shall be found disadvantageous*, and of the law of nations, which it has publicly professed to disregard†, shall snatch the reins of our government from the hands in which we have placed them? Whether, in fine, they will give their confidence to men of their own choice, having the same interests with themselves, or to strangers and foreigners, charged with the interests of another country, and always seeking to promote them at our expence? Can the decision be difficult!

And what are these pretensions, which France enforces by the plunder of our merchants, and the imprisonment of our citizens? What are those injuries which she avenges by insulting our government and our country, and whereof, with a more than magisterial haughtiness, she declaress that the redress shall precede all explanation?

She complains of our treaty with Great Britain, of

* See Mr. Adet's note of October 27, 1796; where this right is expressly asserted.

† See the letter of M. Tilly, French Charge des Affairs at Genoa, to the Secretary of State of that republic, dated July, 24, 1794: Debret's State Papers, vol. 2, p. 347—In a controversy between them, the Genoese Secretary relied on the law of nations: M. Tilly replied, "that he did not acknowledge as public rights, (*Droits publique*, which ought to have been translated "*public laws*) papers drawn up under the authority of kings." It was to ascertain and establish the true public law, he said, that the French had taken up arms, "until this work of theirs, he adds, "shall be completed, their ministers, resident in foreign states, "are bound provisionally to make the French name respected, by "conducting themselves conformably to reason and justice, which "are the only basis of true public rights:" Of this *reason and justice* the French themselves were to be the judges, and under this pretence, they were to controul and set aside the established law of nations.

This was pretty much of a piece with the declaration of Mr. Genet, who thanked God that he had long since forgotten what was contained in the *worm-eaten volumes of Vattel, Grotius, and Puffendorf*.