

known as the Thirty Years' War had commenced in 1618, and for the first twelve years had proceeded with the most adverse results to the interests of the Reformation. A contemporary writer, describing the distressed state of the Protestants of Germany at this time, intimates that, bad as things were, they threatened, as the result of Jesuit intrigue, to become much worse, and to involve the "total ruin of the true religion," and the entire subjugation of Germany to Romish superstition.

When, under these circumstances, the "Lion of the North," as Gustavus was called, resolved to make war upon the Emperor, in defence of the rights of the injured Protestants, his forces seemed utterly inadequate for the purpose. He had but fifteen thousand men besides his artillery; while ready to encounter him in Pomerania alone were forty thousand troops, forming only the advanced guard of the imperial army. The Swedish monarch and his brave companions in arms made for the mouth of the Oder, where they took possession of the island of Usedom. Gustavus was the first to land, and at once fell upon his knees and breathed forth earnest prayer; and then was the first to seize the spade. The troops as fast as they landed, were engaged one-half in raising intrenchments, and the other half in battle array, ready to repel assault.

Gustavus soon mastered and expelled the imperial garrisons from Usedom, Wollin and Wolgast with a rapidity unknown in those days; he invested and reduced Stettin; in the course of only eight months he took eighty fortified places, and by his successive victories obtained the adhesion of all Pomerania. He had landed in Germany without any ally in that country; but the electors of Brandenburg and Saxony, and other princes, as his successes and their necessities became apparent, threw in their lot with him.

These rapid conquests of Gustavus struck the empire with consternation; and the veteran general Count Tilly was created a field-marshal, and ordered to take command of a large army and repel the advances of the Swedish monarch. The opposing forces met on the plains of Leipsic; and here Tilly was utterly defeated, losing in a few hours twelve thousand men in killed and wounded, and having, in fact, his army completely shattered. Gustavus once more encountered Tilly on the banks of the Lech, where his passage was disputed by that commander. Again, the Protestant monarch was the victor, and Tilly, who in the course of his career had gained thirty-six battles was not only defeated, but slain.

The mightiest military chief in Europe, Wallenstein, was next called to the aid of his sovereign; and he having stipulated for, and been invest-