In 1454 peace was concluded, and Denmark for the preſent freed from the Swediſh yoke. Neither did Canutſon long enjoy even the crown of Sweden itſelf. Having quar­relled with the archbiſhop of Upſal, the latter formed luch a ſtrong party that the king could not refill him. Chriſtian king of Denmark was called to the throne of Sweden ; and in 1459 once more united the three kingdoms. He enjoyed his dignity but a ſhort time; for having begun to oppreſs his ſubjects in an arbitrary manner, he was obliged to retire to Denmark in 1463. Katil biſhop of Lincoping, who had driven out the king, took upon himſelf the office of re­gent. Next year Chriſtian returned with a powerful army ; but was defeated. The people then thought proper to re­cal Canutſon : but he, on his firſt acceſſion, having offend­ed the warlike Biſhop Katil, was by him defeated, and obli­ged to renounce his right to the crown. After this the kingdom was rent into factions ; between whom the moſt cruel civil wars took place, until the year 1467, when Canut­ſon was again recalled, and enjoyed the kingdom, though not without difficulty and opposition, till his death, which happened in 1470.

The confuſion in which the Swediſh affairs had been ſo long involved did not ceaſe on the death of Canutſon. Christian again invaded Sweden ; but was defeated by Steen Sture, nephew to the late king. After this the kingdom ſeems to have remained in peace till the year 1487, when the Russians invaded Carelia, committing everywhere the greatest ravages. Theſe were ſoon driven out : but in 1497, a rupture happening betwixt Sture and the ſenate, an offer was made of the Swediſh crown to John king of Denmark. This prince readily accepted the offer, and was crowned ac­cordingly ; but no ſooner was be ſeated on the throne than he became odious to the Swedes, from his partiality to the Hanes. In a ſhort time he ſet out for Denmark, leaving his queen, with a ſtrong garriſon, in the citadel of Stock­holm. He was no ſooner gone than the capital was inveſted : and though the queen made a noble defence, ſhe was at laſt obliged to capitulate, on condition of being allowed to paſs into Denmark. All the garriſon were made priſoners of war, and the queen herſelf was confined in a monaſtery till the following year.

The Swediſh affairs continued to be involved in the same dreadful confuſion as we have already related, until the year 1520, when a great revolution was effected by Guſtavus Ericſon, a nobleman of the firſt rank, who reſtored the kingdom to its liberty, and laid the foundation of its future grandeur. The occaſion of this great revolution was as fol­lows : In 1518, Chriſtian king of Denmark invaded Swe­den, with a deſign to ſubdue the whole country ; but being defeated with great loſs by young Steen Sture, the regent at that time, he ſet sail for Denmark. But meeting with contrary winds, he made ſeveral deſcents on the Swediſh coaſt, which he ravaged with all the fury of an incenſed barbarian. The inhabitants, however, bravely deſended themselves, and Chriſtian was reduced to the utmoſt distreſs ; one half of his forces having periſhed with hunger, and the other being in the most imminent danger by the approach of a rigorous winter. He then thought of a ſtratagem, which had almoſt proved fatal to the regent ; for having invited him to a conference, at which he designed either to aſſaſſinate or take him priſoner, Sture was about to comply, bad not the ſenate, who ſuſpected the plot, interpoſed and prevented him. Chriſtian then offered to go in person to Stockholm in order to confer with Sture, upon condition that six hoſtages ſhould be sent in his room. This was accord­ingly done ; but the wind happening then to prove favour­able, he ſet sail for Denmark with the hoſtages, of whom Guſtavus Ericſon was one. Next year he returned ; and having drawn Sture into an ambuſh, the regent received a wound of which he died ſome time after. The kingdom being thus left without a head, matters ſoon came to the moſt desperate criſis. The army diſbanded itſelf; and the ſenate, inſtead of taking proper meaſures to oppoſe the ene­my, ſpent their time in idle debates. Chriſtian in the mean time advanced into the heart of the kingdom, deſtroying every thing with fire and sword,∙ but on his arrival at Stragnez, he granted a ſuſpenſion of arms, to give the peo­ple time to deliberate on their ſituation, and to reflect that they might eaſily get rid of their troubles by electing him king. This they accordingly did; and Chriſtian proved one of the moſt bloody tyrants that ever ſat on the throne of any kingdom. Immediately after his coronation, he gave grand entertainments for three days; during which time he projected the diabolical deſign of extirpating at once all the Swediſh nobility, and thus for ever preventing the people from revolting, by depriving them of their proper leaders. As the tyrant had ſigned articles, by which he promiſed indem­nity to all who had borne arms againſt him, it became neceſsary to invent ſome cause of offence againſt thoſe whom he intended to deſtroy. To accompliſh his purpoſe, Gu­ſtavus Trolle, formerly archbiſhop of Upſal, but who had been degraded from that dignity, in an oration before his majeſty lamented the demolition of Stecka, his place of reſidence, and the loſſes ſuſtained by the ſee of Upſal, amount­ing to near a million of money. He then proceeded in a bitter accuſation againſt the widow and the ſon-in-law of Sture the late-regent, comprehending in the ſame accuſa­tion about 15 of the principal nobility, the whole ſenate, and the burghers of Stockholm The conſequence of this was, that above 60 of the principal nobility and people of firſt rank in Sweden were hanged up as traitors. Innumerable other cruelties were committed ; part of which are owned by the Daniſh hiſtorians, and minutely related by thoſe of Sweden. At laſt he departed for Denmark, ordering gib­bets to be erected, and cauſing the peasants to be hanged on them for the ſlighteſt offences, all the way as he paſſed along; and it is related of him, that at Jencoping he cauſed two boys, one of ſeven and the other of nine years of age, to be whipped to death.

This monſtrous cruelty, inſtead of ſecuring him on the throne, exaſperated the whole nation againſt him. It has already been mentioned, that Guſtavus Ericſon, or, as he is commonly called, *Gustavus Vaſa,* was among the number of the hoſtages whom Chriſtian had perfidiouſly carried to Denmark in 1519. Large promiſes had been made in or­der to reconcile him to Chriſtian, and threats had been uſed for the ſame purpoſe, but all in vain. Secret orders were given to ſtrangle him in priſon ; but the officer to whom the aſſaſſination was committed remonſtrated to the king about the conſequences of it, and prevailed on him to change the ſentence of death into cloſe confinement in the caſtle of Co­penhagen. Some of the hoſtages periſhed in conſequence of the rigorous treatment they met with; but Guſtavus withſtood all hardſhips. At laſt one Banner, a Daniſh no­bleman, prevailed on the king to put him into his hands, in order to try whether or not he could prevail upon him to change his ſentiments. The king, however, told Banner, that he muſt pay 6000 crowns in caſe the priſoner ſhould make his eſcape. Banner generouſly assented ; and having brought the noble priſoner to his fortreſs of Calo in Jut­land, ſoon allowed him all the liberty he could deſire, and otherwiſe heaped favours upon him. All this, however, could not extinguiſh his remembrance of the cruelties of Chriſtian, and the deſire he had of being ſerviceable to his country. He therefore determined to make his eſcape ; and the liberty he enjoyed ſoon put him in a capacity of