king refused to sign) declaring that all complaints against the measures of the last Riksdag should be punished with fine and imprisonment. The king, at the suggestion of the crown prince (see Gustavus HI.), thereupon urged the senate to summon an extraordinary Riksdag as the speediest method of relieving the national distress, and, on their refusing to comply with his wishes, abdicated. From the 15th of December to the 21st of December 1768 Sweden was without a regular government. Then the Cap senate gave way and the estates were convoked for the 19th of April 1769.

On the eve of the contest there was a general assembly of the Hats at the French embassy, where the Comte de Modène furnished them with 6,000,000 livres, but not till they had signed in his presence an undertaking to reform the constitution in a monarchical sense. Still more energetic on the other side, the Russian minister, Ivan Osterman, became the treasurer as well as the counsellor of the Caps, and scattered the largesse of the Russian empress with a lavish hand; and so lost to all feeling of patriotism were the Caps that they openly threatened all who ventured to vote against them with the Muscovite vengeance, and fixed Norrköping, instead of Stockholm, as the place of meeting for the Riksdag as being more accessible to the Russian fleet. But it soon became evident that the Caps were playing a losing game; and, when the Riksdag met at Norrköping on the 19th of April, they found them­selves in a minority in all four estates. In the contest for the marshalate of the Diet the leaders of the two parties were again pitted against each other, when the verdict of the last Riksdag was exactly reversed, Fersen defeating Rudbeck by 234, though Russia spent no less a sum than £11,500 to secure the election of the latter.

The Caps had short shrift, and the joint note which the Russian, Prussian and Danish ministers presented to the estates protesting, in menacing terms, against any “ reprisals ” on the part of the triumphant faction, only hastened the fall of the government. The Cap senate resigned *en masse* to escape impeachment, and an exclusively Hat ministry took its place. On the 1st of June the Reaction Riksdag, as it was generally called, removed to the capital; and it was now that the French ambassador and the crown prince Gustavus called upon the new senators to redeem their promise as to a reform of the constitution which they had made before the elections. But when, at the fag-end of the session, they half-heartedly brought the matter forward, the Riksdag suddenly seemed to be stricken with paralysis. Im­pediments multiplied at every step; the cry was raised: “ The constitution is in danger”; and on the 30th of January 1770 the Reaction Riksdag, after a barren ten months’ session, rose amidst chaotic confusion without accomplishing anything.

Adolphus Frederick died on the 12th of February 1771. The elections held on the demise of the Crown resulted in a partial victory for the Caps, especially among the lower orders; but in the estate of the peasants their majority was merely nominal, while the mass of the nobility was dead against them. Nothing could be done, however, till the arrival of the new king (then at Paris), and every one felt that with Gustavus III. an entirely incalculable factor had entered into Swedish politics. Unknown to the party leaders, he had already renewed the Swedish alliance with France and had received solemn assurances of assistance from Louis XV. in case he succeeded in re-establishing monarchical rule in Sweden. France undertook, moreover, to pay the outstanding subsidies to Sweden, amounting to one and a half millions of livres annually, beginning from January 1772; and Vergennes, one of the great names of French diplo­macy, was to be sent to circumvent the designs of Russia at Stockholm as he had previously circumvented them at Con­stantinople. Immediately after his return to Stockholm, Gustavus endeavoured to reconcile the jarring factions by in­ducing the leaders to form a composition committee to adjust their differences. In thus mediating he was sincere enough, but all his pacific efforts were frustrated by their jealousy of him and of each other. Still worse, the factions now intrenched still further on the prerogative. The new coronation oath con­tained three revolutionary clauses. The first aimed at making abdications in the future impossible by binding the king to reign uninterruptedly. The second obliged him to abide, not by the decision of all the estates together, as heretofore, but by that of the majority only, with the view of enabling the actually dominant lower estates (in which was a large Cap majority) to rule without, and even in spite of, the nobility. The third clause required him, in all cases of preferment, to be guided not “ principally,” as heretofore, but “ solely ” by merit, thus striking at the very root of aristocratic privilege. It was clear that the ancient strife of Hats and Caps had become merged in a conflict of classes; the situation was still further complicated by the ominous fact that the non-noble majority was also the Russian faction.

All through 1771 the estates were wrangling over the clauses of the coronation oath. A second attempt of the king to mediate between them foundered on the suspicions of the estate of burgesses; and, on the 24th of February 1772, the nobility yielded from sheer weariness. The non-noble Cap majority now proceeded to attack the senate, the last stronghold of the Hats, and, on the 25th of April, succeeded in ousting their opponents. It was now, for the first time, that Gustavus, reduced to the condition of a *roi fainéant,* began seriously to consider the possibility of a revolution; of its necessity there could be no doubt. Under the sway of the now dominant faction, Sweden, already the vassal, could not fail speedily to become the victim of Russia. She was on the point of being absorbed in that Northern System, the invention of the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Nikita Panin *(q.v.),* which that patient statesman had made it the ambition of his life to realize. Only a swift and sudden *coup d'etat* could save the inde­pendence of a country isolated from the rest of Europe by a hostile league. The details of the famous revolution of the 19th of August 1772 are elsewhere set forth (see Gustavus III.; Toll, Johan Kristoffer; Sprengtporten, Jakob Magnus). Here we can only dwell upon its political importance and consequences. The new constitution of the 20th of August 1772, which Gustavus imposed upon the terrified estates at the bayonet’s point, converted a weak and disunited republic into a strong but limited monarchy, in which the balance of power inclined, on the whole, to the side of the monarch. The estates could only assemble when summoned by him; he could dismiss them whenever he thought fit; and their deliberations were to be confined exclusively to the propositions which he might think fit to lay before them. But these very extensive powers were subjected to many important checks. Thus, without the previous consent of the estates, no new law could be imposed, no old law abolished, no offensive war undertaken, no extraordi­nary war subsidy levied. The estates alone could tax them­selves; they had the absolute control of the Bank of Sweden, and the inalienable right of controlling the national expendi­ture. Thus the parliament held the purse; and this seemed a sufficient guarantee both of its independence and its frequent convention. The senate, not the Riksdag, was the chief loser by the change; and, inasmuch as henceforth the senators were appointed by the king, and were to be responsible to him alone, a senate in opposition to the Crown was barely conceivable.

Abroad the Swedish revolution made a great sensation. Catherine II. of Russia saw in it the triumph of her arch-enemy France, with the prolongation of the costly Turkish War as its immediate result. But the absence of troops on the Finnish border, and the bad condition of the frontier fortresses, con­strained the empress to listen to Gustavus’s pacific assurances, and stay her hand. She took the precaution, however, of concluding a fresh secret alliance with Denmark, in which the Swedish revolution was significantly described as “ an act of violence ” constituting a *casus foederis,* and justifying both powers in seizing the first favourable opportunity for intervention to restore the Swedish constitution of 1720.