When Christian VIII. succeeded his father Frederick VI. in 1839 the elder male line of the house of Oldenburg was obviously on the point of extinction, the king’s only son and heir having no children. Ever since 1834, when joint consultative estates had been re-established for the duchies, the question of the succession had been debated in this assembly. To German opinion the solution seemed clear enough. The crown of Denmark could be inherited by female heirs; in the duchies the Salic law had never been repealed and, in the event of a failure of male heirs to Christian VIII., the succession would pass to the dukes of Augustenburg.@@1 Danish opinion, on the other hand, clamoured for a royal pronouncement proclaiming the principle of the indivisibility of the monarchy and its transmission intact to a single heir, in accord­ance with the royal law. To this Christian VIII. yielded so far as to issue in 1846 letters patent declaring that the royal law in the matter of the succession was in full force so far as Schleswig was concerned, in accordance with the letters patent of August 22, 1721, the oath of fidelity of September 3, 1721, the guarantees given by France and Great Britain in the same year and the treaties of 1767 and 1773 with Russia. As to Holstein, he stated that certain circumstances prevented him from giving, in regard to some parts of the duchy, so clear a decision as in the case of Schleswig. The principle of the independence of Schleswig and of its union with Holstein were expressly reaffirmed. An appeal against this by the estates of Holstein to the German diet received no attention. The revolutionary year 1848 brought matters to a head. On the 28th of January, Christian VIII. issued a rescript proclaiming a new constitution which, while preserving the autonomy of the different parts of the country, incorporated them for common purposes in a single organization. The estates of the duchies replied by demanding the incorporation of Schleswig-Holstein, as a single constitutional state, in the German Confederation. Frederick VII., who had succeeded his father at the end of January, declared (March 4) that he had no right to deal in this way with Schleswig, and, yielding to the importunity of the Eider-Danish party, withdrew the rescript of January (April 4) and announced to the people of Schleswig (March 27) the promulgation of a liberal constitu­tion under which the duchy, while preserving its local autonomy,

would become an integral part of Denmark.

Meanwhile, however, the duchies had broken out into open insurrection; a provisional government had been established at Kiel; and the duke of Augustenburg had hurried to Berlin to secure the assistance of Prussia in asserting his rights. This was at the very crisis of the revolution in Berlin, and the Prussian government saw in the proposed intervention in Denmark in a popular cause an excellent opportunity for restoring its damaged prestige. Prussian troops were accordingly marched into Holstein; and, the diet having on the 12th of April recognized the provisional government of Schleswig and commissioned Prussia to enforce its decrees,

General Wrangel was ordered to occupy Schleswig also.

The principles which Prussia was commissioned to enforce as the mandatory of Germany were: (1) that they were inde­pendent states, (2) that their union was indissoluble, (3) that they were hereditary only in the male line. But the Germans had reckoned without the European powers, which were united in opposing any dismemberment of Denmark, even Austria refusing to assist in enforcing the German view. Swedish troops landed to assist the Danes; Nicholas I. of Russia, speaking with authority as representing the elder Gottorp line, pointed out to King Frederick William IV. the risks of a collision; Great Britain, though the Danes rejected her mediation, threatened to send her fleet to assist in preserving the *status quo.* Frederick William now ordered Wrangel to withdraw his troops from the duchies; but the general refused to obey, on the plea that he was under the command not of the king of Prussia but of the regent of Germany,

and proposed that, at least, any treaty concluded should be presented for ratification to the Frankfort government. This the Danes refused; and negotiations were broken off. Prussia was now confronted on the one side by the German nation urging her clamorously to action, on the other side by the European powers with one voice threatening the worst consequences should she persist. After painful hesitation, Frederick William chose what seemed the lesser of two evils and, on the 26th of August 1848,

Prussia signed at Malmoe a convention which yielded practically all the Danish demands. The Holstein estates appealed to the German parliament, which hotly took up their cause; but it was soon clear that the central government had no means of enforcing its views, and in the end the convention was ratified at Frankfort.

The convention was only in the nature of a truce establishing a temporary *modus viυendi,* and the main issues, left unsettled, continued to be hotly debated. At a conference held in London in October, Denmark suggested an arrangement on the basis of a separation of Schleswig from Holstein, which was about to become a member of the new German empire, Schleswig to have a separate constitution under the Danish crown. This was supported by Great Britain and Russia and accepted by Prussia and the German government (27th January 1849). The negotiations broke down, however, on the refusal of Denmark to yield the principle of the indissoluble union with the Danish crown; on the 23rd of February the truce was at an end, and on the 3rd of April the war was renewed. At this point the tsar intervened in favour of peace; and Prussia, conscious of her restored strength and weary of the intractable temper of the Frankfort government, determined to take matters into her own hands. On the 10th of July 1849 another truce was signed; Schleswig, until the peace, was to be administered separately, under a mixed commission, Holstein was to be governed by a vicegerent of the German empire—an arrangement equally offensive to German and Danish sentiment. A settlement seemed as far off as ever; the Danes still clamoured for the principle of succession in the female line and union with Denmark, the Germans for that of succession in the male line and union with Holstein. In utter weariness Prussia proposed, in April 1850, a definitive peace on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum* and the postponement of all questions as to mutual rights. To Palmerston the basis seemed meaningless, the proposed settlc- ment to settle nothing. The emperor Nicholas, openly disgusted with Frederick William’s weak-kneed truckling to the Revolu­tion, again intervened. To him the duke of Augustenburg was a rebel; Russia had guaranteed Schleswig to the Danish crown by the treaties of 1767 and 1773; as for Holstein, if the king of Denmark was unable to deal with the rebels there, he himself would intervene as he had done in Hungary. The threat was reinforced by the menace of the European situation. Austria and Prussia were on the verge of war, and the sole hope of preventing Russia from throwing her sword into the scale of Austria lay in settling the Schleswig-Holstein question in the sense desired by her. The only alternative, an affiance with “ the devil’s nephew,” Louis Napoleon, who already dreamed of acquiring the Rhine frontier for France at the price of his aid in establishing German sea-power by the cession of the duchies, was abhorrent to Frederick William.

On the 2nd of July 1850 was signed at Berlin a treaty of peace between Prussia and Denmark. Both parties reserved all their antecedent rights; but for Denmark it was enough, since it empowered the king-duke **to** restore his authority in Holstein with or without the consent of the German Confederation.

Danish troops now marched in to coerce the refractory duchies; but while the fighting went on negotiations among the powers continued, and on the 2nd of August 1850 Great Britain, France, Russia and Norway-Sweden signed a protocol, to which Austria subsequently adhered, approving the principle of restoring the integrity of the Danish monarchy. The Copenhagen government, which in May 1851 made an abortive attempt to come

@@@1 This was the argument of Karl Samwer, the German jurist, in his *Die Staatserbfolge der Herzogthümer Schleswig und Holstein,* published in 1844 at the instigation of the duke of Augustenburg.