to an understanding with the inhabitants of the duchies by convening an assembly of notables at Flensburg, issued on the 6th of December 1851 a project for the future organization of the monarchy on the basis of the equality of its constituent states, with a common ministry; and on the 28th of January 1852 a royal letter announced the institution of a unitary state which, while maintaining the fundamental constitution of Denmark, would increase the parliamentary powers of the estates of the two duchies. This proclamation was approved by Prussia and Austria, and by the German federal diet in so far as it affected Holstein and Lauenburg. The question of the succession was next approached. Only the question of the Augus- tenburg succession made an agreement between the powers impossible, and on the 31st of March 1852 the duke of Augustenburg resigned his claim in return for a money payment. Further adjustments followed.

After the renunciation by the emperor of Russia and others of their eventual rights, Charlotte, landgravine of Hesse, sister of Christian VIII., and her son Prince Frederick transferred their rights to the latter’s sister Louise, who in her turn trans- ferred them to her husband Prince Christian of Glücksburg. This arrangement received international sanction by the protocol signed in London on the 8th of May 1852 by the five great powers and Norway and Sweden.@@1 On the 31st of July 1853 King Frederick VII. gave his assent to a law settling the crown on Prince Christian, “ prince of Denmark,” and his heirs male. The protocol of London, while consecrating the principle of the integrity of Denmark, stipulated that the rights of the German Confederation in Holstein and Lauenburg should remain unaffected. It was, in fact, a compromise, and left the fundamental issues unsettled. The German federal diet had been unrepresented in London, and the terms of the protocol were regarded in Germany as a humiliation. As for the Danes, they were far from being satisfied with the settlement, which they approved only in so far as it gave them a basis for a more vigorous prosecution of their unionist schemes. On the 15th of February and the 11th of June 1854 the king of Denmark, after consulting the estates, promulgated special constitutions for Schleswig and Holstein respectively, under which the pro- vincial assemblies received certain very limited powers. On the 26th of July 1854 he published a common constitution for the whole monarchy; this, which was little more than a veiled absolutism, was superseded on the 2nd of October 1855 by a parliamentary constitution of a modified type. The legality of this constitution was disputed by the two German great powers, on the ground that the estates of the duchies had not been consulted as promised in the royal letter of the 6th of December 1851; the diet of the Confederation refused to admit its validity so far as Holstein and Lauenburg were concerned (11th February

1858).

The question was now once more the subject of lively inter­national debate; but the European situation was no longer so favourable as it had been to the Danish view. The Crimean War had crippled the power of Russia, and Nicholas I. was dead. France was prepared to sell the interests of Denmark in the duchies to Prussia in return for “ compensations ” to herself elsewhere. Great Britain alone sided with the Danes; but the action of British ministers, who realized the danger to British supremacy at sea of the growth of German sea-power in the Baltic, was hampered by the natural sympathy of Queen Victoria and the prince consort with the German point of view.@@2 The result was that the German diet, on the motion of Bismarck, having threatened federal intervention (July 29), King Frederick VII. issued a proclamation abolishing the general constitution so far as it affected Holstein and Lauenburg, while retaining it for Denmark and Schleswig (November 6).

Though even this concession violated the principle of the “ indissoluble union ” of the duchies, the German diet, fully occupied at home, determined to refrain from further action till the Danish parliament should make another effort to pass a law or budget affecting the whole kingdom without consulting the estates of the duchies. This contingency arose in July 1860, and in the spring of the following year the estates were once more at open odds with the Danish government. The German diet now prepared for armed intervention; but it was in no condition to carry out its threats, and Denmark decided, on the advice of Great Britain, to ignore it and open negotiations directly with Prussia and Austria as independent powers. These demanded the restoration of the union between the duchies, a question beyond the competence of the Confederation. Denmark replied with a refusal to recognize the right of any foreign power to interfere in her relations with Schleswig; to which Austria, anxious to conciliate the smaller German princes, responded with a vigorous protest against Danish infringements of the compact of 1852. Lord John Russell now intervened, on behalf of Great Britain, with a proposal for a settlement of the whole question on the basis of the independence of the duchies under the Danish crown, with a decennial budget for common expenses to be agreed on by the four assemblies, and a supreme council of state consisting in relative proportion of Danes and Germans.@@3 This was accepted by Russia and by the German great powers, and Denmark found herself isolated in Europe. The international situation, however, favoured a bold attitude, and she met the representations of the powers with a flat defiance. The retention of Schleswig as an integral part of the monarchy was to her a matter of life and death; the German Confederation had made the terms of the protocol of 1852, defining the intimate relations between the duchies, the excuse for un- warrantable interference in the internal affairs of Denmark; and on the 30th of March 1863 a royal proclamation was published at Copenhagen repudiating the compacts of 1852, and, by defining the separate position of Holstein in the Danish monarchy, negativing once for all the claims of Germany upon Schleswig.@@4

The reply of the German diet to this move was to forward a note to Copenhagen (July 9) demanding, on pain of federal execution, the withdrawal of the proclamation and the grant of a fresh constitution, based on the compacts of 1852 or on the British note of the 24th of September 1862. Instead, King Frederick VII. issued on the 28th of September 1863 a new constitution for “ our kingdom of Denmark-Slesvig.” The diet now resolved on federal execu- tion; but action was delayed, partly through British efforts at mediation, partly because Bismarck judged the time for a satisfactory solution of the whole question had not yet come. Encouraged by this hesitating attitude, the Danish parliament passed the new constitution on the 13th of November. Two days later Frederick VII. died.

The “ Protocol-King,” Christian IX., who now ascended the throne, was in a position of extraordinary difficulty. The first sovereign act he was called upon to perform was to sign the new constitution. To sign was to violate the terms of the very protocol which was his title to reign; to refuse to sign was to place himself in antagonism to the united sentiment of his Danish subjects. He chose what seemed the remoter evil, and on the 18th of November signed the constitution. The news was received in Germany with violent manifestations of excitement and anger. Frederick, duke of Augustenburg, son of the prince who in 1852 had renounced the succession to the duchies, now claimed his rights on the ground that he had had no share in the renunciation. In Holstein an agitation in his favour had begun from the first, and this was extended to Schleswig on the terms of the new Danish constitution becoming known. His claim was enthusiastically

@@@1 Hertslet, *Map of Europe,* ii. 1151.

@@@2 See Queen Victoria to Lord Malmesbury, 1st of May 1858, in *Letters* (pop. ed., 1908), iii. 280. Compare the letters to Palmerston of 21st of June 1849, ii. 222, and 22nd **of** June 1850, ii. 279, with Palmerston to Russell, 23rd of June 1850, and Queen Victoria to Russell, ii. 250.

@@@3 Note of Sept. 24, 1862. For the diplomatic correspondence on the duchies see *Part. Papers,* lxxiv. (1863).

@@@4 For this and later correspondence see *Parl. Papers,* lxiv. (1864), p. 40 seq.