In Sweden itself the change was, at first, most popular. But Gustavus’s first Riksdag, that of 1778, opened the eyes of the deputies to the fact that their political supremacy had departed. The king was now their sovereign lord; and, for all his courtesy and gentleness, the jealousy with which he guarded and the vigour with which he enforced the prerogative plainly showed that he meant to remain so. But it was not till after eight years more had elapsed that actual trouble began. The Riksdag of 1778 had been obsequious; the Riksdag of 1786 was mutinous. It rejected nearly all the royal measures outright, or so modified them that Gustavus himself withdrew them. When he dismissed the estates, the speech from the throne held out no prospect of their speedy revocation.

Nevertheless, within three years, the king was obliged to summon another Riksdag, which met at Stockholm on the 26th of January 1789. His attempt in the interval to rule without a parliament had been disastrous. It was only by a breach of his own constitution that he had been able to declare war against Russia (April 1788); the conspiracy of Anjala (July) had para­lysed all military operations at the very opening of the cam­paign; and the sudden invasion of his western provinces by the Danes, almost simultaneously (September), seemed to bring him to the verge of ruin. But the contrast, at this crisis, between his self-sacrificing patriotism and the treachery’ of the Russophil aristocracy was so striking that, when the Riksdag assembled, Gustavus found that the three lower estates were ultra-royalist, and with their aid he succeeded, not without running great risks (see Gustavus III.; Nordin, Gustaf; Wallqvist, Olaf), in crushing the opposition of the nobility by a second *coup d'etat* (Feb. 16, 1789), and passing the famous Act of Union and Security which gave the king an absolutely free hand as regards foreign affairs and the command of the army, and made further treason impossible. For this the nobility never forgave him. It was impossible, indeed, to resist openly so highly gifted and so popular a sovereign; it was only by the despicable expedient of assassination that the last great monarch of Sweden was finally removed, to the infinite detriment of his country.

The ensuing period was a melancholy one. The aristocratic classes loudly complained that the young king, Gustavus IV., still a minor, was being brought up among crypto­Jacobins; while the middle classes, deprived of the stimulating leadership of the anti-aristocratic “ Prince Charming,” and becoming more and more inoculated with French political ideas, drifted into an antagonism not merely to hereditary nobility, but to hereditary monarchy likewise. Everything was vacillating and uncertain; and the general instability was reflected even in foreign affairs, now that the master-hand of Gustavus III. was withdrawn.

The renewed efforts of Catherine II. to interfere in Sweden’s domestic affairs were, indeed, vigorously repulsed, but without tact or discretion, so that the good understanding between the two countries was seriously impaired, especially when the proclivities of Gustaf Reuterholm *(q.v.),* who then virtually ruled Sweden, induced him to adopt what was generally considered an indecently friendly attitude towards the government at Paris. Despite the execution of Louis XVI. (Jan. 21, 1793), Sweden, in the hope of obtaining considerable subsidies, recognized the new French republic; and secret negotiations for con­tracting an alliance were actually begun in May of the same year, till the menacing protests of Catherine, supported as they were by all the other European powers, finally induced Sweden to suspend them.

The negotiations with the French Jacobins exacerbated thc hatred which the Gustavians already felt for the Jacobin councillors of the duke-regent (see Charles XIII., king of Sweden). Smarting beneath their grievances and seriously believing that not only the young king’s crown but his very life was in danger, they formed a conspiracy, the soul of which was Gustaf Mauritz Armfelt (*q.v.*), to overthrow the government, with the aid of a Russian fleet, supported by a rising of the Dalecarlians. The conspiracy was discovered and vigorously suppressed.

The one bright side of this gloomy and sordid period was the *rapprochement* between the Scandinavian kingdoms during the revolutionary wars. Thus, on the 27th of March 1794, a neutrality compact was formed between Denmark and Sweden; and their united squadrons patrolled the North Sea to protect their merchantmen from the British cruisers. This approximation between the two govern­ments was happily followed by friendly feelings between thc two nations, under the pressure of a common danger. Presently Reuterholm renewed his coquetry with the French republic, which was officially recognized by the Swedish government on the 23rd of April 1795. In return, Sweden received a subsidy of £56,000; and a treaty between the two powers was signed on the 14th of September 1795. On the other hand, an attempt to regain the friendship of Russia, which had broken off diplo­matic relations with Sweden, was frustrated by the refusal of the king to accept the bride, the grand duchess Alexandra, Catherine II.’s granddaughter, whom Reuterholm had provided for him. This was Reuterholm’s last official act. On the 1st of November 1796, in accordance with the will of his father, Gustavus IV., now in his eighteenth year, took the government into his own hands.

The government of Gustavus IV. (*q.v.*) was almost a pure autocracy. At his very first Riksdag, held at Norrköping in March 1800, the nobility were compelled, at last, to ratify Gustavus III.’s detested Act of Union and Security, which hitherto they had steadily refused to do. Shortly after this Riksdag rose, a notable change took place in Sweden’s foreign policy. In December 1800 Denmark Sweden and Russia acceded to a second Armed Neutrality of the North, directed against Great Britain; and the arsenal of Karlskrona, in all probability, was only saved from the fate of Copenhagen by the assassination of the emperor Paul, which was followed by another change of system in the north. Hitherto Sweden had kept aloof from continental complications; but the arrest and execution of the due d’Enghien in 1804 inspired Gustavus IV. with such a hatred of Napoleon that when a general coalition was formed against the French emperor he was one of the first to join it (Dec. 3, 1804), pledging himself to send an army corps to co­operate with the English and Russians in driving the enemy out of Holland and Hanover. But his senseless quarrel with Frederick William III. of Prussia detained him in Pomerania; and when at last (December 1805) he led his 6ooo men towards the Elbe district the third coalition had already been dissipated by the victories of Ulm and Austerlitz. In 1806 a rupture between Sweden and Prussia was only prevented by Napoleon’s assault upon the latter power. After Jena Napoleon attempted to win over Sweden, but Gustavus rejected every overture. The result was the total loss of Pomerania, and the Swedish army itself was only saved from destruction by the ingenuity of J. K. Toll *(q.v.).*

At Tilsit the emperor Alexander I. had undertaken to compel “ Russia’s geographical enemy,” as Napoleon designated Sweden, to accede to the newly established Continental System. Gustavus IV. naturally rejected all thc proposals of Alexander to close the Baltic against the English; but took no measures to defend Finland against Russia, though, during the autumn of 1807, it was notorious that the tsar was preparing to attack the grand duchy. On the 21st of February 1808 a Russian army crossed the Finnish border without any previous declaration of war. On the 2nd of April the king ordered a general levy of 30,000 men; but while two army corps, under Armfelt and Toll, together with a British contingent of 10,000 men under Moore, were stationed in Scania and on the Norwegian border in anticipation of an attack from Denmark, which, at the instigation of Napoleon, had simultaneously de­clared war against Sweden, the little Finnish army was left altogether unsupported. The conquest of Finland, after