he was visited by thc unfortunate Stanislas, the dethroned king of Poland.

Charles seemed at last inclined to submit to his fate, and began seriously to think of returning to his kingdom, now reduced to the most deplorable situation. His habitation had been fixed at Demotica, a small town about six leagues from Adrianople. Here he was allowed provisions for his own table and those of his retinue ; but only twenty-five crowns a day in money, instead of five hundred which he had received at Bender. During his residence here, he received a deputation from Hesse-Cassel, soliciting his con­sent to the marriage of the landgrave with Eleonora, princess royal of Sweden ; to which he readily agreed. A deputa­tion was also sent him by the regency of Sweden, request­ing that he would prepare for returning to his own domi­nions, which, in his absence, were ready to sink under a ruinous war.

On the 14th of October 1714, Charles set out for Swe­den. All the princes through whose territories he was to pass had given orders for his entertainment in the most magnificent manner ; but the king, perceiving that these compliments only rendered his imprisonment and other misfortunes more conspicuous, suddenly dismissed his Turk­ish attendants, and assembling his own people, bid them take no care about him, but make the best of their way to Stralsund. After this he set out post, in the habit of a German officer, attended only by Colonel During. Keep­ing the by-roads through Hungary, Moravia, Austria, Ba­varia, Wirtemberg, the Palatinate, Westphalia, and Meck­lenburg, he arrived on the 21st of November at midnight before the gates of Stralsund. Being unknown, he was ad­mitted with difficulty ; but being soon recognised by the governor, the greatest tokens of joy were manifested all over the town.

Sweden was now in the greatest distress. On the news of the defeat at Pultava, the Danes had invaded Schonen, but were defeated by General Steenboek. This victory did not, however, put an end to the war. The kings of Denmark and Poland, with the czar of Russia, entered in­to stricter bonds of amity than ever. They dreaded the return of Charles to his own dominions, and apprehended that numberless [victories would soon efface the remem­brance of Pultava. They determined to make the best use of their time ; and perhaps Charles never took a more im­prudent resolution than obstinately to remain so long in the Turkish dominions. His return seemed to give new life to the whole nation. Though the number of inhabitants was visibly diminished, the levies which he had ordered were completed in a few weeks ; but the husbandmen left to cul­tivate the earth consisted of the infirm, aged, and decrepid ; so that a famine was threatened in consequence of the mi­litary rage which had seized all the youth of the kingdom.

The presence of Charles did not now produce those con­sequences which the allies had feared. The kingdom was too much reduced to furnish the necessary supplies of men and money ; and though the king’s courage and military skill were not in the least diminished, the efforts which he made, instead of restoring Sweden to its splendour, serv­ed more completely to ruin it. In 1715, Prussia declared against him, on account of his demanding back the town of Stettin, which that monarch had seized. To complete his embarrassment, the elector of Hanover, George I. of Bri­tain, also became his enemy. The forces of Denmark, Prussia, Saxony, and Hanover joined to invest Wismar, while a body of 36,000 men formed the siege of Stralsund ; and at the same time the czar, with a fleet of twenty large ships of war, and 150 transports, carrying 30,000 men, threw every part of the Swedish coast into the greatest con­sternation. The heroism of Charles could not prevail against so many enemies ; yet he was still so much dread­ed, that the prince of Anhalt, with 12,000 brave troops, did not think himself a match for this furious enemy when at the head of only 2000, till he had intrenched his army be­hind a ditch, defended by chevaux de frise. It appeared, indced, that this precaution was not unnecessary ; for in the night Charles with his men clambered up the ditch, and attacked the enemy in his usual manner. Numbers, how­ever, at last prevailed, and Charles was obliged to retire, after having seen his favourite Grotliusen, General Dardoff, and During, the companions of his exile, killed by his side, he himself being wounded in the breast.

This rash attempt was made in order to save Rugen, whence the town of Stralsund was supplied with provisions. The place was well fortified, and garrisoned with 9000 men, with Charles himself at their head ; but nothing could resist the efforts of the enemy. By the 17th of December it was proposed to give the assault The attack on the horn-work was desperate ; the enemy was twice repulsed ; but at last, by dint of numbers, effected a lodgment. The next day, Charles headed a sally, in which he dealt terrible destruction among the besiegers, but was at length over­powered and obliged to retreat into the town. At last his officers, apprehending that he must either fall into the hands of the enemy, or be buried in the ruins of the place, en­treated him to retire. A retreat, however, was now al­most as dangerous as to remain in the town, on account of the fleets of the enemy with which the sea was covered ; and it is thought that this very circumstance induced the king to consent to it. Embarking in a small boat with sails and oars, he passed all the enemy’s ships and batteries, and arrived safe at Ystedt in Schonen.

To revenge himself for these losses, Charles invaded Norway with an army of 25,000 men. The Danes were everywhere defeated and pursued with that vigour for which the king of Sweden was so remarkable ; but strong rein­forcements arriving from Denmark, and provisions failing, he was at last obliged to retire. S∞n after this the Swedes lost Wismar ; but when every thing seemed hopeless, Baron Goertz, the chief minister and favourite of Charles, contriv­ed to make overtures for a treaty with the czar of Russia, by which the most formidable of all Charles’s enemies was taken off. The minister found means to work on the in­flexible temper of Charles, by representing to him that the cession of certain provinces to Peter would induce him to assist him in his projects of again dethroning Augustus, and of replacing James on the throne of Britain ; which last scheme he had projected out of revenge for the elector of Hanover having seized on the duchies of Bremen and Ver­den. In consequence of the conferences between the czar and Goertz, the former engaged to send into Poland an army of 80,000 men, in order to dethrone that prince whom he had so long defended. He also engaged to furnish ships for transporting 30,000 Swedes to Germany, and 10,000 into Denmark. This treaty was not however ratified, and the death of Charles put a final stop to all the great pros­pects of Sweden.

The king had resolved on the conquest of Norway be­fore he dethroned Augustus ; and as no difficulties ever de­terred him, he marched his army into that cold and barren country in the month of October, when the ground was covered with frost and snow. With 18,000 men he formed the siege of Frederickshall, though the severity of the frost rendered it almost impossible to break ground. He resolv­ed to form trenches ; and his soldiers cheerfully obeyed, digging into the ground with the same labour as if they had been piercing a rock. On the 11 th of December the king visited the trenches in the midst of a terrible fire from the enemy, imagining that his men might be animated by his presence. He took his post in the most dangerous station that he could select, standing on a gabion and leaning with his arm over the parapet, while the enemy were firing chain shot at the very spot where he stood. He was entreated to