

GRAVE-FACED little ten year-old Swedish boy was learning, in 1604, not to yawn or look bored during the long, dreary sessions of the royal council and at the still more tedious audiences to foreign ambassadors. If the child went to sleep at such times, or failed afterward to give a full and intelligent account of the proceedings, a hard whipping was his punishment. It was a trying ordeal for a boy, who would have preferred to be playing. But little Gustavus Adolphus, crown prince of Sweden, learned his lesson well, and he was destined to profit wonderfully

thereby. Sweden's fame was on the wane. Civil strife among various factions, discontent and frequent rebellions on the part of the powerful nobles and loss of all national spirit by the people at large had checked progress and weakened royal power. Wars were waging with Denmark, Russia and Poland, and these cut down the young men of the country and kept the treasury depleted. The father of Gustavus Adolphus did his best to stem this tide of adversity, but made scant headway. However, he had the wisdom to interest his son, from babyhood, in military affairs and statecraft. In consequence, when Gustavus succeeded to the Swedish throne, in 1611, at the age of 17, he was well equipped for ruling as though he were far older. And the first move of this boy-king was to: undo the ill-effect of his ancestors' incompetency and to make Sweden one of the greatest nations of the earth. He was the first Swedish king to play any real part in European history.

By his rare charm of manner, coupled with rarer diplomacy, he won to his own interests the discontented nobles and persuaded them that patriotism was better than factional disputes. 'Then he lowered taxes, promoted interest in education and industries and improved national finances. Downtrodden Sweden took a fresh lease of life. Commerce, learning, agriculture, and general contentment flourished. Having strengthened his kingdom from within, Gustavus now turned upon the foes at her gates and devoted his attention to the triple war she had on her hands.

First he concluded an honorable peace with Denmark; then, concentrating his forces against Russia, he forced the czar to sue for peace and to sign, in 1617, a treaty giving Sweden certain rich provinces along the Baltic. Turning then upon Poland, he wound up his third war with still greater gains in territory. He had original ideas on the subject of war. Instead of hurling an undisciplined mass of men at the foe, he employed a small, compac, army, drilled to the highest point of perfection, capable of firing three volleys to the enemy's one and marching and counter-marching with a bewildering speed and adroitness. The soldiers adored their general-king and followed him blindly. He shared their worst hardships and toughened their constitutions by training them to take the field winter and summer and to endure unflinchingly the rigors of the bitterest weather. And he speedily found use for all its perfection. For the crowning achievement of his life was at hand. Not in his own land, but in Germany.

Germany, in 1618, saw the beginning of one of the most tragic struggles in history, the "Thirty Years' War"-a conflict wherein fully two-thirds of that country's population are estimated to have lost their lives by steel and lead or by samine and disease. At its close, in 1648, Germany was for the most part a wilderness, shorn of wealth, influence and population; devastated, impoverished, broken in spirits and temporarily lost to all the higher aims of life. 'The "German Empire" was practically at an end.

This war, like most of its time, had its beginning chiefly in religious differences. The Protestant princes of northern Germany formed a "union" and leagued with Denmark against the newly elected Emperor Ferdinand IV. Bohemia refused to acknowledge Ferdinand as its ruler. Ferdinand's generals, Tilly and Wellenstein, ravaged Bohemia, and the lands of the union and forced the Danes to surrender. By 1631, the union was helpless, the Danes subdued and Ferdinand triumphant. Tilly and Wallenstein had left a wide swath of blood and desolation from one end of the country to the other. The war seemed almost at an end. Then it was that Gustavus Adolphus took a hand in the game and started the great movement which was destined later to turn the union's defeat into glorious victory.

Whether Gustayus was mainly actuated by zeal for Protestanism, or whether he allied himself with the union in hopes of acquiring certain large Baltic provinces which he had long coveted for Sweden, is a problem that cannot be solved. In either case his heroism was unquestioned. All Europe stood aghast at the apparent foolhardiness of the Swedish king when, in 1630, he landed on German soil with an army only 15,000 strong, prepared to attack the mighty hosts of Ferdinand. And Germany, accustomed to the barbarous cruelty and license of the imperial troops, wondered equally at the piety, moderation and grand discipline of Gustavus' hardy soldiers. The amazement grew when he beat the strongest of Ferdinand's armies in battle after battle. Tilly with a large force was sent to crush him. The Swedes killed Tilly and scattered his army in panic over the land.

Then Wallenstein took charge and met Gustavus in battle at Lutzen, Nov. 6, 1632. One of the flercest conflicts in all the annals of war was waged on this day. The Swedes drove back the larger German force, captured Wallenstein's cannon and turned the German artillery against its former

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