ed them almoſt as much as the Swedes : ſo that he was re­duced to the neceſſity of writing a letter to Charles with his own hand, begging for peace on whatever terms he thought proper to grant. However, as he was then at the mercy of the Russians, this tranſaction was concealed with the greateſt care. His emissaries were introduced to the Swedish court in the night-time ; and being preſented to Charles, received the following anſwer : That king Auguſtus ſhould for ever renounce the crown of Poland, acknowledge Stanislaus, and promiſe never to reaſcend the throne, ſhould an op­portunity offer ; that he ſhould release the princes Sobieſki, and all the Swediſh priſoners made in the courſe of the war; surrender Patkul, at that time reſident at his court as ambassador for the Czar of Muſcovy, and ſtop proceedings againſt all who had paſſed from his into the Swediſh ſervice. Theſe articles Charles wrote with his own hand, end deliver­ed to count Piper, ordering him to finiſh them with the Saxon ambassadors.

Auguſtus all this time was obliged to continue a ſhow of war, though he had neither ability nor inclination to carry it on. He was joined by prince Menzikoff with 30,000 Russians; which obliged him, contrary to his inclination, to come to an engagement with Meyerfeldt, who commanded 10,000 men, one half of whom were Swedes. As at this time no disparity of numbers whatever was reckoned an equi­valent to the valour of the Swedes; Meyerfeldt did not de­cline the combat, though the army of the enemy was four times as numerous as his own. With his countrymen he defeated the enemy’s firſt line, and was on the point of de­feating the ſecond, when Staniſlaus, with the Poles and Li­thuanians, gave way. Meyerfeldt then perceived that the battle was lost ; but he fought deſperately, on purpoſe to avoid the diſgrace oſ a defeat. At laſt, however, he was oppressed by numbers, and forced to ſurrender ; ſuffering the Swedes, for the firſt time, to be conquered by their ene­mies. The whole army were taken priſoners excepting major-general Krassau; who having repeatedly rallied a body of horſe formed into a brigade, at laſt broke through the enemy, and eſcaped to Poſnania.— Augustus had ſcarce ſung *Te Deum* for this victory, when his plenipotentiary returned from Saxony with the articles of the treaty above-mentioned. The king heſitated and ſcrupled, but at laſt ſigned them ; after which he ſet out for Saxony, glad at any rate to be freed from ſuch an enemy as the king of Sweden, and from ſuch allies as the Russians.

The Czar Peter was no sooner informed of this extraordinary treaty, and the cruel execution of his plenipotentiary Patkul@@\*, than he ſent letters to every court in Chriſtendom, complaining of this groſs violation of the law of nations. He intreated the emperor, the queen of Britain, and the States-General, to revenge this inſult on humanity. He ſtigmatized the compliance of Auguſtus with the oppro­brious name of *pusillanimity ;* exhorted them not to guaran­tee a treaty ſo unjuſt, but to deſpiſe the menaces of the Swe­diſh bully. So well, however, was the proweſs of the king of Sweden known, that none of the allies thought proper to irritate him, by refusing to guarantee any treaty he thought proper. At firſt, Peter thought of revenging Patkul’s death by massacring the Swediſh priſoners at Moſeow ; but from this he was ſoon deterred, by remembering that Charles had many more Russian prisoners than he had of Swedes. Gi­ving over thoughts of revenging himſelf in this way, there­fore, in the year 1707 he entered Poland, at the head of 60,000 men. Advancing to Leopold, he made himſelf master of that city, where he assembled a diet and ſolemnly depoſed Staniſlaus with the ſame ceremonies which had been uſed with regard to Auguſtus. The country was now re­duced to the moſt miſerable ſituation ; one party, through fear, adhered to the Swedes ; another was gained over, or forced by Peter to take part with him : a violent civil war took place between the two, and great numbers of people were butchered, while cities, towns, and villages, were laid in aſhes by the frantic multitude. The appearance of a Swediſh army under king Staniſlaus and general Lewenhaupt put a ſtop to theſe diſorders, Peter himſelf not caring to ſtand before ſuch enemies. He retired, therefore, into Lithuania, giving as the cauſe of his retreat, that the coun­try could not ſupply him with proviſions and forage neceſsary for so great an army.

In the mean time Charles had taken up his reſidence in Saxony, where he gave law to the court of Vienna, and in a manner intimidated all Europe. He declared himſelf the protector of the Proteſtant intereſt in Germany, particular­ly of the emperor’s Proteſtant ſubjects in Sileſia. He deſired, or rather *commanded,* the emperor to renew and con­firm to them all the liberties granted by the treaties of Weſtphalia, but ſince that time reclaimed or eluded at the treaty of Ryſwick. The emperor durſt not refuſe; and up­wards of 100 churches were given to the Proteſtants. On this occaſion the emperor is reported to have ſaid, that “ had Charles deſired him to become a Lutheran, he did not know whether he could have refuſed.” One would indeed have imagined that Charles had ſome thoughts of convert­ing, or at leaſt dethroning, the Pope himſelf; for being incenſed at the constant oppoſition of the court of Rome, whole weakneſs and intrigues he deſpiſed, he one day told the emperor’s miniſter, that “ the Swedes had conquered Rome before now, and he might one day demand an inven­tory of the effects left there by queen Chriſtina.” At last,ſatiated with the glory of having dethroned one king, ſet up another, and ſtruck all Europe with terror and admira­tion, Charles began to evacuate Saxony, in purſuit of his great plan, the dethroning Czar Peter, and conquering the vast empire of Ruſſia. While the army was on full march in the neighbourhood of Dreſden, he took the extraordinary reſolution of viſiting king Auguſtus with no more than five attendants. Though he had no reason to imagine that Auguſtus either did or could entertain any friendſhip for him, he was not uneaſy at the consequences of thus putting himſelf entirely in his power. He got to the palace door of Auguſtus before it was known that he had entered the city. General Fleming having ſeen him at a diſtance, had only time to run and inform his maſter. What might be done in the preſent caſe immediately occurred to the miniſter ; but Charles entered the elector’s chamber in his boots before the latter had time to recover from his ſurpriſe. He breakfaſted with him in a friendly manner, and then expressed a deſire of viewing the fortifications. While he was walking round them, a Livonian, who had formerly been condemn­ed in Sweden, and served in the troops of Saxony, thought he could never have a more favourable opportunity of ob­taining pardon. He therefore begged of king Auguſtus to intercede for him, being fully aſſured that his majeſty could not refuſe ſo slight a requeſt to a prince in whoſe power he then was. Auguſtus accordingly made the requeſt ; but Charles refuſed it in ſuch a manner, that he did not think proper to aſk it a ſecond time. Having paſſed ſome hours in this extraordinary viſit, he returned to his army, after having embraced and taken leave of the king he had de­throned.

The armies of Sweden, in Saxony, Poland, and Finland, now exceeded 70,000 men ; a force more than sufficient to have conquered all the power of Muſcovy, had they met them on equal terms. Peter, who had his army diſperſed in ſmall parties, inſtantly aſſembled it on receiving notice of the king oſ Sweden’s march, was making all poſſible prepara-

@@@[m]\* See the article Patkul.