

Chapter 60 : Young Man with Prospects & Ancestry (II) (1877-1880).

Gustaf's life the four years following his baccalaureate consisted of three years of civilian & military studies and a one-year educational trip - "the grand tour" as the English call it. He was introduced to a number of courts, met his possible prospects and chose Princess Victoria of Baden. He also had time for some representation and professional practice.

*

Gustaf's civilian university studies took place in Uppsala, Heidelberg & Kristiania and lasted five terms: Three initial terms 1877/78 in Uppsala & Heidelberg. Two closing terms 1880 in Kristiania & Uppsala. Between then was the journey.

Gustaf and his newly appointed royal staff arrived at Uppsala on January 31, 1877, and were accommodated in their own house - the so-called Prince's House at Bäverns gränd 6. This had been built by Oscar I on behalf of his children, sold but now repurchased and restored. The Royal Staff consisted of Gustaf's Governor Gustaf Jakob Edelstam (1831-1892), the aid-de-camp lieutenant Carl Malcolm Lilliehöök (1847-1928), the adjutant 2nd lieutenant Gustaf Adolf Löwenhjelm (1842-1924) and the servants. In 1878, the Norwegian aid-de-camp 1st lieutenant Einar Wilhelm Krohn (1848-1922) was added. All had instructions to keep Gustaf under watch so that he did not "overstep". Edelstam regularly reported to Gustaf's parents.

According to various sources¹, Gustaf's intercourse consisted of those whom his governor had told to socialize with him: The Archbishop, the County Governor, the County Secretary (administrative director under the governor), a number of university teachers, their families and acquaintances. His student intercourse was to be elected honorary member of Värmland nation shortly after arrival and participate in their parties. He was also elected member of the student choir to the O.D. The lectures were a problem. These started by welcoming him, but no one really knew how to behave during the breaks. Natural behaviour was considered to be contrary to court etiquette. Easier to leave him and the adjutant alone. Neither Gustaf seems to have taken any initiatives. There was much talk of his shyness. "The prince makes a pleasant impression on all who see him at close quarters; He seems shy, but imbued with a youthful spirit and a certain dignity that suits him. Here with us he has made morning visits as any young gentleman and also in the evening when we played music and danced. ... I've had the prince here a couple of times all alone a.m. to practice a few pieces of music and I really like him, so modest and amicable is his essence."² Details are missing but the restrictions from above on his student intercourse were such that even Archbishop Anton Niklas Sundberg (his confirmation priest) protested. Compared to the prince school, however, the actual control had been relaxed. - Gustaf seems to have profited the most from the circle around O.D. that was not as fixated on his person as the others. If you sang false in the O.D., it didn't matter how royal you were. Those mentioned as his intimate acquaintance at this time (=invited to the prince house) all had a singing or music background.

¹ Sjögren red. 1881: ss. 8-10; [Waldemar Swahn?] "Skolgossen och studenten." Vecko Journalen 1928:26, ss. 29-30,56; Lundebeck 1952: ss. 196-204.

² Söderberg 1951: ss. 37-38. [Brev från landshövdingen fru Agnes Geijer-Hamilton 1877.]

The first three terms in Uppsala Gustaf followed lectures in economics, Latin and Swedish history and received individual teaching in art history and more recent general history. The pace was jerky. If you eliminate all the interruptions, the terms were about two and a half months. The first term was January 31 to May 15, 1877. The second term was 24 September to some time in December. The third term was February 6 to May 7, 1878. Social life was very extensive - especially for Gustaf who represented - and there were events every weekend. The level of ambition varied from balls to dinner parties, sledge tours and soirees. Gustaf also issued his own invitations, sang bass in a mixed student quartet outside O.D. & practised on the skating rink in company with his admirers - "the Prince's droplets" called. Most probably youngsters. As at home at the castle, he played the piano for himself as relaxation - operas, romances & dance music. During a visit to his mother in Heidelberg in January 1878, he also received individual instruction in German law.

After a break for the educational journey, Gustaf 1880 completed his civil university studies. In the spring, 29 January to mid-April 1880, he studied at the University of Kristiania where he followed lectures in Norwegian legal history and in recent Norwegian and Danish history. In the autumn, 30 September to 30 November 1880, Gustaf was back in Uppsala. He followed lectures in procedural law and Swedish history and received individual instruction in Swedish law from Hugo Blomberg.

There are many examples of how his Uppsala surroundings had difficulty dealing with Gustaf's low profile. For example, when he insisted to serenade any of O.D.'s amours as a member of the choir or to participate unnoticed in the students' torchlight parade at Uppsala University's 400th anniversary, it gave rise to discussions whether this really was royal behaviour. A crown prince should lead, not follow!³ Even his appearance was commented upon and considered to indicate an immature, far from royal character. As in Beskow he was praised by the young - the others were non-committal. Professor Helena Nyblom describes a dinner party: "The Crown Prince looked very childish with his wavy shiny hair, his red cheeks and his youthful figure. At the time he was actually only interested in *one* thing, namely to dance, and everywhere balls were arranged in his honour. As we, because of limited space, were unable to produce a ball, he was of course extremely bored with us. My eldest son, who was ten or eleven years old, showed his reverence to the royalty by constantly running behind the crown prince with a chair "so that he might sit down". As is well known, the Bernadottes are known for always wanting to *stand*, so it was a very misplaced attention. ... Since I spoke very little with the Crown Prince, I have no other impression of his person from that time than as an unusually healthy and thriving youth, who liked to dance. For the rest he seemed shy and rather quiet."⁴ (This to always stand was to avoid the discussions about the order of sitting down. It could take fifteen minutes even for small parties to make up their minds on the correct rank order.)

Gustaf spent the weekends in Stockholm. He had a bachelor's flat in the north-west wing of the castle which in the usual style was laden with a little of everything - antique furniture, Persian bronze vases, German porcelain, majolica & fajans - and which he gladly showed to outsiders.

³ Lundebeck 1952: s. 200.

⁴ Nyblom 1922: ss. 191-192.

*

Until his confirmation 1875 Gustaf's military training was pro forma. At one month of age he became corporal, in 1873 sergeant. In the summer of 1875 he attended "non-com school". This consisted of "conversations" (=oral orientation about army and sailor life) combined with exercises in troop drills. Gustaf lived with Lieutenant Colonel Erling Ribbing (1831-1900) at Skärsåtra, Lidingö, close to the training area Ladugårdsgårde so that he could participate in the morning drills. After that he was appointed 2nd lieutenant in Svea Livgarde, Livregementets Dragonkår, Värmland Regiment, Norske Kavalleribrigaden & Norske Jägerkorps.

Gustaf never received an officer's degree. Like his civilian studies, the officer studies were short orientation courses in war history & strategy (a full officer training was 1 ½ years) and took place in the autumn of 1879 & spring 1880 before and after the Kristiania studies. In the summers of 1876-1878 & 1880 he participated in field exercises. May 15, 1877, he was appointed lieutenant and served as a platoon commander in Svea Livgarde. May 14, 1880, he was appointed captain and served as company commander in Svea Livgarde and Akkershus Hussars, 14 days each. For a description:

Our current king began his first military service as Crown Prince [captain's rank] at Livregementets Dragonkår in the summer of 1880. My old regiment, Livregementets Hussarer, was at that time during the regimental meeting housed in tent camp at Ladugårdsgården, between the Royal Castle and Livdragonerna. During that time, a lively relationship between the two regiments naturally took place, and the then 22-year-old crown prince showed us, his peers, the most collegial friendship, not least on horseback. In the ensuing races, he also signed up as a participant and competitor. Thus, first, an obstacle race was organized on the state price for cavalry officers, whereby I had the pleasure of winning first prize, which was a beloved increase in my meagre lieutenant treasury!

Then came a smooth run, in which the crown prince participated on a large beautiful full-blooded mare "Alice". During the homestretch, however, "Alice" was attacked by a large dog and distracted by the barking. The crown prince wanted a rematch and suggested a not too long endurance race, which took place a few days later.

This time it was the crown prince who won, and I had the pleasure to hand over to the victor a small so-called. Charles XII's jug, which, as we hope; is yet to be found among the present king's many other trophies in the royal castle.⁵

*

Gustaf's educational journey October 2, 1878, to October 10, 1879 is probably the best documented period of his life. In addition to the biographies (Sjögren red. 1881: ss. 32-41; Åsbrink 1918: ss. 40-44; Swahn 1938: ss. 56-58; Lundebeck 1952: ss. 205-288) the ciceron Augustus Hare (1900: ss. 75-240) written about him in his memoirs and Lundebeck references a number of letters and reports - also Hares - from Sophie's private archive. During and after the trip, some newspaper details about the route and schedule were published that journalist Victor Emanuel Öman expanded into a travelogue (Öman 1879). There is also a special study by Birger Steckzén (1959: ss. 262-317) on the English part of the trip. Steckzén's sources below seem the same as Lundebeck's:

⁵ Örn, Gustaf Wilhelm. "Sverige har fått en ny ryttarprins." Vecko Journalen, 1929:30, ss. 16-17.

Thanks to rich source material, the prince's journey through Europe can be followed in detail. Prince Gustaf himself was a frequent letter writer and wrote some 70 letters to "My Beloved Mom" and "My Beloved Dad". The letters, which he apparently wrote entirely on his own and which have a strongly confidential tone, are quite extensive and up to 16 pages long. A strong contributor was also Printzsköld. Unfortunately, his letters are lost and only fragments are known of them. However, a large suite of letters from Lilliehöök, Krohn and Hare are preserved, as well as letters to Printzsköld from the Queen's maid of honour, Ebba von Rosen, Marshal of the Court Holtermann and a number of foreign acquaintances. They are complemented by Lilliehöök's diary, Hares' memoirs and information in the then domestic and foreign press, which often comments on the prince's journey.⁶

His parents were worried about letting him go, but had given his suite careful instructions. The suite consisted of 1st Marshal of the Royal Norwegian Court Markus Høyer Holtermann (1826-1880), Sophie's chamberlain, Dr. Otto Hack Roland Printzsköld (1846-1930) and Gustaf's two aid-de-camps Lilliehöök & Krohn. In addition servants. The trip was a combination of family visits, representation, recreation, sightseeing & studies. All of Gustaf's waking time would be used to enrich him. The first stop was the Danish court. During the summers, Louise had often met Gustaf at Sofiero. She described him in a letter to Princess Anna of Hesse as having stagnated in his personal development:

Crown Prince Gustaf of Sweden and Norway have visited us on a journey through Hamburg. He has grown as tall as his father, perhaps even taller, but has the same gracious quiet manner as when a boy. He does not seem as talented as his father, but reflective and wise both in conversation and opinions. Perhaps more so than his age. He is not much of a Bernadotte (if one excludes the length!) but much more Nassau, whatever this implies of good and evil. ... The crown prince is of course still far too dependent on others, but such things can disappear over the years, if he gets a freer rein and *when* he gets it. I am afraid that, as he is now, he will not be a good fit. The Swedes expect more temperament and fire from their kings.⁷

From October 9 to November 6, the group spent time in Paris. Gustaf took part in a number of official events but most of the time he was walked through the city's attractions: buildings, museums, theatre, variety shows, industrial exhibitions, etc. He also trained his French conversation. As the departure date approached, Gustaf was thoroughly tired both of the city and of his ciceron & language teacher M. Hement - possibly referring to Felix Hement (1827-1891). From November 19 to March 13, the group visited Rome and the surrounding areas. On the way there they visited Pau where Gustaf met his ancestor's nephew Baron Oscar Bernadotte and other relatives. In Rome, Holtermann was relieved by Printzsköld & Hement by the Englishman Augustus Hare. The British and German ambassadors were also involved. Gustaf followed classes in English, French, archaeology and singing and was also here herded around among the sights. Occasionally he was allowed to stroll freely, participate in social life and pursue English fox hunting with his peers.

*

Hare had met Gustaf at an earlier meeting in Trondheim & Kristiania on August 10-16, 1878, and had a rather negative impression of him: "I was desired to sit by the

⁶ Steckzén 1959: s. 284.

⁷ Lundebeck 1952: s. 217.

Prince Royal. His peculiar features are redeemed by a good expression when animated. He talks no English and atrocious French, and was difficult to get on with at first." Both his father and mother emphasized how inexperienced he was: He is a good boy, but he has not been tried; He has no idea what the world is like, nor of the many temptations which lie in wait for a young man, above all for a prince." Hare accompanied the family to Kristiania on a small steamer.

The voyage was very long - five hours. I sat reading "Ticknor's Memoirs," and the King and Prince Imperial [Gustaf] came occasionally to talk to me. I found in the book an account of the Prince's grandmother, Comtesse de Teba, in her prime, which interested the King very much. He said, "The Prince Imperial keeps me in a perpetual state of mental tension: he does ask me *such* questions. I am always wondering what he will say next. He is almost *too* intelligent a young man. He has just asked me to tell him how long a steamer takes to get up steam. I have seen hundreds of steamers getting up steam, but I never thought before how long it took. However, I have had to think now, and it takes five quarters of an hour. Oh, the Prince Imperial is very good mental exercise."

Half-way down the fiord, the Prince Imperial insisted upon it that he must bathe. At first the King said it was impossible, that the moment of his arrival at Kristiania was fixed, that the people were waiting to see him, that the steamer could not be delayed - in fact, that it was out of the question. But while the King was discoursing, the Prince Imperial stripped off every article of clothing he had on, and after rushing up and down the deck perfectly naked, jumped into the sea over the poop and swam like a fish. The King then was obliged to stop the steamer, as he could not leave the Prince Imperial in the middle of the fiord, and he told an aide-de-camp to undress and go to pick out the Prince. The Prince lay on the breast of the waves laughing at the King till the aide-de-camp reached him, and then he dived, disappeared for some time, and came up on the other side of the vessel. The Prince Royal then undressed and went in too, and two aides-de-camp, and they all swam and pursued each other like mermen. When at last the Prince was persuaded to re-embark, he sang and shouted in most uproarious spirits.⁸

Two years later there were still pranks in the same style, for example this schnitzel hunt during the summer stay in Sofiero:

A schnitzeljagt (tells us Helsingborgs Tidning) was arranged on Monday a.m. [July 26], in which the Crown Prince, Prince Carl and 9 younger officers participated. Lieutenant Löwenhjelm served as the "fox", dressed in a red jacket and with a respectable fox tail. The society gathered outside General Cederström's, and there also found Prince Eugene with 20 men cavalry and women from la haute volée, all on horseback. At the 5 o'clock sharp the "fox" took of down Bolbrogatan towards the gasworks and the lake, then towards the plantations and then Eneborg, over banks and ditches in the direction of Ramlösa, Köpinge and Raus, signalling his way through pieces of paper (the schnitzels). After eight minutes the hunters set themselves in motion, directed by the Crown Prince, and the chase to find "Mr Fox" was began. At the same

⁸ Hare 1900: ss. 127-128.

time, a cavalcade of men, ladies and carriages (the audience) headed to Ramlösa. After an hour, the cavalcade having reached the race site, they finally caught up with "the fox", who after long detours, at the wildest speed exited the plantation into the race site, closely followed by Baron Kjell Otto Bennet, Lieutenant Cederström, the crown prince and the other hunters. A proper race now took place; but "the fox" could no longer escape, but was caught in a corner, where Baron Bennet deprived him of his tail as a trophy of victory.⁹

*

Gustaf was moderately interested in his English studies, but became much more diligent when his suite took part and he had to compete. The Italian court was uninterested in them, so there was much time. He met some distant cousins though. Gustaf was a very inquisitive tourist and Hare had to read up in the evenings at what he had forgotten. At the end, he came to appreciate Gustaf: "He has no sense of beauty and no care for it, and he has naturally very few of my tastes, but he has the most transparent, truthful, simple, loyal character I have ever known, and he has ever been unspeakably kind and affectionate to me."

The journey continued without Hare to Germany, Austria-Hungary, Romania to his cousin Elisabeth & her husband there and April 3 to Constantinople. After a week they returned the same way with detours to arrive in England on May 19. Here, the responsibility for Gustaf's program passed to the Swedish-Norwegian minister Count Edvard Piper who toned down the useful and the officious in favour of sports & social life. During the trip, Gustaf had received seven high Orders. In England he also received an honorary doctorate - his only one ever, later he declined such honours. On September 5 the party continued to Belgium and Holland and September 18-23 Gustaf was invited by Emperor William II to oversee the autumn manoeuvres in Strasbourg. Gustaf arrived in the company of Major General Count Sven Lagerberg - "Sven in Hell" called because of his unpolished language. He appears to have given Gustaf sex education on the instructions of Oscar II or on his own initiative. However, Lundebeck is so embarrassed by the subject that it is difficult to understand what was said. Raw, biased & heartfelt seems to be the correct description. Afterwards, they visited King Oscar II's chamberlain Carl Israel Wilhelm Douglas (1824-1898) at his castle Langenstein. On September 27, Gustaf was also invited to dinner with his future father-in-law Frederick I of Baden and for the first time met Princess Victoria of Baden. During the dinner Lagerberg appears to have been full of risqué expressions that made Gustaf embarrassed on his behalf. On October 10 they were back in Sweden.

*

Gustaf's problem was that until his educational trip he was virtually unknown to the various courts. For this reason, the parents seem to have worried what impression he would make. It is unclear how much they were told. Lundebeck & Steckzén in their depictions mix their own speculations, newspaper clips, common knowledge, parental instructions, court reports & Gustaf's own letters - probably from necessity. The origin of the data is often not clear.

The effect of the trip on Gustaf's personality - the little that you get to know or surmise - was as expected. He was treated by the environment according to his rank and began to behave according to his rank - made his own wishes known & snobbed with his outfit. His mother

⁹ "Schnitzeljakt." Dagens Nyheter 1880-07-29. [Citat ur Helsingborgs Tidning.]

was worried that his contemporaries would drag him to the brothels. This does not seem to have happened, but Lundebeck talks about late evenings and dinners at the Prince of Wales, where "young charming ladies stick strawberries in his mouth with silver pliers". This was later commented upon by one the Prince of Wales of the circles of - the lady's man, Baron William Gordon-Cumming - as: "The Crown Prince of Sweden-Norway was less innocent when he left than when he arrived!"¹⁰ Maybe so.

Printzsköld's final report to Queen Sophie was written after a meeting September 9 in the seaside resort of Scheveningen with Gustaf's aunt Marie who thoroughly questioned him about his experiences :

Incidentally, the princess [Gustaf's aunt Marie] finds that the crown prince as to his character has developed quite a lot, gained a greater degree of independence in his opinions and a greater ease in dealing with both relatives and strangers. The princess has asked me to say this, but it is not only her opinion, but the princess of Romania [Gustaf's cousin Elisabeth] and the prince of Wied [her father] have also told me the same. What the princess still lacks, is a real interest in a serious subject, thorough knowledge or at least the desire to acquire such and the willingness to submit to the necessary work...¹¹

¹⁰ Lundebeck 1952: ss. 261,264.

¹¹ Lundebeck 1952: s. 283.