

The King Who Has Lost Half His Kingdom.

(Written for the Deseret News by Wilson Gillies.)

The ablest monarch in Europe—King Oscar II of Sweden—was once called by Theodore Roosevelt—today shares with the czar the limelight of the stage of royalty. For King Oscar has just lost half of his kingdom. Having ruled the Swedes and Norwegians for 33 years, he now is monarch of the Swedes only. Norway a few days ago seceded, set up its own government, and may soon have a republic. It is as if all our own great west suddenly withdrew from the union, declaring Roosevelt no longer president of the country beyond the Mississippi. In such circumstances the east and the west would go to war. Not so Sweden and Norway. King Oscar, 74 years old, loves peace. Yet the one man who directly caused the rupture, by vetoing a bill creating a consular service for Norway separate from that of Sweden, was King Oscar himself.

A RULER WHO LOATHES THE VERB "TO FAIL."

For years this ruler has striven to keep Norway and Sweden as one. He has failed at last. Yet once he said: "I loathe the verb 'to fail'." and added: "I know a man who was compiling a dictionary. 'Remember' I said to him, 'there is no such word as fail.' I thought no more of the matter until I received a copy of the dictionary. On the title page the true title was scratched out, and in its place was written: 'The Dictionary of the Missing Word.' I turned to the letter F, and surely enough, there was no such word as fail."

This monarch has tried the busiest of lives, assigning himself a task for every minute of the day. In his library where he works hangs a large piece of canvas, on which is painted in Swedish these lines:

I shall pass through this world but once.
Any good thing that I pass by I can do.
Or any kindness that I can show to any human being.
Let me do it now.
Let me not defer it.
Nor neglect it.
For I shall not pass this way again.

Thus King Oscar summarizes his life philosophy so far as it concerns his relations toward his fellow creatures.

While addressing the students at a Swedish university he said: "Remember time; it is your best friend. Always carry a watch and live by it." In his youth he was allowed to become intimate with a boy of humble birth. They became chums. One day when playing with his little friend the prince asked the lad what time it was. "I have no idea," said the lad. "But you ought to have an idea," retorted the prince. "Why have you none?" "Because I have no watch," replied the boy. The next day the lad received a splendid gold watch, with a note from young Oscar, scribbled in his boyish hand, saying: "This will give you some idea about time."

LIKES TO BE TALLEST OF HIS COURT.

With this king who has lost one of his two thrones I talked for an hour

not many months ago. The interview was arranged by the American minister at Stockholm, Mr. Thomas. In full evening dress, though the time was high noon, I proceeded to the palace, where the lord chamberlain ushered me into the king's private library, wherein hung the three already quoted. The place was overheated, oppressively close, like all living rooms in Sweden, where windows are made not to open. By a masterpiece of stove of porcelain stood the tallest of the world's rulers. With all his accomplishments as orator, author, musician, linguist and scientist, the king's only noticeable vanity is said to be in his six feet two and one-half inches. On ceremonial occasions, when his cocked hat is ornamented with three gigantic ostrich plumes, he looks a veritable giant. He used to be the tallest of his court. Once he appointed to office under the crown a Norwegian whom he had never seen. When his majesty arrived in Christiania, he was greeted by one of the few men he had ever promoted, whose height compelled him to look up. That tall functionary was forthwith given another and higher office far from Christiania.

After the formal bows in receiving me his majesty shook my hand with a vigorous grasp, then we sat down on opposite sides of a broad table, on which were many periodicals and a telephone. Age had only added grace to his erect figure. His hair, like his beard, was gray and was parted on the extreme left side. He had a lofty brow and serious eyes, ears of refinement close to his head, the prominent nose of the generous, the mouth of the merciful, the long, strong fingers of the pianist and a mighty breadth of shoulder. He was dressed like any well bred gentleman, displaying no ornament, not even the button of an order, to indicate his exalted rank. He wore a gray tuxed suit, with cutaway coat, standing collar, four-in-hand tie and patent leather shoes. His only articles of adornment were a small pearl scarfpin, a plain seal ring and an ordinary watch chain. He speaks nine languages, including the perfect English, in which he has begun telling me of his greatest hobby.

That hobby is geographical exploration. His active participation in expeditions, however, is perforce confined to supply money for expeditions conducted by others. He showed me a tiny model of a balloon carrying a car made of gold and precious stones. "This was intended," he said, "as a gift to Andrew when he came back from his balloon trip toward the north pole. I have sent many men northward to look for him, but, as you see, the little toy still remains unclaimed. And here," he added, "is a present from Dr. Nansen, a diary of his arctic journey in his own hand." It should be said parenthetically that Dr. Nansen is today one of the Norwegian envoys appointed to represent the new government of his country at the court of his friend King Oscar.

FOND OF A JOKE.

While the king is more of a scholar than a politician, just the same he

Oscar the Man—Personal Side of the Ruler Just Now So Prominent in the World's Eye—The Tallest of Kings, Yet the Kindest—How He Appears at His Home—His Gracious Reception of a Deseret News Correspondent—The Most Democratic and Accessible of European Monarchs—An Accomplished Sovereign Who Has No Use for the Verb "To Fail"—Geographical Exploration His Chief Hobby—His Love of a Good Joke.



KING OSCAR II OF SWEDEN.

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loves a joke. He related an incident that marked the celebration of his birthday: "A committee representing many trades waited upon me, and I inquired of each what was his business. One said he was a manufacturer of penicillators. I asked him if he was doing well. He replied that his business was thriving. The next man proved to be an undertaker. He complained that times were bad for his business; that he was doing poorly. So I said to him: 'Look here, I'll tell you what to do. Go home and become a manufacturer of penicillators. I have just been told that that business is flourishing.'"

King Oscar is one of the most accessible and most democratic monarchs in Europe. "I was out walking alone one day," he said, "when I met an old friend. I asked him to have some refreshment, so we went to a restaurant. When paying time came I found that I had left my purse at home, so I had to ask my friend to lend me the money to pay for his entertainment."

At this juncture a door opened and there entered a lady with the sweetest face imaginable. She was dressed in black silk, without any fuss or feathers. Whereupon I was presented to Sophia, queen of the Swedes. She will soon celebrate her golden wedding anniversary, and she wore the lace cap prescribed for women who are approaching 75. She is remarkably well preserved, though somewhat of an invalid. She takes part in state ceremonies only with great pain. A sufferer herself, she devotes her time to alleviating the sufferings of others. She has always been interested in reform dress for women. At the palace she has a room fitted up specially for the display of rational costumes designed by her. One day while driving in Stockholm she came to a crowd. A young girl had fainted. The queen ordered her footman to see that the girl was carried to the nearest apothecary's shop, and to the shop went also the queen, where she helped restore the girl to consciousness. The patient proved to be a poor girl who had striven in vain to support herself by dressmaking. The queen relieved the girl's immediate wants and appointed a day for her to come to the palace. Receiving the visitor in her dressing room, the queen handed her protegee a certain simple costume, saying: "Take this as a model. Call it the queen model and tell your customers that it is made after the queen's own fashioning." Then, by wearing one of the gowns herself, the queen set the fashion for the ladies of Stockholm, and soon the once poor dressmaker had to take a larger shop.

PLEASANTLY GREETED BY ABSENT COUNTRYMEN.

One of the volumes which lay on the king's table was Roosevelt's "History of New York." After speaking of the pleasure he had derived from reading the book the king said: "When President Roosevelt retires to private life he should make a tour of the world as did General Grant, for he is a man whom we over here wish to see." Concerning the 2,000,000 Swedes and Norwegians in the United States, the

king said: "Every year on my birthday I receive the most pleasing greetings and the most surprising gifts from my countrymen in America." After expressing his astonishment at the continued opportunities which the United States offers the poor of the world, as shown in the large amounts of money which the Swedes and Norwegians in America are constantly sending to their poor parents in the home country his majesty exclaimed: "No wonder my people are emigrating to America by thousands!"

Regarding the king's tact at court ceremonies, the actual hero of this little story related it himself to me: "I had to go before his majesty to receive a high honor. At the palace I approached the place where his majesty stood. A cushion lay at his feet. I thought it was there by mistake and I kicked it out of the way. Afterward I understood my mistake, but the king only smiled. Then I noticed that his majesty was holding out his hand, impulsively I seized that extended hand and shook it. Instantly it flashed over me that I had made another mistake. That hand was for me to kiss, as part of the ceremony. 'Oh,' I exclaimed, 'I ought not to have shaken your hand, ought I, your majesty?' To which the king replied—and note the cleverness, the readiness, the kindness—I hope, sir, the day will never come when you ought not to shake my hand."

The king is the father of four princes, only one of whom is under 40. His successor, the crown prince, is Gustav, who has several times sat on the throne in place of his father. The saddest event in the king's family life, however, has to do with the second son, Prince Oscar, who married for love a "girl of the people," a charming girl, but not royal blood. And because of that marriage Prince Oscar was obliged to renounce his right to succession to the throne. It is this second son of King Oscar whom the Norwegians now wish to place on their independent throne. The poetic justice of giving a crown to a young prince who had renounced a crown for love appeals to the hearts of the Norwegians, but King Oscar, to this proposal to place a son of his on the throne of the half of the kingdom that he has lost, says "No!"

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