

the consequences of his award. The fact that a king, deciding a principle of international law, must in the future himself be bound by his own decision, is, however, a very strong reason for selecting a king as sole arbiter. Though he may employ others to assist him in ascertaining the law, yet the opinion will finally come as his own.

THE PORTENDIC CLAIMS.

No better model of submission can be found, than a treaty made by France and England to provide for the settlement of the Portendic claims. The French Government, in 1834 and 1835,* carried on war with the Trasa Moors on the coast of Portendic, where British merchants were engaged extensively in the gum trade. British vessels were seized while approaching this coast, when no blockade had been notified, and even after the French Government had declared that no blockade was intended.

As soon as the war was ended, the British Government presented the claims of her aggrieved and plundered merchants. The whole question was finally submitted to the arbitration of the King of Prussia, who was asked to decide whether any real injury was unduly inflicted on British subjects, while they were pursuing on the coast of Portendic a regular and lawful trade; and also whether France was equitably bound to pay to such or such class of the said claimants any compensation by reason of such injury. It was agreed, in the submission, that, whatever should be the decision of the arbiter, it should not be regarded as in any way affecting any of the rights which had been maintained, or any of the principles which had been asserted, by either Government, during the course of their discussion.

The award declared that the blockade was justifiable, but that all claims which rested on the want of notice of the blockade were valid. In accordance with the treaty, commissioners of liquidation were at once appointed, to whom was added an umpire, a Prussian, Baron Roenne,—the same who had acted with the commissions of the United States and Mexico. Under this commission the whole matter was settled.

* British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. XXXIV. p. 1036.