

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

PART II (E)

MILITARIA

THE PERIOD AFTER CHARLES XII.

When on that other fatal November day the bullet pierced Charles the Twelfth's head as he stood in the trenches before Fredrikshald, watching his men at work, it put an end not only to a young heroic life but also to Sweden's position as one of the Great Powers. The Conqueror King left his own country on the verge of ruin. Considering the state of its utter exhaustion, distress, and discontent, the marvel is that such a country as Sweden does at the present day exist at all. Then or never, one would think, the opportunity presented itself to her numerous enemies to annihilate their troublesome neighbour.

It would be unjust, however, to blame Charles XII. alone for the rapid decline of Sweden's power. His head-strong policy only accelerated a process which in any case had become inevitable. Provinces which had been violently torn from their mother-country, like Bremen, Pomerania, and Finland, naturally gravitated towards the whole to which they historically and geographically belonged.

Even now a strong and wise king might have done much, but Charles XII.'s successor was neither the one nor the other, neither strong enough to subdue his foreign enemies without, nor wise enough to break the power of an ambitious nobility within.

Frederik of Hessen-Kassel, the husband of Charles's younger sister Ulrika Eleonora, who had assumed the government in 1720, was a tool in the hand of the parties, which, under the influence of Russia, France, and England, disturbed and polluted the political life of the country. The two chief parties were called the "Hats" and the "Caps." Of these the "Caps" represented what we should now call the "Chauvinists." Of the origin of these names we are told that the King once, being annoyed at Horn's, his minister's, and his friends' inability to carry out his plans, called them "Nachtmützen," night-caps. The "Hats" again took the hat as a

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

symbol of freedom from France; they favoured a bold attitude towards Russia. The wish to win back the provinces ceded to the latter country by the Peace of Nystad in 1721 was largely occupying the minds of the people; it was especially powerful in the Secret Committee of the Riks-dag, in the hands of which the foreign policy of Sweden then lay. The old idea of Charles XII. of an alliance with Turkey against Russia and Austria was eagerly taken up, and day after day the public temper grew more excited. It only needed a spark to bring about the explosion. This spark was the cruel murder of a Scotsman who by his death gave the signal to an unprecedented popular out-burst, hastening thereby an unwise and inglorious war.

Malkolm (or Malcom) Sinclair, one of the many Sinclairs who had held military commands in the Swedish army from the time of Gustavus the Great, was a Major in the so-called Uplands Regiment, and a son of Major-General Wilhelm Sinclair, the Governor of Malmö. Born in 1691, he first served as an Ensign in the Royal Bodyguard (Lifgardet). Having been made a prisoner at Poltawa, he was sent to Kasan in Siberia, whence he returned in 1722. In 1738 he was sent by the Secret Committee to Turkey, ostensibly in order to redeem Charles XII.'s obligatory bills, but in reality to bring about an alliance with that country against Russia.

After he had successfully accomplished his errand, Sinclair left Constantinople on the 15th of April 1739, in company with a French merchant named Couturier. On the 12th of May the obligatory bills were put into his hands at Adrianople, and he continued his journey. This time he was accompanied by a Tartar, two Pashas, and a German servant, Johann Ernst Büneck, who by trade was a wheelwright in Breslau. By way of Tassi, which was reached in May, they arrived at Chozin after a journey of three days. Here the Pasha showed the Major a letter written in Polish, and promising a rich reward to any one that would arrest him. According to other information, a Greek at Lemberg was lying in wait for Sinclair, eager to earn the hundred Ducats promised for any news concerning him. Acting upon this news, Sinclair took another way through Poland. Furnished with the Pasha's recommendation, they reached Stanislas, the residence of a certain General or Grand-General Potocki, where an officer led them to a small inn kept by a Jew. The house next to it was occupied by a Russian Colonel of the name of Darewski. Not long after their arrival the servant of the latter appeared and tried to discover any news he could concerning the travellers under pretence of buying brandy. An Adjutant also sent for them to ask for their passports and inquire into their business.

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

The Lieutenant who acted as their guide then treated them to free drinks, to ferret out the secret of their errand, but it so happened that he drank too much himself and left them free from his importunities.

From this point of their journey onward they were tracked by two people, the one a servant in a white dress, the other in a Colonel's uniform. They had noticed both at Stanislas.

On the 7th (17th) they came to Lugensko, where Potocki had desired the Governor to furnish them with an escort as far as the Polish frontier. During their stay at this place a Jew approached the servant and inquired of him which road his master was going to take, as he was anxious to travel the same way under the protection of the escort. In Lublimitz their passports were again examined, ostensibly to make certain they did not come from any plague-stricken town or district. At last they arrived at Breslau on the 13th of June, and took their lodging in the "Goldnes Schwert," in one of the suburbs. Here Sinclair intended to wait until the 15th for the ordinary mail-coach, as the safer way of conveyance, but when he found that it did not leave till the 17th he reluctantly resolved to travel post. Brünneck in the meantime took his leave, and another servant was engaged, of the name of Scholz; whereupon the President of the High Court of Justice, Count Schaffgotsch, gave orders to seize the former and cast him into prison because he had ventured to return from Constantinople without giving notice of this fact to the police. The prisoner was then subjected to a severe examination, not so much with regard to his own person and mode of travelling, but to that of Sinclair. The passports, letters, and luggage of the party were then carried to Schaffgotsch again under the convenient pretence of the plague, At length, on the 16th of June, the journey was continued after many excuses on the part of the Count.

On that same day, at six o'clock in the morning, two strangers arrived at Breslau together with four attendants. They put up at the "Blaue Hirsch," and said they were Russian officers. Their names were Küttler and Levitzky, two of the attendants - non-commissioned officers - were Germans, the other two Russians. Of Küttler it is said that he was of Irish extraction; it is certain that he had studied in the Jesuits' College at Breslau. Levitzky was a Pole of noble family from Lemberg. The two immediately betook themselves to Schaffgotsch, to whom they delivered a letter, saying that they had orders to pursue Sinclair, who harboured designs dangerous to

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

the whole Christian world. Schaffgotsch replied that if they arrested Sinclair he should keep him in safe but respectable custody; in the meantime he had taken notice of the addresses and contents of his letters. The Russians left the town towards twelve o'clock in the night on fresh horses, after having bought two sabres, and after having given out everywhere that Sinclair was a spy. Near Grünberg, only about three miles from the Saxon frontier, they came up with the travellers, and commanded the postilion to stop. Having ascertained the names of those inside, they announced to them that they had orders to carry them back to Breslau. The coach was turned, but not in the direction of that city. On a little eminence, sparsely overgrown with underwood, a halt was made, and whilst some of the pursuers ransacked the portmanteaus and the other luggage, Sinclair was decoyed to a lonely spot a little way off the road. Couturier heard a shot, saw Sinclair give a jump among the bushes, crying, "Mon Dieu, Jésus, mon Dieu." Then all was still. The murderers then tried to calm the trembling Frenchman, who was begging them to spare his life, telling him in Latin ["Ne timeas! Peccatum esset contra Spiritum sanctum male facere viro probo sicut te (!). Iste habuit quod merebat, erat inimicus Magistri, inimicus Magistri est inimicus Dei et puto me non peccasse interficiendo eum."] to fear nothing, for it would be a pity to hurt him "probum virum sicut te." But the other, they continued, had been punished justly, for he was an enemy of the "Master of the Order." "Those who are enemies of the Order are enemies of God." Then they took their seats in the coach and drove rapidly off in the direction of Dresden, with Couturier as a prisoner. It was the 17th of June, 1739. On the road they advised Couturier for his own safety's sake not to say a word about the matter. In Dresden they divided the booty, dressed themselves in Sinclair's clothes, and disappeared, whilst Couturier was examined by the Russian ambassador, and allowed to continue his journey after having been paid 500 Ducats. For five days the murder remained undiscovered. At last a clergyman of the small neighbouring town of Naumburg in Silesia found the corpse, already much decomposed, lying on its face with arm outstretched. A bullet had pierced the body, and there was a sword-cut on the head. Excepting a gold ring on his finger and a snuff box, everything else had been taken from the dead man. These relics, as well as a broken sword-blade and the officer's dress, were preserved in the Castle of Naumburg, whilst the body itself was conveyed to Stralsund, where it was buried at the expense of the Swedish King in the Church of St Nicolas.

The news of the murder caused an unprecedented commotion in Stockholm, and in fact all over the world. Letters from the Swedish Government were at once

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

despatched to St Petersburg and Vienna. The Russian ambassador at Stockholm, Bestucheff, solemnly protested his sovereign's innocence and ignorance of the whole matter; but he was not believed, the less so since it turned out that a tradesman painter had by his order painted a portrait of Sinclair, which, he was made to believe, was a present for a very handsome young lady. Towards the end of 1739 the opened letters and documents of Sinclair, the murdered man, carefully wrapped in waxcloth, reached the Swedish post-office at Hamburg. The parcel bore the address, "An das Schwedische Postamt, Hamburg," but no trace of the place it came from, or of the person who delivered it, could be discovered. [*Omständelig Berättelse om thet på Majoren Malkolm Sinclair then 17 Junii År 1739 föröfvade grymme mord* (1741), i.e. "Accurate Account of the Cruel Murder of Major Sinclair on the 17th of June in the Year 1739."]

The excitement grew when poetry seized the subject. The first who wrote a ballad on the murder of Sinclair was Axel D. Leenberg, but his poetical effusion was soon ousted by the famous "Sinclair-Visan," a ballad of enormous length, describing the meeting of Charles XII., King of Sweden, and Major Sinclair in heaven, or rather in the Elysian Fields. [Both these literary productions have very little poetical merit, the latter often bordering on the absurd. Thus when the King says to Sinclair, "I do not know you. Who may you be!" and Sinclair answers, "I am a Swedish major," etc. But the public temper was excited, the memory of the great Soldier-King roused, and the hatred of Russia inflamed anew. The tune also contributed much to the popularity of the ballad. The title of the first piece is: "Minnesrunor öfver K. Maj. af Sveriges Tro Tjenare och Major Malkolm Sinclair som den 17 Junii 1739 i Schlesien genom ett försätligt och grymt mord blef afdaga tagens när han uti K.M. höga ärende var stadd på hemresan ifrån Constantinopel." The second is entitled: "Hjeltarnas Samtal med den tapre men förrädeligen mördade.... Herr Malcom Sinclair uppå de Gufva Eliseiska Fälten . . . berättade af Herden Celadon," i.e. "The Conversation of Heroes with the Brave but foully murdered M. S. in the Elysian Fields, related by Pastor Celadon." The latter name is a pseudonym for A. Odel, a minor Swedish poet. A third poem on the subject was written by one Anders Hesselius. Here the call for revenge is less loud and given in a more indirect way, the poet asking, "Will tears suffice to avenge the hero's blood?" See about these and a fourth poem by an anonymous ("Amicus militaris") Karl Warburg, illustrated. *Svensk Litteraturhistoria*, ii. I pp. 48-51.] The last verse of it

"Derför I hjeltar, som ha'n mod
Och hjerta uti broste',
Ack, hämnen Malkolm Sinclairs blod
Som Küttler mordisk öste!"

"Therefore ye brave ones, in whose breast a courageous heart beats, avenge the blood of Malkolm Sinclair, who was cruelly murdered by Küttler," found an echo in a "thousand hearts." Already on the eleventh day of the following month it was resolved to conclude an alliance with Turkey, and on 6th August to convey an army across to Finland. The war, which was formally declared on the 28th of July, 1741,

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

was commenced with vainglorious ideas of the speedy taking of St Petersburg, and which ended with the inglorious surrender of 11,000 Swedes near Helsingfors on 24th August, 1742. An utter want of discipline, an insufficient commissariat, bad leadership, illness, and the revolutionary ideas of fraternity and equality fermenting in the heads of many officers, combined to bring about this sad conclusion.

This of course does not mean that brilliant examples of individual bravery were wanting. Thus, for instance, Lieutenant Alexander Hercules, though wounded himself, saved the colours of his regiment on the retreat after the Battle of Vilmanstrand in Finland (1741). The same remark holds good for the suppression of the rebellious peasantry of Dalekarlia in 1743, when Lieutenant Ramsay was wounded, and Major-General Axel Spens had his horse shot under him.

It was a great misfortune for Sweden that, owing to the imprudent and bellicose notions of the "Hat" party, the country was a little later plunged into war against Prussia, which was then engaged in the Seven Years' struggle against Austria. It was again a campaign commenced with insufficient means. The supreme command changed from Ungern-Sternberg to Rosen, from Rosen, to Hamilton, from Hamilton to Lantingshausen. The old Gustavian, martial spirit had to such a degree evaporated that more than two hundred officers, "to whom military service had become irksome, succeeded in procuring for themselves, under all kinds of pretences, the permission to return home." [*Sveriges Historia*, v. 157.] On the other hand, here also proofs were given that personal bravery was not extinct in the Swedish ranks. Prominent above the rest was Count Fred Charles Sinclair, [He had previously served with distinction in the French army. Born 1732, died 1776, at Carlskrona.] who assisted in the successful siege of Peenemünde, in 1758, and was five times wounded in the skirmish at Lockenitz.

Hamilton's position was one beset with difficulties. He was no Fabius Cunctator, but a man of action, and to see his movements thwarted by home authorities, who of course knew better, must have been particularly galling to him. After the Swedes under Ehrensward had taken Peenemünde, he was for blowing the fortifications up as they could be of no use to them. But the Government at home would not admit the necessity of it. The consequence being that, out of an army already small, a garrison for the place had to be furnished. And when he was eager to engage the Prussians, even after they had beaten the Russians at Zorndorf, especially "since his

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

soldiers wished for nothing better than to come to blows with the enemy," he was again delayed and thwarted by the miserable condition of the train: of one hundred horses ninety were useless, the waggons were continually out of gear, the pontoons had to be left behind because the wheels and axles were rotten, and the baking establishment for the army was altogether insufficient. Again his great plan to join hands with the Austrians in Saxony was ruined by the great Frederick's victory over General Daun, by which he was driven back towards the frontier of Bohemia. Thus Hamilton found himself and his little army in a hostile country without the support of allies, and cut off from his own, especially from Stralsund. For these reasons, to which had to be added the necessity of leaving his more than two thousand invalids at the hospitals, as well as of providing the rest with shoes and stockings, he commenced the retreat. The news of it caused a profound sensation in Stockholm. Instead of taking possession of Berlin - a retreat! Immediately the War Office wrote a very sharp letter to Hamilton, blaming him for the want of success. The General's answer was dignified; at the same time he did not choose to submit to a rule of imbecility any longer: he asked for his discharge, and it was granted on the 24th of November of the same year, 1758.

In the meantime the hostilities between the Hats and the Caps continued and increased in bitterness. It was an internecine war fought with despicable weapons. The Hats especially treated their political opponents with unworthy suspicion, and little was needed in those days to stamp a man as a traitor. Thus a citizen named Springer, who was said to belong to the Russian party as represented by the Russian Ambassador, Von Korff, was accused, imprisoned, and brought before the Secret Committee (Utskottet). He was doomed to death, but reprieved and sentenced to imprisonment for life. Another of Korff's agents, Hedman, was also tried by the High Court of Justice, but acquitted. A third, whose guilt appears still more doubtful, was A. Blackwell, a Scot. To mention him in this part of our book, which exclusively deals with military matters, may be open to objection; but both he and his fate are so typical of the period we speak of, when all laws of fairness were made subservient to political rancour and ambition, that we have thought it best to introduce him here in his chronological place.

There are a good many discrepancies in Blackwell's early history. According to his own statement he was the son of Principal Blackwell of Marischal College in Aberdeen, and was born in that city in or about the year 1700. [There is uncertainty almost

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

in every step of Blackwell's life. The *Dictionary of National Biography* inclines to the view that his father was a learned Scotch minister and Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen, called Thomas Blackwell (1661-1728), who married a sister of Dr Johnston. Other sources, inspired by the opposite party, maintain that his father was a petty shopkeeper (and stocking-merchant) in Aberdeen. Even the date of his birth is uncertain.] His early training seems to have been careful. Already in his fifteenth year he could boast of a fair knowledge of Greek and Latin. When sixteen he entered the University of Edinburgh or Aberdeen, but how he spent his time there, and with what object in view, we are not told. We only know that about 1722 he left the city secretly, "urged by ambition and restlessness" to see the world and to seek his fortune elsewhere. It is said that he first went to London and learned printing in the printing-office of one Wilkin. In London also we find him married. But who this Elizabeth Blackwell was, whether the daughter of a small shopkeeper and stocking-merchant in Aberdeen [See Em. Bruce, *Eminent men of Aberdeen.*] with whom he eloped, or the daughter of a well-to-do London citizen, is not known. Certain it is that she was a lady of much intelligence and unselfish devotion. She was to have occasion soon to prove the latter, for Blackwell, after having travelled on the Continent, studied at Leyden, and taken his medical degree at Aberdeen, [That he took a medical degree has also been denied. But during his long trial, when everything was ferreted out that could injure the accused, no doubt was expressed as to this, and even in his sentence the title of Doctor of Medicine was retained.] founded a printing-establishment of his own at London, an undertaking which, through the trade jealousy of other printers, led to his ruin. He became a bankrupt and inmate of the Debtors' Prison. His wife, who had cultivated her talent for flower-painting, then resolved to put it to practical use. She took lodgings in the neighbourhood of Chelsea, and painted medicinal plants from nature. In this occupation she was encouraged by Dr Hans Sloane, Dr Mead, and Dr Rand, the Curator of the Botanical Gardens at Chelsea. After some time she had gained sufficient money to effect the liberation of her husband, who now co-operated with her in writing the scientific nomenclature, with descriptions from Miller's *Botanicum officinale*, for the botanical drawings, which she had in the meantime engraved on copper herself and coloured by hand. The work appeared in 1737, in two volumes folio, under the title, *A Curious Herbal, containing Five Hundred Cuts of the Most Useful Plants*. A German translation of it, called *Auserlesenes Kräuterbuch*, was printed some years later. This dabbling in botany seems to have led Blackwell to the study of medicine, and also to that of agriculture, in good earnest. The Duke of Chandos took notice of him and made him director of his parks and improvements at Cannons; and the Swedish Minister at London, Wasenberg, who had probably read Blackwell's treatise on *A New Method of improving Cold, Wet, and Clayey Grounds* (1741), persuaded him to go to

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

Sweden on what seemed most advantageous terms, but proved in the end nothing but illusive promises. However, to Sweden he went, and there can be no doubt that he soon acquired a certain fame among the nobility and the influential citizens. He was even appointed one of the king's body-physicians (Lif-Medicus), and had as such access to his Majesty. But otherwise Stockholm was a dangerous place for a man of Blackwell's temper. It was ruled over by a weak king and torn by the two hostile factions, the Hats and the Caps, and political intrigue had undermined all principles of morality. There was no slander, no bribery, no crime from which the adherents of one party would shrink, if the calumination and destruction of the other could thereby be promoted; or, to use the words of the sympathetic historian of the famous Blackwell Case [Arfvidsson, in the periodical "Frey" of the year 1846. He was the first to use the voluminous acts of the trial, and with great fairness to lay open its glaring travesty of the law. The title of his essay is *Blackwellska Rättegången*. See also *Dict. of National Biogr.* and the Swedish *Biographisk Lexicon*.]-

“Ambition, imprudence, and a certain impetuosity of temper caused him - Blackwell - to be swallowed up in the vortex of party strife. More led than leading, he was finally sacrificed, less for minor political offences which he had actually committed than for his own *insouciance*, and the machiavellian designs of a person or persons whose interest imperatively required that his loose and somewhat flippant tongue should be silenced for ever. His trial proves that the unfortunate man was already doomed when arrested, and the hypocrisy of pedantically adhering to the letter of the law whilst its spirit was everywhere broken makes this trial an instructive if also a very dismal page in our history.” [*Blackwellska R.*]

Count Tessin was then at the height of his power and influence. He was the head of the Hat party, which now ruled after the disastrous war against Russia. In its hands the weak king was but a tool.

At first, indeed, everything seemed to thrive with Blackwell. He was appointed Director of the Royal Model Farm at Ållestad in the district of Elfsborg; his medical practice increased, and he made his name known by publishing an Essay on the Improvement of Swedish Agriculture. Then on a fatal day in the month of March, he received an anonymous letter, purporting to come from the Queen of Denmark, Louisa, daughter of George II., or from the English Minister at Copenhagen, in which it was vaguely hinted that the queen would supply £100,000 to the Court of Sweden if the king would adopt a more friendly attitude towards

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

England and Denmark. On the next morning after the receipt of this letter Blackwell requested an audience of the king and told him of its contents. According to the king's statement, he also at this interview dropped some words about altering the succession; but this Blackwell stoutly denied. At first his Majesty seemed to take the matter lightly, but on the following day he opened his mind to Tessin and requested him to bring the matter before the Privy Council. Here quite a different opinion prevailed: the case was treated as most serious from the first. A Committee of eight members was appointed, with Tessin, Blackwell's only accuser, as President. It was at once resolved to arrest Blackwell, but secretly, and without causing a sensation. For this purpose a deputation, headed by one Löwenhielm, was to wait on him on pretext of wishing to hear his opinion on certain agricultural matters. Having thus gained access to his house and rooms, he caused the unfortunate man to be removed by the guards and brought before the Committee, whilst a strict search was made among the letters and papers left at his house. At the same time a message was sent to the Swedish Ambassador at Copenhagen explaining that Blackwell had been arrested on account of "knavery, unfulfilled promises, and improper behaviour." At the first trial the accused denied having touched the question of succession at all; but on the strength of the king's statement - who, however, only said that there had been some utterances on the "possible or eventual change of the succession to the Swedish throne" - and other statements equally vague, a capital charge was brought against him, and Blackwell's life was now at stake. If the Council did not succeed in proving a conspiracy, a conspiracy had to be concocted artificially.

Another proof of the unfairness of the whole proceedings was the refusal of letting the defendant have his own counsel. Blackwell had chosen a lawyer named Springer, the only one whom he knew, and who had previously done some business for him at Stockholm. He was declared unfit, because his brother had once been accused of high treason. In his stead another lawyer, who seldom or never opened his mouth during the trial, was, appointed, on the understanding that he was neither to interfere with the course of the proceedings nor speak for his client, but only to watch the proper observance of legal formalities. In the meantime nothing was found in spite of all ransacking: no conspiracy was brought to light. A letter from the English Minister at Copenhagen to Blackwell, and another which reached the Committee after the commencement of the trial, contained some veiled expressions with regard to imminent political upheavals, but these were at worst nothing else

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

but intrigues of the then common kind among the opposing parties. Neither did Blackwell's admission that plans had been discussed to procure a greater influence for England and Denmark in Sweden, to send a more influential person to Copenhagen as representative of the latter country, to fit out a Swedish regiment commanded by scions of the Swedish nobility for service in England, and so forth, satisfy the enemies of the accused. Tessin had no intention to rest content with such small results. He now hoped that by subjecting the prisoner to torture, confessions concerning a change in the reigning dynasty might be extorted. Now this was against the Swedish law, which only in certain cases admitted of what was called "a severer imprisonment," but so clever were the interpreters of that law that Blackwell's future cruel torture was understood to fall under this category. The letter of Titley, the anonymous letter, and the touching upon the succession question were the three points upon which the final charge was founded. The place chosen for Blackwell's imprisonment was the "Tjufkällare" - thieves'-hole - an underground, dark room under a house on the Stor Market, where now the Exchange stands. The beadle received orders to let the prisoner remain there as long as he could stand it, and frequently to look in upon him, an order which sufficiently showed that the Committee were well aware that no one could endure the confinement for weeks or months, but only for hours. Blackwell was of small stature, weakly, and had "soft limbs," according to the beadle - no wonder that he could hold out no longer than three-quarters of a day. On the first of April, the day of his incarceration, towards eleven o'clock at night, he suffered terrible agonies, calling aloud for his warder, since he was prepared to confess. But first he begged to be placed before the Council, not before the Court, for he wanted to crave for mercy, "wishing to die a hundred times rather than to suffer the like again." Then he was going to tell something about Sweden's political relation to Russia. This was considered irrelevant, and the unfortunate man had to return to his subterranean hole, where the beadle found him on the next morning, half dead. For a week more there followed daily examinations. On the third of April the prisoner, threatened with torture if he did not confess about the succession question and the £100,000, assured the Court again with many tears that he had nothing to confess, and that he would much rather die a hundred times for truth's sake. His sufferings and his despair seemed at last to make some impression upon his judges; they allowed him to write his own prescriptions for his racked and tortured body; and when the question of torture was at last brought to the vote, three out of eight voted against it, three proposed a middle course, and only two, the implacable Tessin and

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

Klinckowström, were for the most rigorous application of the law. In their eyes the mere fact of having touched in conversation upon the succession to the throne was a capital crime, aggravated by what they called the obstinacy of the prisoner. It was on the 11th of April that these two votes decided the business. Blackwell was carried back to his prison, and on the 13th, early in the morning, he was undressed, and chained naked to the wall. A little straw to lie upon had been refused. Interrogated if he had nothing to say, he assured the warder "that he was a reasonable being, and that if he had anything to confess he would confess it instead of going to prison again. As he did not stir till eleven o'clock in the evening, the warder, getting alarmed, went to Tessin and asked him how long Blackwell was to remain chained. The answer was, "As long as he can talk." Towards three o'clock in the morning, after having endured the torture for twenty hours, Blackwell's body began to grow cold, and the physician who was called declared that he would not answer for his life. So the chains were removed; but even now the prisoner remained firm. "He had a body and a soul," he said; "for the latter he was responsible to God with his body, and if he had fourteen they might do as they liked." In the forenoon of the same day the unfortunate man was again dragged before his judges. An anonymous letter had arrived concerning his private life in Ållestad, and he was examined and cross-examined about it. Not being able to collect his thoughts for pain, the prisoner asked for a day's respite, vowing at the same time that on the next day he would confess all about the £100,000 and the machinations of bringing about the overthrow of the French party. When the day appeared, Blackwell, though confined to his bed, was interrogated by the prosecuting counsel, and declared that Titley had only inquired about the relative strength of the party, and had mentioned certain sums which were circulating for party purposes. Pressed to say whether the £100,000 were destined for the king or meant for a political party, he again gave an evasive answer, and only when he was threatened with the second stage of the torture, the so-called "Rosenkammer," he confessed amidst tears that the money was or would be sent from England to certain persons to buy votes.

On the 15th of April a division took place. Tessin declared the votes to be so equal that an appeal to the king was advisable. In reality only four of the members of the Court had directly voted for the application of the new torture, five against, and one had advocated delay. [*Blackwellska R.* in "Frey," p. 246.]

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

On the 6th of May Blackwell, after the king had given his decision in favour of Tessin, was removed to the Rosenkammer. This was an oblong room through which there ran a cold well; under the ceiling irons were fastened in which the prisoner was hung up by the hands at a height allowing him just to touch the ground with one foot. Some had been known to stand this torture for six hours, others again for two hours only. Then at last the strength of Blackwell broke down. He confessed that the letter which he was said to have received never existed; but that the whole proposal originated with Titley, whom he had asked for employment in Denmark. Titley had replied that the queen accepted his services if he could gain and give some information about the Danish party in Stockholm and furnish the names of persons favourable to the Danes. As to a change in the succession to the throne, he now admitted the *possibility* of having said something concerning it. To this he added on the following day that he had heard of an English spy at Göteborg named Fitzgerald. In the course of other trials, however, the prisoner said Denmark did as little think of really changing the existing order of succession in Sweden as he himself, and when threatened again with a renewal of the torture, he called out in desperation that “he would confess anything they wished, even should it be the poisoning of the king, the Royal Family, or his Excellency, the President of the Court, himself.” [This cry of despair has given rise to the rumour that Blackwell had attempted to poison the king and the Royal Family.] This rather startled the judges, who were afraid Blackwell might say too much about the machinations and plottings of the party. So the trial was hurriedly concluded, and the formal and final charge read on the 23rd of May. Blackwell wrote the defence himself. In it he showed great clearness of thought and a skill of expressing himself, which was the more wonderful since he had only settled in Sweden a few years before. He tried to explain that his crime was a “*crimen ignorantiae*” rather than a “*crimen praemeditativum*.” He pointed out the freedom of speech in England, where the Hanoverian succession was frequently and openly discussed, adding, “I should not have thought there was so little freedom of thought and so much torture in a Protestant country.” His plan had been a closer union between Denmark, Sweden, and England, and for that reason he had commenced a correspondence with Titley. On the ninth of June the prisoner was again promised the intercession of the Court if he had anything to add; but he refused.

Then on the following day, the 10th of June, sentence was pronounced in a document “which will for ever be remarkable to all those that followed the

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

proceedings on account of the unheard-of audacity with which the truth was trampled under foot. [*Blackwellska R.*, p. 435.] It is stated that Blackwell's guilt was established from other sources as well as from his own words; that he had expressed himself in the most criminal fashion concerning the change in the order of succession obtaining in Sweden; that he had allowed himself to be used as a spy, and that he had been suborned for the overthrow of the Constitution.

In the meantime Blackwell had added something concerning the Swedish regiments in the pay of England; nevertheless, the promised intercession of the Court was not forthcoming, nor was his own petition for mercy listened to. The king confirmed the judgment of the Court on the 15th of July.

Shortly before the execution of the sentence, Tessin had several interviews with the prisoner at the latter's request, but he never disclosed their nature. In a last supplication "in the sight of death," Blackwell most solemnly revoked all he had said in the agonies of torture; he acknowledged only the offer of a large sum of money to the king, and his own correspondence with Titley. In various parts of this document he alludes to a certain "noble person" whose name he did not dare to mention; he further laid stress upon the fact that he had unbosomed himself to two of his ministers, and finally, in moving words, he begged for his life and requested to be sent to the East Indies as ship's doctor on one of the East India Company's boats, adding that he trusted in the Court's promise to intercede for him. He waited in vain. The only thing he was allowed to do was to write to his wife in England. Even his wish to have a clergyman of his own Calvinistic persuasion, of the name of Dartis, near him, met with opposition, and he had to be content with a Lutheran priest. Until the last moments the fear that Blackwell might divulge something possessed Tessin. He gave strict orders that the priest was not to speak to the prisoner alone, and if the latter should make any attempts to speak from the scaffold the drums were to be beaten.

On the 5th of August, 1747, Blackwell's head fell. We cannot but admit the truth of Arfvidsson's words in "Frey" when he says: "This judicial murder must be lamented, for the chief instigators of the conspiracy were to be found elsewhere. A Venetian policy must be detested which desired to obliterate the traces of party intrigues by means of it, and tried - in vain - to seal a reconciliation of the parties, which at best could only be of short duration, through the cruel and abominable

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

sacrifice of a submissive tool.”

All the acts of the trial were put into one bundle, sealed by Tessin, and handed to the Royal Archives, to be kept in their secret department. There they lay for fifteen years; the seals were then broken by order of the king, and access was at last gained to the proceedings.

In the meantime Blackwell's person had not slipped out of the memory of men. Numerous were the legends told about him. Grisly facts of his having been an atheist, of his having poisoned two women, of a skeleton found in Tessin's house, which was somehow made to have something to do with the mysterious bearer of the letter, were hawked about in a book professing to be a biography, but in reality nothing but a libel. [Published in 1763 at Norrköping.] Such, then, was the fate of the unfortunate Scot, Alexander Blackwell, who may have been an adventurer, but who certainly was more sinned against than sinning, and on that account deserves our pitying remembrance. [Blackwell wrote in Swedish, *Rön om Humlegårds plantering och bruk samt at fördrifva Mullvadar* (Experiences in the laying out of Hop Gardens, and how to extirpate Moles), Stockholm, n.d.; 2. *Försök till Landbrukets förbättring i Sverige* (An Attempt to improve the Agriculture of Sweden), ridiculed by Linné.]

An instructive example of how far the intensity of party prejudice may destroy all fairness of judgment, even in men of a liberal education and learning, is given us in the verdict of Ahlström, formerly Swedish Consul in London, a man of great wealth - chiefly known as having been the first who introduced the potato into Sweden. According to him, Blackwell was the “demoniac incarnation of England's envy of the newly flourishing Swedish industry, which must be put down at all risks” - a view which seems to have been shared by his friend, the great Linné.

One might have thought that Sweden, torn as it was by party strife, would have kept aloof from complications with foreign powers, and certainly the Swedish population as a whole yearned for peace after this. But such was the cruelty of fate that, scarcely fifty years after the events related above, treasonable conspiracies with Russia for gaining the independence of Finland dragged Sweden again into war, a war for which it was at that time particularly ill-prepared, for, “besides the forgetfulness of one's duty and the censoriousness which are generated by party strife, a moral cowardice had spread which considered a resistance against a

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

gigantic country like Russia an impossibility.” [See *Inre Orsaker till Förlusten af Finland* (Interior Causes of the Loss of Finland) (1902), p. 27. This is a reprint from the *History of the War of 1808-9*, by the Historical Committee of the Staff. Part III.] The conspiracy in which several Swedish officers were implicated, is known as the Anjala Conspiracy. A Scottish name also occurs among the conspirators, that of Robert Montgomery. He had formerly served with distinction in the French army. On the first of August, 1788, he and two other officers were charged with the crime of treason; but he escaped the fate of Captain Hästeske, the chief culprit, who was hanged, though his own punishment was severe enough: he was cashiered, deprived of his decorations, and sent as a captive to St Barthélemy, whence he was released only in 1793. The war ended, as one might have predicted, disastrously for Sweden. Curiously enough, another Montgomery, David Robert, saved the life of Gustavus III., King of Sweden, in this Finnish campaign, when the latter, during an inspection of guards, was murderously attacked by three runaway Cossacks (1st June 1789). As a reward for this piece of bravery he was made a Knight of the Order of the Sword. In later years he fought in Pomerania, and was made a prisoner of war in 1806 by the French at Lübeck.

The war which led to the final loss of Finland was the war of 1808-9 against Russia. It was a war of defence, and was caused by Napoleon's hostility to the King of Sweden, who adhered to his friendly policy towards England. Here also the inability of the leaders rendered the martial spirit of the troops ineffective. Old General af Klercker, [For the third time Swedish poetry sang of Scottish names. Runeberg (1804-1877) published his most famous collection of poems, called *Fanrik Ståhls sägner* (The Tales of Ensign Stahl), in 1860. One of the poems in it is the above-named "Främlingens syn." The Swedish poet Gejer also wrote a "Death-offering for the Brothers Ramsay." It has been set to music by the Swedish composer Berwald.] a man of seventy-three, endowed with the courage of a youth, who was just going to take the offensive, was superseded by the incapable and spiritless Klingspor, who allowed the country to fall into the hands of the enemy. It was in this war that the two brothers Ramsay fell. Their untimely death afforded to the Swedish poet Runeberg the subject for his poem entitled: "Främlingens syn," [Runeberg has another poem in which he sings of the grave of the two Ramsays. It is called "Färd från Åbo" (A Sail from Åbo).] *i.e.* the sight presented to a stranger, or "what a stranger saw." In it the poet relates how one night, in travelling past a lordly estate, he saw a light in a room of the hall, and an old, white-haired lady accompanied by a servant stopping in silent prayer before two pictures which hung close to each other upon the wall. This was Lady Ramsay, who to the end of her life, in 1816, every day used to "bid good night" to her two sons. 'The elder one, Anders

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

Vilhelm, had been a very promising young officer. Born on the 28th of October, 1777, he finished his studies at the military academy of Karlberg. He then served in a Neapolitan regiment from 1798-1801, where he took Major's rank. After his return to Sweden he was appointed, in 1805, Captain in the Tavastehus regiment, and gained in the same year the highest prize of the Academy for his treatise on "the most advantageous posting of infantry." In the Finnish war he was killed by a bullet in the skirmish of Lemo, on the 20th of June.

His brother Karl Gustav fell about a month later, on the 14th of July, at the skirmish of Lappo. He had been Adjutant to Generals Adlercreutz and Von Döbeln. The mother caused the bodies to be brought to Sweden, where they were interred in Borgå, and had a medal struck in their memory.

One other Scottish name deserves mention, General Pontus Gahn (of the Cahuns or Colquhouns), who was present in nine engagements during this war, and was at last taken prisoner in Norway. Not less distinguished were the services of Gustav Adolf Montgomery, who commenced as a simple drummer-boy and ended as Commander of the Order of the Northern Star, member of the Military Academy, officer of the Legion d'Honneur, Colonel and Governor of the province of Westbotten. During the war of 1808 he was several times wounded, and received the medal for bravery in the field.

Of the war during the years 1812-14 against Napoleon - the last war Sweden was engaged in - little need be added. The same old names meet us again, and scions of families whose members had served the Great Gustavus nearly two hundred years before, now fought for the honour of their country and the integrity of Europe under a Bernadotte, showing all the martial qualities for which their race is celebrated.

Our historical survey would, however, be incomplete without finally casting a glance at the Swedish fleet. [See Zetterstén, *Svenska Flottans Historia*.] To the long and glorious list of its victories the Scoto-Swede has contributed not a little. The XVIIth century is particularly rich in Scottish names. There is first Will. Rudven, who commenced his career as Captain of the Horse in the service of King Sigismund, went over to Duke Charles as Captain of a Scottish regiment (1600), turned shipbuilder in 1609, and died in the following year as Warf-Admiral. About the same time the name of Anders Styfert (Stewart), son of Colonel John Stuart, occurs. He

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

was chamberlain of Duke Charles, became Captain in 1598 and Vice-Admiral in 1621, after having been Stadtholder of Dorystat and ambassador to Russia. He died in 1640. Another Stewart, who writes his name in the usual way, and whose Christian name was Simon, son of Robert Stewart of Touccars (?), was born in 1580, rose to be Captain of the fleet in 1629, when he went to Pillau with Admiral Horn, and concluded his career as Admiral (1646), after having been ennobled in 1634.

Of the Clerck or Klerck family we find no less than three mentioned in the history of the Swedish fleet. Richard (or Jacob), who was born in Scotland in 1606, became a shipbuilder in Sweden, had the command of five ships before Riga in 1610, and advanced to the rank of Vice-Admiral in 1612. In the years following he had to superintend the provisioning and fitting out of the whole Swedish fleet at Stockholm. He died as "Holm" Admiral in 1625.

A nephew of his, Richard Klerck, son of a Captain William Klerck, who in 1607 came to Sweden with Scottish recruits, was likewise born in Scotland (1609). He commanded the ship *Swärdet*, and showed great prowess in naval engagements. He was ennobled in 1648, and died as "Holm" Admiral at Stockholm, in 1668. His brother Hans, captain of the ship *Jupiter*, sailed to Germany with the king in 1620. He also died as "Holm" Admiral in 1644. Besides these we find in the Swedish navy two Foraths, of whom Alexander commenced as Captain in 1611, commanded a fleet of six pinnaces and thirty-six transport vessels which carried troops from Stockholm to Narva (1614), and twice accompanied the king to Germany, in 1618 and 1620.

In the year 1621 an event occurred which very nearly put an end to this Forath's career. He was accused of murder, together with his friend Captain Jacob Myr (Muir). The complainant was the widow of the victim, Jacob Logan. Two other Scotsmen, J. Jerner (Gerner) and Jören (George) Logan, represented her at the trial, which took place on the 4th of May 1621. The witnesses agreed that Forath, who had been the guest of Hans Clerck, the Admiral, at dinner, commenced a quarrel with Jacob Logan, who had also at a late hour come to the house of his host. He provoked him by ironically asking him if he would give him back the money he had lent him, now that he had taken service as Ensign or Lieutenant, or if he was too proud for it now? Logan answered that he had nothing to do with the Captain, and

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

with that they left the Admiral's house and went to Gerdt Specht's house, where they freely partook of beer, till they were both somewhat the worse for drink. Beer after a dinner in an Admiral's house is said to have this effect. In short, the quarrel waxed hotter until Forath hurled his tin "stoop" at Logan, "so that it bent," ["Så that stoopet bågade."] and caused an ugly wound from which the blood freely flowed. Anger now gave way to fury. Logan closed with his enemy, and having thrown him on the bench, knelt on him and threatened him with a knife. The row became general. Clerck tried to separate the combatants, and Myr snatched a sword from one of the Admiral's servants, and in the drunken heat he ran Logan through the body. The latter fell prostrate. When his widow came upon the scene he was already dead. The consternation of Forath and Myr, now suddenly sobered, was great. "Two cannot die for the murder," said the former to his lamenting friend. "If one must die I shall take the matter upon me, being the first who laid hand on him." Both culprits were condemned to death. Forath, however, was immediately pardoned by the king, and sentenced "ad poenam arbitrarium," whilst poor Myr, who had no such powerful patron, seems to have suffered the extreme penalty.

[Tänkebok of 1621. R.A.]

Forath was appointed captain of the ship *Solen (The Sun)*, and ordered to proceed to the Danzig roads. Here, on 18th November, he was surprised by a sudden attack of the Danzigers and their ten men-of-war. Outnumbered and unable to escape, he blew himself and his ship up rather than fall into the hands of the enemy (1627). His widow, a Miss Rutherford, received several estates as a donation from Gustavus Adolphus, [See Kammer-Arkivet, Stockholm. F's daughter married a Captain Seton, another example of the clannishness of the Scot abroad.] with all the privileges of nobility attached to it. His brother, Hans Forath, ennobled in 1650, lived variously employed as a Captain till 1660.

The feat of A. Forath is said to have been repeated in the Finnish war of 1700, when Thomas Bennet, a Lieutenant in the Navy, blew himself up in the Peipus Lake (1704), to escape the terrific fire from the Russian batteries.

Of the Pfeifs a great many have excelled as military men in modern times: Gustaf Pfeif received the gold medal for bravery in the naval battle of Svensksund, on the 9th of July 1790, whilst Daniel Pfeif received the same distinction after the war of 1813-14. [A member of the Klerck family, Carl U. af Klercker, a naval officer who died in 1828, likewise

THE SCOTS IN SWEDEN

received the medal for bravery.] Nor must we forget Captain Michael Spalding, who was Governor of Karlskona. He commanded the Frigate *Pelikan* in the naval battle of Moen in 1712, on the 24th of August, when he took a Danish galliote. He was also successful against the Danes in 1715. He died in 1741.

But enough has been said of wars and rumours of wars. When the Scots levies poured across into Sweden, they were given the place of honour in battle by one who knew and esteemed their qualities; when afterwards the levies had ceased, and the residue of officers had mingled with the best blood of Sweden, the Scots again came to the front. Their adopted country had become their native country; but they were animated still by that same martial spirit which brooks no insult, and has not without good reason the Thistle for its emblem.