determined traitor like Trolle. He publicly protested, in thc sharpest language, that unless Johannes Magni were recognized at Rome as archbishop of Upsala, he was determined, of his own royal authority, henceforward to order the affairs of the Church in his realm to the glory of God and the satisfaction of all Christian men. But the Holy See was immovable, and Gustavus broke definitely with Rome. He began by protecting and promoting the Swedish reformers Olavus and Laurentius Petri, and Laurentius Andreae. The new teaching was allowed to spread, though at first unostenta­tiously and gradually. A fresh step in the direction of Lutheran­ism was the translation of the New Testament into Swedish, which was published in 1526. Simul­taneously, a systematic attack was made upon the religious houses, beginning with the sequestration of the monastery of Gripsholm in January 1526. But the affair caused such general indignation that Gustavus felt obliged, in May, to offer some justification of his conduct. A few months later there was an open rupture between the king and his own primate, who ultimately was frightened into exile by a sudden accusation of treason. But the other bishops were also against Gustavus, and, irritated by their conscientious opposition, the king abandoned the no longer tenable position of a mode­rator and came openly forward as an antagonist. In 1526 the Catholic printing-presses were suppressed, and two-thirds of the Church’s tithes were appropriated to the payment of the national debt. On the 18th of February 1527 two bishops, the first martyrs of Catholicism in Sweden, were gibbeted at Stockholm after a trial which was a parody of justice. This act of violence, evidently designed to terrorize the Church into submission, was effectual enough, for at the subsequent Riksdag of Vesterås (June, 1527), the bishops durst not even present a protest which they had privately prepared, and the assembly itself was bullied into an absolute submission to the royal will. The result was the Vesterås Recess which transferred all ecclesiastical property to the Crown. By the subsequent Vesterås Ordinance the Swedish Church was absolutely severed from Rome. Never­theless, the changes so made were mainly administrative. There was no modification of doctrine, for the general resolution that God’s Word should be preached plainly and purely was not contrary to the teaching of the ante-Tridentine Church. Even at the synod of Örebro, summoned in February 1529, “for the better regulation of church ceremonies and discipline according to God’s Word,” there was no formal protest against Rome; and the old ritual was retained for two years longer, though it was to be explained as symbolical. Henceforth the work of the Reformation continued uninterruptedly. In 1531 Laurentius Petri was elected the first Protestant primate of Sweden. Subse­quently matters were much complicated by the absolutist tendencies of Gustavus. From 1539 onwards there was a breach between him and his own prelates in consequence of his arbitrary appropriation of the Church’s share of the tithes, in direct violation of the Vesterås Recess. Then Gustavus so curtailed the power of the bishops (ordinances of 1539 and 1540) that they had little of the dignity left but the name, and even that he was disposed to abolish, for after 1543 the prelates appointed by him, without any pretence of previous election by the cathedral chapters, were called ordinaries, or superintendents. Finally, at the Riksdag of Vesterås, in 1544. though no definite con­fession of faith was formulated, a final breach was made with the traditions of the old religion.

Thus the Reformation in Sweden was practically the work of one strong man, acting (first from purely political and latterly from purely economical reasons) for the good of the state as he understood it. In this Gustavus acted contrary to the religious instincts of the vast majority of the Swedish nation; for there can be no doubt at all that the Swedes at the beginning of the 16th century were not only still devoted to the old Church, but violently anti-Protestant. This popular Romanism was the greatest of all Gustavus’s difficulties, because it tended to alienate the Swedish peasants.

For the last hundred years the peasants had been a leading factor in the political life of the land; and perhaps in no other contemporary European state could so self-reliant a class of yeomen have been found. Again and again they had defended their own and the national liberties against foreign foes. In the national assemblies, too, their voice had always been powerful, and not infrequently predominant. In a word, they were the sound kernel of the still but partially developed Swedish constitution, the democratic safeguard against the monarchical tendency which was enveloping the rest of Europe. Gustavus’s necessities had compelled him to break with the ecclesiastical traditions of Sweden; and they also compelled him, contrary to his masterful disposition, to accept constitutionalism, because without it his footing in his own kingdom would have been insecure. The peasants there­fore were his natural allies, but, from the nature of the case, they tended to become his most formidable rivals. They prided themselves on having “ set King Gus in the high seat,” but they were quite ready to unseat him if his rule was not to their liking, and there were many things with which they were by no means contented. This anomalous state of things was responsible for the half-dozen peasant risings with which Gustavus had to contend from 1525 to 1543. In all these rebellions the religious difficulty figured largely, though the increasing fiscal burdens were undoubtedly grievous and the peasants had their particu­lar grievances besides. The wholesale seizure and degradation of Church property outraged them, and they formally protested against the introduction of “ Luthery.” They threatened, more than once, to march upon and destroy Stockholm, because the Reformers had made of it “ a spiritual Sodom.” They insisted on the restoration of the ancient Catholic customs, and would have made neglect of fasting and other sins of omission penal offences. Though he prevailed in the end, Gustavus was obliged to humour the people throughout. And thus, though he was strong enough to maintain what he had established and finish what he had begun, he was not strong enough to tamper seriously with the national liberties or to crush altogether Catholic aspirations. At the time of his death the Riksdag was already a power in the state, and a Catholic reaction in Sweden was by no means an impossibility, if only the Catholics had been able to find capable leaders.

Gustavus’s foreign policy at first aimed at little more than self-preservation. Only with the pecuniary assistance of the wealthy merchants of Lübeck had he been able to establish himself originally; and Lübeck, in return, had exploited Sweden, as Spain at a later day was to exploit her American colonies. When, with the aid of Denmark, Gustavus at last freed himself from this greedy incubus (see Denmark; Gustavus I.; Christian III.) by the truce of the 28th of August 1537, Sweden for the first time in her history became the mistress of her own waters. But even so she was but of subordinate importance in Scandi­navian politics. The hegemony of Denmark was indisputable, and Gustavus regarded that power with an ever-increasing suspicion which augured ill for peace in the future. The chief cause of dispute was the quartering by the Danish king of the three crowns of Sweden on the Dano-Norwegian shield, which was supposed to indicate a claim of sovereignty. Still more offensive was the attitude of Sweden’s eastern neighbour Muscovy, with whom the Swedish king was nervously anxious to stand on good terms. Gustavus attributed to Ivan IV., whose resources he unduly magnified, the design of establishing a universal monarchy round the Baltic.

Nevertheless events were already occurring which ultimately compelled Sweden to depart from her neutrality and lay the foundations of an overseas empire. In the last year of Gustavus’s life (1560), the ancient military order of the Sword, amalgamated, since 1237, with the more powerful order of the Teutonic Knights, had by the seculari­zation of the latter order into the dukedom of Prussia (1525) become suddenly isolated in the midst of hostile Slavonians. It needed but a jolt to bring down the crazy anachronism, and