

(ORIGINAL.)

## THE ROYAL QUIXOTE.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

## CHAPTER I.

"For oh! the choice what heart can doubt,  
Of tents with love or thrones without!"

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS, King of Sweden, terminated his early wars with Denmark and Poland gloriously for his country; and returned to Stockholm, crowned with success, and justly proud of the military fame he had so nobly earned.

The world, astonished at the rapid conquests which a mere stripling had gained, over his powerful hereditary enemies, predicted from his fortunate outset in life, the brilliant career which in after years, won for him the epithet of the Great King of Sweden. Perhaps, this title was never more justly bestowed than on this amiable prince, who was as remarkable for his clemency, as for those splendid military talents, which rendered him an object of terror and admiration to surrounding nations. His ambition sprung from an insatiable love of glory, an ardent desire to be ranked with those mighty conquerors whose names had operated like a spell upon the minds of men; and over the records of whose greatness, his young heart had caught the first glow of martial enthusiasm, and his spirit acquired that enterprising tone, and fearlessness of danger, which formed at all times a striking trait in his character.

Germany presented a wide field for his ambitious speculations. The states were dissatisfied with their Emperor, the cautious, cold hearted Ferdinand II. and all the petty principalities at open variance with each other.

But a scheme of far less importance than that of subjugating a mighty empire, was floating through the brain of the young monarch. The interest of his country was at stake, and he was daily urged by his ministers to choose a royal consort, and secure the victory he had gained over his enemies by forming a powerful alliance with one of the neighbouring states.

Capable of owning the most generous and exalted passion for the softer sex, the Swedish monarch viewed with sovereign contempt those royal alliances, formed without any previous knowledge of the parties concerned, who never beheld each other until they met as man and wife; and he entertained the enthusiastic hope of winning incognito, the affections of some high born female, who would prize him more for the virtues and talents he pos-

sessed, than for the crown he had to offer—and he determined that in a choice which so nearly concerned his domestic happiness, he would choose for himself.

A few days after his coronation, which was performed with great pomp at Upsal, the chancellor Oxenstiern, his faithful friend and steady adviser, placed before him the portraits of several of the most beautiful princesses in Germany, and strenuously advised him to consider the welfare of his country, and yield to the wishes of the people, by choosing from among them a royal bride.

The king examined the pictures with a critical eye, and for some minutes returned no answer to the grave chancellor's exhortation. Most of the portraits were handsome, and two of them, eminently beautiful; but Gustavus objected to them all—one was too dark, another too fair—one had no expression, was a perfect idiot, and the countenance of a third was proud and ill tempered.—Such a woman would infringe on his prerogatives and expect to wear his crown. The worthy chancellor, who had not expected to find his youthful master so fastidious, listened to his remarks with no small degree of impatience, and as he saw no necessity for those virtues and talents in a queen, which the king so much desired, he cut short the monarch's eloquent harangue on the perfections he required in a wife, by gravely assuring him—that as it was impossible to discover the mental endowments of the fair candidates for royalty, he would save himself much unnecessary anxiety, by choosing the lady whose countenance best pleased him; and who was most likely to bring him an heir to the crown.

"Your majesty is not quite such a despotic and powerful prince as Ahasuerus, of whom we read in holy writ," continued the chancellor; "you cannot pass a decree, that all these fair young virgins should be brought before you, that you might choose from among them a second Esther. It is useless to consult the heart in alliances of this nature; a good and wise monarch should always sacrifice his private feelings for the welfare of his people."

"If my private hours were rendered miserable by domestic strife," returned the king, hastily rising, and pushing the portraits from him; "it would destroy all my energy with regard to public affairs. If I cannot claim the same privilege, which every peasant in my realm enjoys, I will remain single!"

"But your majesty's inclinations are at variance