

the waters were covered for more than half the breadth of the channel. It was noon before the foremost ships came to anchor in the bay. From the largest one, decorated with the royal flag, and filled with guards, the Queen, assisted by the chancellor Oxenstein, stepped into a barge that was to convey her to shore; four princesses of the blood, and the court dames followed. Other barges were in attendance, filled with Swedish nobles and officers; the boats danced gaily on the waves, while to meet the royal train, came Duke Bogislaus and his consort, with the Pomeranian barons. After the ceremonies of greeting and welcome, the royal barges proceeded side by side towards the land; they were soon secured with cables, and a temporary bridge constructed to the shore.

As the Queen of Sweden set her foot on the soil, salutes were fired from all the ships; the greeting echoed in thunders by the joyous huzzas of the soldiers and the people. Cannon were also fired in quick succession as her majesty proceeded towards the castle; while Hepburn, approaching with graceful courtesy, delivered the letter of Gustavus, praying her to accept his services, for which purpose the king's majesty had been pleased to send him. Smiling, Mary took the letter of her beloved hero, disengaged its silken cord, glanced at the first line, dwelt fondly on the signature—'Gustavus Adolphus'—her eyes suffused with tears of pleasure; then motioning graciously her greeting to the knight, turned again to the Duchess and ladies, who waited to conduct her to her temporary place of abode. A rich collation was there prepared; at the close of which the Queen retired to her chamber, read the letter, and commanded the young officer to be summoned.

"You are a native of Brandenburg!" she said, while she gave the youth her white hand to kiss.

Hepburn answered in the affirmative, and again made proffer of his service and devotion.

"I am your debtor, noble knight!" replied Mary, "and rejoice to find a countryman so worthy. You have saved my husband—have bled for him; how dear to Mary of Brandenburg are those wounds! I see by your badge, you are of the Order of the Sword; let me bestow another badge, less martial, but not less honorable—a pledge of the approbation of your Queen!" The knight sank on his knee, and the royal hands of Mary tied round his neck the blue ribbon with the white cross of the Seraphin Order.

"Now rise, gallant sir!" said her majesty—"and relate to us the adventure wherein you saved the king's life."

Hepburn was in no little confusion; it had

formed no part of his martial education to speak or act in presence of the fair; and never had his eyes beheld so fair and noble a company. But the Queen commanded, and with crimson face and downcast eyes, he detailed the particulars of the engagement, the more embarrassed as truth compelled him to give to himself and his comrades the praise of the victory. The Queen thanked him at the conclusion; and tears of sympathy in many beautiful eyes were also his reward.

The next day Hepburn, with the officers of his suite, and the nobles of the court of Bogislaus, was presented in form to the Queen and her ladies; a round of gaieties and festivities succeeded, in which the knight could not mingle with pleasure, since, notwithstanding the honours that had crowned his military career, a blight was upon his heart's dearest hopes. The image of his lost Irene, as he had last seen her, appealing to heaven against him, against her own love, with eyes upturned in solemn self-sacrifice, was with him in the heat of strife—in the pomp of war; how much more in moments of leisure—in hours when others were mirthful, while no effort could compel a smile to his lips! His habitual melancholy was not unmarked, nor its cause un conjectured, by the Queen and her dames; (what is so penetrating as a woman's perception in such matters?) and there was one among the circle who resolved to be the physician to heal his bosom's wounds.

Before her marriage with Gustavus, Mary, at the court of her father, Sigismund of Brandenburg, had formed acquaintance with a young Italian lady, the widow of the Marchese Ricci. Banished for political causes from his own country, that noble had found shelter at the Prince's court. His young bride accompanied him, but hardly, as it seemed from the impulse of love. At sixteen, she became a widow; frivolity and love of pleasure soon caused her to forget she was an exile; the princess, compassionating her condition, caused her to forget she was alone. Mary took Donna Giulia for her chosen companion; they became inseparable friends, till the love of the princess for Gustavus overmastered every other feeling. Notwithstanding their partial estrangement, Giulia accompanied her, on her marriage, to Sweden, and retained a place in her household. This lady, who had not yet numbered twenty summers, vain, voluptuous, and ambitious, was now resolved, cost what it might, on the conquest of the youthful hero. When a lovely woman thus resolves, it seldom costs much to achieve the conquest!

Donna Giulia's beauty was of that majestic and luxuriant cast, peculiar to the women of Lombar-