making some “ small cession ” to them. This Charles XL refused to do, whereupon Louis took it upon himself to conclude peace on Sweden’s account without consulting the wishes of the Swedish king. By this Treaty of Nijmwegen (Feb. 7) and of St Germain (June 29, 1679) Sweden virtually received full restitution of her German territory. On the 2nd of September by the Peace of Fontainebleau (confirmed by the subsequent Peace of Lund, Oct. 4, 1679), Denmark was also forced to retrocede her conquests. It is certain that Sweden herself could never have extorted such favourable terms, yet “ the insufferable tutelage ” of France on this occasion inspired Charles XI. with a per­sonal dislike of the mighty ruler of France and contributed to reverse the traditional diplomacy of Sweden by giving it a strong anti-French bias (see Charles XL; Oxenstjerna, Benedict).

The remainder of the reign of Charles XI. is remarkable for a revolution which converted the government of Sweden into a semi-absolute monarchy. The king emerged from the war convinced that if Sweden were to retain her position as a great power she must radically reform her whole economical system, and, above all, cir­cumscribe the predominant and mischievous in­fluence of an aristocracy which thought far more of its privileges than of its public duties. He felt that he could now draw upon the confidence and liberality of the lower orders to an unlimited extent, and he proceeded to do so. The Riksdag which assembled in Stockholm in October 1680 begins a new era of Swedish history. On the motion of the Estate of Peasants, which had a long memory for aristocratic abuses, the question of the recovery of the alienated crown lands was brought before the Riksdag, and, despite the stubborn opposition of the magnates, a resolution of the Diet directed that all countships, baronies, domains, manors and other estates producing an annual rent of more than £70 per annum should revert to the Crown. The same Riksdag decided that the king was not bound by any particular constitution, but only by law and the statutes. Nay, they added that he was not even obliged to consult the council of state, but was to be regarded as a sovereign lord, responsible to God alone for his actions, and requiring no intermediary between himself and his people. The council thereupon acquiesced in its own humiliation by meekly accepting a royal brief changing its official title from *Riksråd* (council of slate) to *Kungligaråd* (royal council)—a visible sign that the senators were no longer the king’s colleagues but his servants.

Thus Sweden, as well as Denmark, had become an absolute monarchy, but with this important difference, that the right of the Swedish people, in parliament assembled, to be consulted on all important matters was recognized and acted upon. The Riksdag, completely overshadowed by the throne, was during the reign of Charles XI. to do little more than register the royal decrees; but nevertheless it continued to exist as an essential part of the machinery of government. Moreover, this transfer of authority was a voluntary act. The people, knowing the king to be their best friend, trusted him implicity and co­operated with him cheerfully. The Riksdag of 1682 proposed a fresh Reduktion, and declared that the whole question of how far the king was empowered by the law of the land to bestow fiefs, or, in case of urgent national distress, take them back again, was exclusively his majesty’s affair. In other words, it made the king the disposer of his subjects’ temporal property. Presently this new principle of autocracy was extended to the king’s legislative authority also, for, on the 9th of December 1682, all four estates, by virtue of a common declaration, not only confirmed him in the possession of the legislative powers enjoyed by his predecessors, but even conceded to him the right of interpreting and amending the common law.

The recovery of the alienated crown lands occupied Charles XI. for the rest of his life. It was conducted by a commission which was ultimately converted into a permanent department of state. It acted on the principle that the titles of all private landed estate might be called in question, inasmuch as at some time or other it must have belonged to the Crown; and the burden of proof of ownership was held not to lie with the Crown which made the claim, but with the actual owner of the property. The amount of revenue accruing to the Crown from the whole Reduktion it is impossible to estimate even approximately; but by these means, combined with the most careful manage­ment and the most rigid economy, Charles XI. contrived to reduce the national debt from £2,567,000 to £700,000.

These operations represent only a part of Charles XI.’s gigantic activity. Here we have only space sufficient to glance at his reorganization of the national armaments. Charles XI. re-established on a broader basis the *indelningsverk* introduced by Charles IX.—a system of military tenure whereby the national forces were bound to the soil. Thus there was the *rusthåll* tenure, under which the tenants, instead of paying rent, were obliged to equip and maintain a cavalry soldier and horse, while the *knekthållarer* supplied duly equipped foot soldiers. These *indelning* soldiers were provided with holdings on which they lived in times of peace. Formerly, ordinary conscription had existed alongside this *indelning,* or distribution system; but it had proved inadequate as well as highly unpopular; and, in 1682, Charles XI. came to an agreement with the peasantry whereby an extended *indelning* system was to be susbstituted for general conscription. the navy, of even more importance to Sweden if she were to maintain the dominion of the Baltic, was entirely remodelled; and, the recent war having demon­strated the unsuitability of Stockholm as a naval station, the construction of a new arsenal on a gigantic scale was simul­taneously begun at Karlskrona. After a seventeen years’ struggle against all manner of financial difficulties, the twofoldsenterprise was completed. At the death of Charles XI. Sweden could boast of a fleet of forty-three three-deckers (manned by 11,000 men and armed with 2648 guns) and one of the finest arsenals in the world.

Charles XI. had carefully provided against the contingency of his successor’s minority; and the five regents appointed by him, if not great statesmen, were at least practical politicans who had not been trained in his austere school in vain. At home the Reduktion was cautiously pursued, while abroad the successful conclusion of the great peace congress at Ryswick was justly regarded as a signal triumph of Sweden’s pacific diplomacy (see Oxenstjerna Family). The young king was full of promise, and had he been permitted gradually to gain experience and develop his naturally great talents beneath the guidance of his guardians, as his father had intended, all might have been well for Sweden. Unfortunately, the sudden, noiseless revolution of the 6th of November 1697, which made Charles XII. absolute master of his country’s fate in his fifteenth year (see Charles XII.), and the league of Denmark, Saxony and Russia, formed two years later to partition Sweden (see Patkul, Johann Reinhold; Peter the Great; Charles XII.), precipitated Sweden into a sea of troubles in which she was finally submerged.

From the very beginning of the Great Northern War Sweden suffered from the inability of Charles XII. to view the situation from anything but a purely personal point of view. His determination to avenge himself on enemies overpowered every other consideration. Again and again during these eighteen years of warfare it was in his power to dictate an advantageous peace. After the dissipation of the first coalition against him by the peace of Travendal (Aug. 18, 1700) and the victory of Narva (Nov. 20, 1700), the Swedish chancellor, Benedict Oxenstjerna, rightly regarded the universal bidding for the favour of Sweden by France and the maritime powers, then on the eve of the War of the Spanish Succession, as a golden opportunity of “ ending this present lean war and making his majesty the arbiter of Europe.” But Charles, intent on dethroning Augustus of Poland, held haughtily aloof. Subsequently in 1701 he rejected a personal appeal from William III. to conclude peace on his