supported by the German princes and people, and in spite of the negative attitude of Austria and Prussia the federal diet decided to occupy Holstein “ pending the settlement of the succession.” On the 24th of December Saxon and Hanoverian troops marched into the duchy in the name of the German Confederation, and supported by their presence and by the loyalty of the Holsteiners the duke of Augustenburg assumed the government under the style of

Duke Frederick VIII. With this “ folly ”—as Bismarck roundly termed it—Austria and Prussia, in the teeth of violent public opinion, would have nothing to do, for neither wished to risk a European war. It was clear to Bismarck that the two powers, as parties to the protocol of 1852, must uphold the succession as fixed by it, and that any action they might take in consequence of the violation of that compact by Denmark must be so “ correct ” as to deprive

Europe of all excuse for interference. The publication of the new constitution by Christian IX. was in itself sufficient to justify a declaration of war by the two powers as parties to the signature of the protocol. As to the ultimate outcome of their effective intervention, that could be left to the future to decide. Austria had no clear views. King William wavered between his Prussian feeling and a sentimental sympathy with the duke of Augusten­burg. Bismarck alone knew exactly what he wanted, and how to attain it. “ From the beginning,” he said later *{Reflections,* ii. 10), “ I kept annexation steadily before my eyes.”

The protests of Great Britain and Russia against the action of the German diet, together with the proposal of Count Beust, on behalf of Saxony, that Bavaria should bring forward in that assembly a formal motion for the recognition of Duke Frederick’s claims, helped Bismarck to persuade Austria that immediate action must be taken. On the 28th of December a motion was introduced in the diet by Austria and Prussia, calling on the Confederation to occupy Schleswig as a pledge for *the observance by Denmark of the compacts of 1852.* This implied the recognition of the rights of Christian IX., and was indignantly rejected; whereupon the diet was informed that the Austrian and Prussian governments would act in the matter as independent European powers. The agreement between them was signed on the 16th of January 1864. An article drafted by Austria, intended to safeguard the settlement of 1852, was replaced at Bismarck’s instance by another which stated that the two powers would decide only in concert on the relations of the duchies, and that they would in no case determine the question of the succession save by mutual consent.

At this stage, had the Danes yielded to the necessities of the situation and withdrawn from Schleswig under protest, the European powers would probably have intervened, a congress would have restored Schleswig to the Danish crown, and Austria and Prussia, as European powers, would have had no choice but to prevent any attempt upon it by the duke of Holstein. To prevent this possibility Bismarck made the Copenhagen government believe that Great Britain had threatened Prussia with inter- vention should hostilities be opened, “ though, as a matter of fact, England did nothing of the kind.” The cynical stratagem succeeded; Denmark remained defiant; and on the 1st of February 1864 the Austrian and Prussian forces crossed the

Eider.

An invasion of Denmark itself had not been part of the original programme of the allies; but on the 18th of February some Prussian hussars, in the excitement of a cavalry skirmish, crossed the frontier and occupied the village of Kolding. Bismarck determined to use this circum­stance to revise the whole situation. He urged upon Austria the necessity for a strong policy, so as to settle once for all not only the question of the duchies but the wider question of the German Confederation; and Austria reluctantly consented to press the war. On the 5th of March a fresh agreement was signed between the powers, under which the compacts of 1852 were declared to be no longer valid, and the position of the duchies within the Danish monarchy

as a whole was to be made the subject of a friendly understanding. Meanwhile, however, Lord John Russell on behalf of Great Britain, supported by Russia, France and Sweden, had intervened with a proposal that the whole question should once more be submitted to a European conference.@@1 The German powers agreed on condition that the compacts of 1852 should not be taken as a basis, and that the duchies should be bound to Den­mark by a personal tie only. But the proceedings of the conference, which opened at London on the 25th of April, only revealed the inextricable tangle of the issues involved. Beust, on behalf of the Confederation, demanded the recognition of the Augustenburg claimant; Austria leaned to a settlement on the lines of that of 1852; Prussia, it was increasingly clear, aimed at the acquisition of the duchies. The first step towards the realization of this latter ambition was to secure the recognition of the absolute independence of the duchies, and this Austria could only oppose at the risk of forfeiting her whole influence in Germany. The two powers, then, agreed to demand the complete political independence of the duchies bound together by common institutions. The next move was uncertain. As to the question of annexation Prussia would leave that open, but made it clear that any settlement must involve the complete military sub­ordination of Schleswig-Holstein to herself. This alarmed Austria, which had no wish to see a further extension of Prussia’s already overgrown power, and she began to champion the claims of the duke of Augustenburg. This con­tingency, however, Bismarck had foreseen and himself offered to support the claims of the duke at the con­ference if he would undertake to subordinate himself in all naval and military matters to Prussia, surrender Kiel for the purposes of a Prussian war-harbour, give Prussia the control of the projected North Sea Canal, and enter the Prussian Customs Union. On this basis, with Austria’s support, the whole matter might have been arranged without—as Beust pointed out (*Mem.* i. 272) —the increase of Prussia’s power beyond the Elbe being any serious menace to Austrian influence in Germany. Fortunately, however, for Bismarck’s plans, Austria’s distrust and jealousy of Prussia led her to oppose this settlement and at her instigation the duke of Augustenburg rejected it.

On the 25th of June the London conference broke up without having arrived at any conclusion. On the 24th, in view of the end of the truce, Austria and Prussia had arrived at a new agreement, the object of the war being now declared to be the complete separation of the duchies from Denmark. As the result of the short campaign that followed, the preliminaries of a treaty of peace were signed on the 1st of August, the king of Denmark renouncing all his rights in the duchies in favour of the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia. The definitive treaty was signed at Vienna on the 30th of October 1864. By Article XIX., a period of six years was allowed during which the inhabitants of the duchies might “ opt ” for Danish nationality and transfer themselves and their goods to Denmark; and the right of “ indigenacy ” was guaranteed to all, whether in the kingdom or the duchies, who enjoyed it at the time of the exchange of ratifications of the treaty.@@2

The Schleswig-Holstein Question from this time onward became merged in the larger question of the general relations of Austria and Prussia, and its later developments are sketched in the article Germany: *History.* So far as Europe was concerned it was settled by the decisive result of the war of 1866. It survived, however, as between Danes and Germans, though narrowed down to the question of the fate of the Danish population of the northern duchy. This question is of great interest to students of inter­national law and as illustrating the practical problems involved in the assertion of the modern principle of “ nationality.”

@@@1 *Parl. Papers* (1864), lxv. 124 seq. Beust (*Mem.* i. 252) says that Queen Victoria personally intervened to prevent British action in favour of Denmark.

@@@2 The full text of the treaty is in *La Question du Slesvig,* p. 173 et seq.