helped Denmark out of her difficulties. During the Crimean War Sweden remained neutral, although public opinion was decidedly anti-Russian, and sundry politicians regarded the conjuncture as favourable for regaining Finland.

Oscar I. was succeeded (July 8, 1859) by his son, Charles XV. *(q.v.),* who had already acted as regent during his father’s ill­nesses. He succeeded, with the invaluable assistance of the minister of justice, Baron Louis Gerhard de Geer (*q.v*.), in at last accomplishing the much-needed reform of the constitution. The way had been prepared in i860 by a sweeping measure of municipal reform; and, in January 1863, the government brought in a reform bill by the terms of which the Riksdag was henceforth to consist of two chambers, the Upper House being a sort of aristo­cratic senate, while the members of the Lower House were to be elected triennially by popular suffrage. The new constitution was accepted by all four estates in 1865 and promulgated on the 22nd of January 1866. On the 1st of September 1866, the first elections under the new system were held; and on the 19th of January 1867, the new Riksdag met for the first time. With this one great reform Charles XV. had to be content; in all other directions he was hampered, more or less, by his own creation. Thc Riksdag refused to sanction his favourite project of a reform of the Swedish army on the Prussian model, for which he laboured all his life, partly from motives of economy, partly from an appre­hension of the king’s martial tendencies. In 1864 Charles XV. had endeavoured to form an anti-Prussian league with Denmark; and after the defeat of Denmark he projected a Scandinavian union, in order, with the help of France, to oppose Prussian predominance in the north—a policy which naturally collapsed with the overthrow of the French Empire in 1870. He died on the 18th of September 1872, and was succeeded by his brother, the duke of Gothland, who reigned as Oscar II. (R. N. B.)

The economic condition of Sweden, owing to the progress in material prosperity which had taken place in the country as thc result of the Franco-German War, was at the accession of Oscar II. to the throne on the 18th of September 1872 fairly satisfactory. Politically, however, the out­look was not so favourable. In their results, the reforms inaugurated during the preceding reign did not answer expecta­tions. Within three years of the introduction of the new electoral laws De Geer’s ministry had forfeited much of its former popularity, and had been forced to resign. In the vital matter of national dcfence no common understanding had been arrived at, and during the conflicts which had raged round this question, the two chambers had come into frequent collision and paralysed the action of the government. The peasant proprietors, who, under the name of the “Landtmanna” party,@@1 formed a compact majority in the Second Chamber, pursued a consistent policy of class interests in the matter of the taxes and burdens that had, as they urged, so long oppressed the Swedish peasantry; and conse­quently when a bill was introduced for superseding the old system of army organization by general compulsory service, they de­manded as a condition of its acceptance that the military burdens should be more evenly distributed in the country, and that the taxes, which they regarded as a burden under which they had wrongfully groaned for centuries, should be abolished. In these circumstances, the “ Landtmanna ” party in the Riksdag, who desired the lightening of the military burden, joined those who desired the abolition of landlordism, and formed a compact and predominant majority in the Second Chamber, while the burgher and Liberal parties were reduced to an impotent “ intelligence ” minority. This majority in the Lower Chamber

was at once attacked by another compact majority in the Upper, who on their side maintained that the hated land taxes were only a kind of rent-dιarge on land, were incidental to it and in no way weighed upon the owners, and, moreover, that its abolition would be quite unwarrantable, as it was one of the surest sources of revenue to the state. On the other hand, the First Chamber refused to listen to any abolition of the old military system, so long as the defence of the country had not been placed upon a secure basis by the adoption of general compulsory’ military service. The government stood midway between these con­flicting majorities in the chambers, without support in either.

Such was the state of affairs when Oscar II., surrounded by his late brother’s advisers, began his reign. One of his first cares was to increase the strength of his navy, but in consequence of the continued antagonism of the political parties, he was unable to effect much. In the first Riksdag, however, the so-called “ compromise,” which afterwards played such an important part in Swedish political life, came into existence. It originated in the small “ Scania ” party in the Upper House, and was devised to establish a *modus vivendi* between the conflicting parties, *i.e.* the champions of national defence and those who demanded a lightening of the burdens of taxation. The king himself perceived in the com­promise a means of solving the conflicting questions, and warmly approved it. He persuaded his ministers to constitute a special inquiry into the proposed abolition of land taxes, and in the address with which he opened the Riksdag of 1875 laid particular stress upon the necessity of giving attention to the settlement of these two burning questions, and in 1880 again came forward with a new proposal for increasing the number of years of service with the militia. This motion having been rejected, De Geer resigned, and was succeeded by Count Arvid Posse. The new prime minister endeavoured to solve the question of defence in accordance with the views of the “ Landtmanna ” party. Three parliamentary committees had prepared schemes for a remission of the land taxes, for a new system of taxation, for a reorganiza­tion of the army based on a *stammtrupp* (regular army), by the enlistment of hired soldiers, and for naval reforms. In this last connexion the most suitable types of vessels for coast defence as for offence were determined upon. But Count Posse, deserted by his own party over the army bill, resigned, and was succeeded on the 16th of May 1884 by Oscar Themptauder, who had been minister of finance in the previous cabinet. the new premier succeeded in persuading the Riksdag to pass a bill increasing the period of service with the colours in the army to six years and that in the militia to forty-two days, and as a set-off a remission of 30% on the land taxes.

Influenced by the economic reaction which took place in 1879 in consequence of the state of affairs in Germany, where Prince Bismarck had introduced the protectionist system, a protectionist party had been formed, which tried to gain adherents in the Riksdag. It is true that in the Riksdag of 1882 the commercial treaty with France was renewed, but since 1885 the protectionist party was prepared to begin the combat, and a duty on corn, which had been proposed in the Riksdag of the same year, was rejected by only a slight majority. During the period of the unusually low price of corn of 1886, which greatly affected the Swedish farmers, protection gained ground to such an extent that its final triumph was considered as certain within a short time. During the Riksdag of the same year, however, the premier, Themptauder, emphati­cally declared himself against the protectionist party, and while the parties in the Second Chamber were equal in number, the proposed tax on corn was rejected in the First Chamber. In the Riksdag of 1887 there was a majority for protection in the Second Chamber, and in the first the majority against the tax was so small that the tax on corn would have triumphed in a combined meeting of the two chambers. The government, availing itself of its formal right not to dissolve the chamber in which it had the support of a majority, therefore dissolved only the Second Chamber (March 1887).

The new Riksdag assembled in May with a free trade majority

@@@1 The Swedish "Landtmanna” party was formed in 1867. It consisted mostly of the larger and smaller peasant proprietors, who at the time of the. old “ Standers Riksdag ” were always opposed to the nobility and the clergy. The object of the party was to bring about a fusion between the representatives of the large landed proprietors and the regular peasant proprietors, to support the interests of landed proprietors in general against those of the town representatives, and to resist Crown interference in the administration of local affairs.