

Chapter 70 : Crown Princess of Sweden-Norway (III) (1881-1907).

Victoria's life the 25 years 1881 to 1907 was about the home, family, artistic ambitions and to establish herself. She did not have any representation, but she sometimes accompanied Gustaf as his wife and did some charity. After childbirth, she spent a lot of time travelling: Karlsruhe, Mainau, Egypt, Rome, Capri and various spas. Contemporaries could read about it in the state owned Post- och Inrikes Tidningar. No details though.

At the risk of putting Victoria in a Procrustean bed, I have thematised the story: To establish herself (1881-1884), to fulfil her duties (1881-1892) and to "be herself" (1881-1907). The primary sources are Victoria herself and her ladies-in-waiting - letters, diaries, interviews & memories: Helene Åkerhielm (m. Bildt) 1881-1883, Louise af Ugglas (m. Wachtmeister) 1883-1884, Amelie Cederström (m. Berch) 1884-1892, "Vom Nil" 1889-1992, Anna Nordenfalk (m. Brahe) 1992-1907, Augusta Ehrenfalk 1891-1902 (m. Alströmer) & Cecilia Lewenhaupt (m. Falkenberg & af Klercker) 1901-1907.

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September 28, 1881, Gustaf & Victoria arrived in Gothenburg. October 1 they were driven in a procession through Stockholm. Gustaf wore her dragoon uniform and Victoria wore a yellow and blue velvet dress, white hat and long, white coat. The reception was unexpectedly warm, given that absolutely no one knew who she was. Her court preacher Clemens Åhfeldt 50 years later: "My own memory is, that the young bride looked more serious than happy, pale with emotion, slender and vigorous, royal in posture and greetings. ... Of the people who were present at the large cour, which immediately after the arrival was held at Stockholm Castle, I have heard how the Crown Princess from the start conquered everybody by her regal charm and exquisite courtesy, with which she especially greeted the elderly ladies and gentlemen."¹

October 7, the couple, their suite and some German guests continued to the Tullgarn Castle. "The days at Tullgarn became the Crown Prince Couple's first taste of married life. The court did not see much of them except at the meals, which were taken in the rather cold dining room, where the big fireplace had an unpleasant habit of letting in smoke."² They quickly fell into an everyday rut where Gustaf and his court during the morning hours went hunting and fishing and Victoria at the return served breakfast. Other than that, the days were devoted to walks, inspecting the house paying visits to the neighbours, the evenings to billiards and party games. In early November, Victoria's father became seriously ill, and they visited him in the spa town of Baden-Baden where he was recovering. On the way back they visited the courts in Berlin and Copenhagen. Christmas came and went. "With the New Year 1882 began a lot of festivities, courting, cour for presentation of ladies, visits to institutions etc. of interest, such as Nationalmuseum, Rörstrands fabriker, Atlas verkstäder, Borgerskapets änkehus, Frimurarebarnhuset, Frimurarlogen, Handarbetets vänner, Bikupan, Hushållsskolan, etc."³ They gave a thankyou ball for 600 persons and February/March they were in Norway a month for Victoria to present herself. Then it calmed down.

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¹ Åhfeldt 1932: s. 62.

² Åsbrink red. 1922: s. 61.

³ Åsbrink red. 1922: s. 63.

In 1884/85, the author August Strindberg summarized her situation at the time for an intended French audience: "The Crown Princess does not feel very comfortable in her new country. The queen makes her life hard by her authority, which extends all the way to the toilets of the young woman, once mild and of cheerful disposition, now distressed, tired of life and sickly. Her court [=Oscar II's court] is modelled after that of London. The horses, the servants, the conceit, the morals, everything is English."⁴

Victoria's immediate family, on the contrary, believed that her troubles were self-inflicted. You could demand a minimum of social sense even from a crown princess:

Young, gracious, charming, the Crown Princess Victoria arrived in Sweden. King Oscar thought her adorable. But this did not last long. My mother [Louise af Ugglas; lady in waiting 1883-1884] stated that the Crown Princess could have had everything she wanted, if she had only used the King's weakness for her - been a little friendly - but that instead she had been "unwise". Lady-in-waiting Jeanna von Rosen [Queen Sophie's lady-in-waiting] added, that Crown Princess Victoria could not bear with her father-in-law, only he was mentioned, she stiffened.

A strong personality and intelligent was the young princess. After three years in Sweden, she spoke fluent Swedish.

The Crown Princess received two maids of honour: Helene Åkerhielm [maid 1881-1883] and Anna Lagerberg [maid 1881-1882]. The latter was the daughter of Oscar II's good friend, General Sven Lagerberg. Anna Lagerberg, who was a few years older than the Crown Princess, tried to advise her on what was acceptable. A single example suffices. The Crown Princess had once proclaimed: "O, I love Boccaccio!" - Anna in reproach: "Your Royal Highness, you don't say you love Boccaccio." - Soon the relationship between the Crown Princess and her maid of honour became so tense, that Victoria requested she be relieved. The Queen, however, declared that this was not possible. Then the Crown Princess is supposed to have said: "I will make her life so hard, that she will leave." And indeed, after a scene between them Anna Lagerberg requested her resignation.

The removal of a maid of honour was considered an insult to her family. In vain, they tried to make Victoria apologize. Then her mother, the Grand Duchess of Baden [on a visit to Sweden], undertook to do so in her place. It was done exceptionally well. The apology was to be given to Countess Jeanna von Rosen. (Anna Lagerberg's mother was like Countess Jeanna née von Rosen.) From the beginning of the audience, the Grand Duchess spoke incessantly, highlighting the youth and foolishness of her daughter, after which the audience was over and Countess Rosen backed out of the room without having uttered a single word.⁵

The wretched relationship between King, Queen and Crown Princess seems to have been due to a perfect storm of concurrent circumstances: The couple's poor financial situation (the proceeds of the dowry went to the expenses), the mother-in-law "tyranny", Gustav's unwillingness to confront his parents which would have been interpreted as a constitutional crisis, Victoria's delayed puberty rebellion, the mother's initiative which made the daughter look like an idiot, and Victoria's attempt to assert her position by replacing an English with a more hierarchical German court culture. Somewhere along the way, she seems to have lost control of the situation:

It was not long, however, until Crown Prince Gustaf had grown tired of his first, much-worshipped consort. abandoned by her consort, the Crown Princess fell madly in

⁴ Strindberg 1981: s. 36.

⁵ Steyern 1962: del 1, ss. 78-79.

love with him. It was therefore decided that after the second son, Wilhelm, in June 1884, Victoria would be allowed a stay abroad. Crown Princess Victoria did not breastfeed her children. The oldest, Prince Gustaf Adolf, she saw only half an hour a day, told my mother [Louise af Ugglas], and she lacked the desire and perhaps the ability to make the family a home.⁶

Victoria first visited Buckingham Palace where she met the German crown princess. Then she continued to the seaside resort of Eastbourne, where she met her friend Adèle d'Hénin, went for walks and had fun. As usual, she ignored her ladies-in-waiting, which they complained about in their letters. September 12, the Norwegian-Swedish consul-general in London, newly appointed Norwegian Prime Minister in Stockholm, Ole Richter, asked for a meeting. Richter was also ignored but managed to nag himself a lunch. Sometimes Victoria has tried to charm even people she disliked but not this time. Richter was a liberal, supported parliamentary majority rule and was treated accordingly.

After her stay abroad, Victoria's situation improved considerably. The appanage issue was resolved. The new Norwegian ministry voted to increase their share from 30 to 80 thousand kronor. (The shares were 12/17 Sweden and 5/17 Norway.) Her parents also contributed money so that she and Gustaf no longer depended on Oscar II's goodwill. With the help of Gustaf, she managed to choose her own ladies-in-waiting. The criterion seems to have been that they kept their opinions to themselves and obeyed her in everything. She resumed her old interests. A room at the castle was converted into a studio and she devoted herself to modelling, painting and photography. When the surroundings later asked her why this interest she answered that she needed a profession to fall back on when the revolution came.⁷ Victoria was always good at such concise and conversation-killing "one-liners" - a lot of them are quoted in the literature - but you should not pay too much attention to them.

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The first duty of a crown princess is to give birth to an heir. She bore three sons: Gustaf (VI) (1882-1973; "Gusty"), Wilhelm (1884-1965) and Erik (1889-1918). The pregnancies were severe. Victoria was nauseous, vomited, and lost weight. The first pregnancy she had a strong haemorrhage and afterwards weak. The second pregnancy, she had bronchitis and afterwards bedridden. The third pregnancy was the worst. She had back pain and a pleural inflammation. She was given cocaine several times a day against the back pain and a cough medicine (?) from caffeine and brandy. Erik was born retarded and there has been speculation about a connection with the medication. The doctors (there were several people involved) afterwards recommended a longer stay abroad to recuperate. Victoria chose to spend it in Karlsruhe & Egypt. One trip became two trips: 1890/91 and 1891/92. The children were allowed to stay at home.

There are many question marks about the children's upbringing. First of all, it was more isolated than appears justified. Both Gustaf & Victoria had had playmates, not their sons however. They received individual tuition and met only "approved" children of the parents' employees and acquaintances. They had each other, but they didn't fit very well. Gusty was a bookish grind, Wilhelm a naval cadet with artistic leanings and Erik retarded. They had a nanny, Miss Lovisa Rinnman (employed 1884) and a governess, Miss Ida Borin (employed 1889-1890). The head teacher was the pedagogue M.A. Carl Svedelius (employed 1890-1896) and the botanist PhD Carl Lindman (employed 1896-1900). Additional teachers were employed as needed. Gusty graduated as a private student in 1900. Wilhelm attended the

⁶ von Steyern 1962: del 1, s. 79.

⁷ "The Queen of Sweden." Times 1930-04-05, s. 16.

Naval War School from 1898 to 1904 and received an officer's degree. Erik got a adapted schooling corresponding to elementary school. When asked by the children, Victoria claimed that the home schooling was to protect them.

Gustaf does not appear to have interfered in the children's education until after confirmation. Victoria was allowed to decide which meant excessive demands and such detailed control that it became counterproductive and Svedelius eventually protested. However, the intention was good: "[The upbringing would open] their eyes to the enduring values of life, to the monarchist duty of seeking to acquire a personal esteem from the people, commensurable to the honours of the royal burden."⁸ Wilhelm summarized the practice: "Our upbringing was strict and basically similar to other peers, but there was a great, fundamental difference. We never fully owned our freedom. From morning to night we were being watched, constantly had someone on our heels checking that no evil happened to us or that we ourselves did not do any inappropriate mischief. With touching care, we were looked after and anything that might have darkened our innocent children's views or hurt our fragile souls was excluded. We were never allowed anything outside the daily routine without asking our parents for permission. Our parents strictly upheld the class distinctions of the day, and any fraternize was interpreted as democratic ideas and intensely disliked. Thus, we never went out alone, not even in the countryside, for on the one hand, an accident of a more indefinite nature could have happened to us, and on the other hand, and perhaps above all, we could have been addressed by some low class person and thus drawn into undesirable discussions about undesirable subjects. Finally, we could possibly have come up with the horrible idea of joining other young people to participate in their games. Such things would have been considered terribly inappropriate! No, at best we were allowed to invite some boys of the same age - never girls - from the city's finest families on Saturdays and play with them in a polite and timidly manner. But otherwise we were left to ourselves. Alone, isolated and completely shut off from the outside world."⁹ - "I had been brought up to keep silent when others spoke and to have unreserved respect for all the elderly who knew everything better. What I myself happened to think was irrelevant. As a result, there were deep inferiority complexes, clingy like burs and long lasting until my 50s. I felt downtrodden and useless which certainly was not the intention of my well-meaning parents. But that was the case and much of it was probably my own fault."¹⁰

Wilhelm's life continued this vein until his officer training in 1898, when he spent summer practising on board some ship and the rest of the year studied at the Naval Warfare School with his fellow cadets. Gustaf did not escape until his university education in 1900. He has never said, written or even suggested anything about his youth but there is plenty of evidence that his relationship with the parents was contentious.

Since Victoria had been brought up in exactly the same way as she herself raised her children, one can only speculate about her own inferiority complex. Probably they were a contributing reason for her wanting to wipe out her person & her works from history. Whatever she did, it wasn't enough. An acquaintance - the envoy etc. - Herman Lagercrantz tried to clarify the matter:

For some summers I was at Solliden as a guest of the royal family and I remember many long and interesting conversations with the Queen. "Surely I know that I am an ordinary mortal," said the Queen, "but the principle of monarchy is important. We represent the country as a whole: to the outside world and across the parties – the

⁸ Hökerberg red. 1930: s. 23.

⁹ prins Wilhelm 1938: ss. 32-33.

¹⁰ prins Wilhelm 1951: s. 25.

continuity not affected by opinions or considerations. I am fully aware that I am no more remarkable than the next man or woman, but our princely duty obliges us to demand that the principle of monarchy be respected.” In this manner she interpreted her position, humility and pride at the same time.¹¹

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Another duty was to be seen. It was hoped that she would form a counterweight to Gustaf who buried himself in a never ending ”Crown Prince” training. On the first Christmas she gave gifts to the poor. In February/March 1882, she accompanied Gustaf to Norway. In January 1886 she demonstrated her cooking skills,¹² September 1886 she attended the inauguration of the seamen's home in Gothenburg, February 1887 she participated in the financing of Sofiahemmet by performing on stage in musically arranged tables with religious motifs. In the summer of 1887 there was another Norwegian trip and in 1887/88 there were several German family gatherings. The papers wrote about her patriotic dress code. At Tullgarn she wore a military-style jacket with the insignia of the Life Guard. In 1889 she changed to the self-designed ”Tullgarn dress”. Photographs were published from some of the events. A couple of times a year she participated in the castle cours. This was not much, and criticism increased throughout the 1880s.

The head of the Foreign Office, Baron Carl Fleetwood (1859-1892), considered that Victoria 1881-1891 had become a burden for the monarchy. Her lack of interest in everything that her position as Crown Princess required had caused the Swedish people to turn against her. She never appeared in public, she was in conflict with the king and queen, and it was obvious that she would rather stay abroad than in Sweden. ”With all its faults, however, the [present] monarchic regime is much better than what will come after and for that reason it mortifies me to see the monarchy play the cards of its opponents.”¹³ 1893 & - 94 Victoria at least assured her German acquaintances that besides her feelings for Germany did her best to feel the same for both Sweden and Norway,¹⁴

125 years later, it is difficult to make Fleetwood's disappointment comprehensible. I quote a letter from the professor-wife Helena Nyblom to a friend about the impression Victoria made on her during a party with the archbishop on December 8, 1884:

I wish I could describe to you the Crown Princess, for I have never seen a more beautiful person. You know her from photographs, but you can't imagine her face to face. The skin is milky white, eyes very large, with tense round eyebrows. These eyes are bright and transparent and express a young, radiant happiness, the warmest heart and an unusually powerful intelligence. Goodness, happiness and wisdom really radiate from her.

She looks like the crown of jewels, she wore at her head during the ball. The mouth is large and extraordinarily beautiful. The corners of the mouths bend slightly upwards as she smiles, and she often does. But it only changes the mouth, showing healthy, beautiful teeth. The eyes always smile, even when the expression remains serious, yes, majestic. She looks as if she could be nothing but a princess, and as if many centuries of culture, nobility, good education, virtue and wealth coexisted to bring about such a gem of perfection into the world. I would rather have kneeled for her, and suddenly I clearly understood a lot of bad things about myself, which I have

¹¹ ”Drottning Victorias gamla vänner har ordet.” Vecko Journalen 1930:15, ss. 26-29,35.

¹² Edholm 1919: ss. 296-297.

¹³ Fleetwood 1968: s. 1372, 1891-06-28.

¹⁴ Gammelien 2012: s. 234.

previously ignored. I think it is a great good to have been in her vicinity. She looked as if she were only 19 years old, with something so clean and childish in her facial features and skin, regardless of the mature expression.

At the archbishop's office, she was wearing a very light blue atlas dress with a long trailer, low in front, high in the neck. She wore a necklace of sapphires and genuine drop-shaped pearls, on her hair three white plumes fastened with a large butterfly of brilliants.

She felt very deeply for every lady who was introduced to her, took them in her hand and said to everyone in very good Swedish with a little accent: "It is my great pleasure to make your acquaintance." And then she looked into your soul and stole your heart, at least I can assure you, she stole mine. It is well that she is a princess and not a prince, for if so then one had not dared speak about how enraptured one is (such infernally stupid are we humans!). I think of her all day and dream of her at night. At the ball, she was low cut. The most beautiful neck and shoulders, with a necklace of emerald jewellery set in brilliants. On the hair a half diamond crown fastened with two light red plumes. The dress was a mixed bag of of opal-coloured moiré, rose atlas and dark red velvet with a long trailer, very beautiful.

She is taller than everyone else, but perfect in proportions.¹⁵

Perhaps the disappointment was inevitable. Who can or even wants to live up to such fantasies. One tends to forget that Victoria was brought up as a secluded family girl, far from the madding crowd.

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Most of what has been written about Victoria's life 1881-1907 is related to her illness, trips abroad, socializing and artistic activities. It is taken for granted that she was a frustrated politician or artist's soul who was hampered in her ambitions by her illness, the views of women of the time or her own personality. It's hard to lead in evidence. Easier to lead in evidence is that she enjoyed travelling, meeting interesting people and playing the lead role. She seems to have been non-independent. There is information about three conflicts with Gustaf. In all cases, she was gripped by anxiety and apologized. It seems to have been more than isolated incidents. Gustaf was so worried about her that he even neglected his crown prince duties:

He [Oscar II] lectures his son Crown Prince Gustaf, who in 1890 had stayed abroad with his sick consort Victoria and not - as agreed on - returned home to his representative duties. Oscar writes to his son (20.4.1890) that it saddens him that Gustaf so often adheres to the unbelievable detours, which are incompatible with "the relationship and trust that should always be between father and son" - "I fear that for the anxiety of the moment you forget our rule: *Royauté oblige!*"¹⁶

Victoria was heavily dependent on her parents, especially her mother who interfered in everything. In 1892, she turned 30 after the Egyptian Expeditions. It seems to have come to several showdowns mother-daughter & even man-wife. Probably everyone screamed at each other. In 1893/95, the relationship with her mother was particularly bad. Victoria departed for Rome instead of Karlsruhe. It seems to have been part of a personal liberation process. In 1891, she had a physician, Axel Munthe, with a background in gynecology and psychiatry, who became her confidant. Munthe seems to have told her mother about her daughter's state of mind, because in 1894 she wanted to enroll the daughter in a psychiatric

¹⁵ Nyblom 1922: ss. 251-252.

¹⁶ Michanek 1979: s. 13.

clinic or rest home. Victoria humiliated herself so far as to ask Queen Sophie for help to escape. At a meeting between Queen Sophie and Grand Duchess Louise, the Grand Duchess was informed that she was interfering in matters that no longer concerned her. The Grand Duchess was not happy to quarrel with crowned heads, but Gustaf, during his future visits, had to intervene at least once.¹⁷ Gustaf was also himself criticised for not disciplining his wife properly.

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Victoria herself stated (see above) that her main ambition was to assert "the monarchist principle". It is not clear how this would be done, but probably through examples. Her bookcase gives few clues. She had the most books (dozens) about Marie Antoinette (1755-1793), the second most books about Marie Antoinette's mother Queen Maria Theresa of Austria (1717-1780) and about Napoleon. These books are possibly Victoria's textbooks in being a queen - full of the possibilities of the profession & pitfalls but only partly relevant. In 1897, Oscar II interpreted it as meaning that, despite 15 years in Sweden, Victoria did not understand or did not accept that Sweden had different traditions than her revered Prussia.¹⁸

The influence of the Swedish royal house after the constitutional reform in 1866 was mainly on Norwegian politics, but 1881-1907 Oscar II kept Victoria completely out of it. However, she did have views on the subject:

How have I not, to a lesser extent, tried to draw attention to the danger involved in dealing with this unfortunate Norwegian issue in the manner it has been done; But what influence did I have? And you knew everything so much better. And since I have the impression that women should not interfere in politics, I did not feel justified in saying more than a word of warning. Sadly, I now see my fears confirmed. Have those who need to know realized what they have to do? Perhaps, but unfortunately too late! this terrible word has so often been fatal after the other has been committed; people did not want to hear well-intentioned advice coming from persons who had a wider political outlook than we at home. But all was in vain.¹⁹

The letter has been interpreted as saying that she wanted to force Norway to remain in the Union, with military force if necessary. It does not fit well with the letter's talk about female submission, but Victoria was never very consistent. In this case, she had her views expressed by William II's confidant Philipp zu Eulenburg (1847-1921), who was married to a Swede and therefore occasionally visited Sweden. Victoria also believed that King Oscar II had been influenced by Queen Sophie to give in to the Norwegian demands. Both behaviours unworthy of a king.²⁰

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Victoria was technically a skilled pianist and photographer. She had a studio at the castle where she dabbled in watercolour painting, calligraphy and sculpture. She wrote poetry and worked on interior design, gardening and architecture. Most of it she let destroy. What remains are two busts (one in clay, one in plaster), some watercolours, a photo chronicle from the Egyptian trip of 1890/91, some "at home" pictures and her Italian "Capri-villa" Solliden.

¹⁷ Eimer 2003: s. 240.

¹⁸ Eimar 2003: s. 241.

¹⁹ Hadenius 2010: s. 50 [Brev till okänd hovdam, Rom 1906-02-24.]

²⁰ Eimer 2003: s. 217.

The clay bust was a juvenile work of a melancholy patrician girl - Margareta (Gretchen) of Goethe's Faust, possibly an attempt at self-portrait. The plaster bust was from 1888, probably representing her youngest brother Ludvig (1865-1888). The watercolours were landscapes and architecture in an impressionistic style from her travels in Italy and Egypt 1891/92. Her poetry we know nothing about but her prose was rather wingless. The photo chronicle of the Egyptian trip was a 30-year gift from the parents. Victoria's diary and photographs of the Egyptian Journey 1890/91 were printed in a limited edition of 500 copies. Victoria also exhibited the photographs, which received friendly reviews for their technical quality and made her an honorary member of the Photographic Society. The interior design was in the overloaded style of the time. A later generation has refurnished. She created a garden at Tullgarn. The building of Solliden was carried out in 1903-1906. The contemporary description was that the architect Torben Grut (1871-1945) provided the building and Victoria the garden. But as she was the developer, it was of course her intentions that were carried out:

The architect of the summer palace was officially Torben Grut, but it was in fact the Queen who built this house, that she loved not only because it was her work but above all because she in the gentle moisture-free air felt she could "breathe for real". -"She imagined it herself", Grut said, and the building was built over the next two years while the park and garden were being composed. With clarity, certainty and willpower, the owner implemented her intentions, always purposefully and logically consistent. Hundreds of letters testify to this. The uncompromising energy of the almost constantly sick queen, the longing for beauty that filled her rich spirit and appeared even to the smallest things, such as locks and window hooks. But what you are most impressed by is the practical insight that shines through everything, whether it is a question of suitable roof covering, luminaire or other devices. This building, the interior design of the castle villa and the shaping of the Solliden surroundings, sometimes so absorbs the Queen's thoughts and imagination that for several days in a row she can let the pen fly over the paper to communicate her thoughts of submitted drawings or projects, share with him new ideas and criticize the work done so far.²¹

From a financial point of view, the project seems to have been designed so that Victoria's mother provided the money. By 1890, she had inherited a great deal from her own mother, Empress Augusta. When Victoria's mother died in 1923, Victoria inherited her own estate - about SEK 260 million in today's money value. (According to another source, she didn't get the money until 1928 after the death of her eldest brother when inflation had reduced the majority. Some data may be interpreted as the legacy before inflation and the process with the Weimar Republic of who owned what was close to a billion SEK in today's money.) Gustaf inherited the patrician villa Solliden. Prince Wilhelm inherited the castle Mainau. Gusty (?) inherited the money and the movables.

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Victoria's own court was intended to emphasize Gustaf's role as heir to the throne and master of the house, and her own role as mistress, the household's unrestricted ruler and hostess. This was most easily done on Tullgarn. At Stockholm Castle, she had competition from Queen Sophie. The protocol was that Gustaf held service every Sunday for the family and servants, that everyone stood up when he entered the room and that the servants as he approached interrupted their work for some form of reverence. "In this cozy world [Tullgarn], formality and simplicity existed side by side in a rather puzzling way. Whenever outsiders visited or it was a question of representing, the strictest rules were observed,

²¹ Swahn, Waldemar. "Kungen och hans hus." Vecko Journalen 1935:julnumret, s. 23.

everything and everyone would be solemnly correct to the fingertips, ranking was meticulously maintained, each knew his place and appeared gripped by the seriousness of the moment. A certain old-fashioned, solid pomp developed, which certainly did not prevent bonhomie and an almost exuberant kindness without exception from the host people's side."²² The ambition was to micromanage the household if it should be from the bed or by letter. No other will than her own was allowed.

Victoria's external court was somewhat different. She described it in 1910 as "You spend time with your peers, you give cours to the ladies of society, but you give orders to your ladies-in-waiting." Everyone who has ever met her has emphasized her dignified conduct, that she took great care to give the person her full attention, that she always knew the right words and that it was difficult to remain her enemy when she switched on her charm. She considered "code of conduct" as her speciality. Sometimes she could be persuaded by the surroundings for objective reasons, but in etiquette she only bowed to Gustaf & Oscar II. Victoria considered her biggest embarrassment regarding etiquette being the address "Ni" ("You"). The "Ni" reform had been introduced shortly before her arrival as an attempt to simplify the etiquette (avoiding titles), but since subordinates were still expected to use titles when addressing their superiors, it never had the intended effect. "Ni" was instead perceived as a marking of its superiority and an insult. Victoria was in the habit of mentioning this misjudgement even after several decades.²³

She had few personal friends outside her family. In Germany the authors Alberta von Freydorf (1846-1923) and Lita zu Putlitz (1862-1935) - friends from Karlsruhe theater circles. Two other foreign friends were Adèle d'Hénin (1863?-?) & Countess Theresia Wurmbrand-Stuppach (1869-1945). In Sweden, her closest friends were three elderly ladies-in-waiting: Baroness Wilhelmina Bonde (1817-1899), Duchess Thérèse d'Otrante (1837-1901) & Countess Alice Gyldenstolpe (1850-1927; m. Åkerhielm). She also appreciated some of Gustaf's male acquaintances: Crown equerry Gustave d'Otrante (1840-1910), teacher Carl Rogberg (1829-1905), adjutant Gustaf von Blixen-Finecke (1862-1930) & classmate, envoyé etc. Herman Lagercrantz (1859-1945). She was intimate with her sons' informant Carl Svedelius (1861-1951), her life-medic Axel Munthe (1857-1949) and possibly her court preacher Clemens Åhfeldt (1860-1941). To Solliden she invited cultural personalities such as the director-general of the national heritage board Karl Hildebrand (1842-1913), the writer Verner von Heidenstam (1859-1940), the composer etc. Sven Scholander (1860-1936) & the artist Per Ekström (1844-1935). Most of her circle was 20 years older. Perhaps she needed father and mother figures. There were rumours of adultery with her male acquaintances of the same age: Carl Svedelius, Gustaf's adjutant Gustaf von Blixen and Axel Munthe, but nothing has been confirmed. The rumours are described in appendix 2.²⁴

The relationship with Gustaf's brothers was tense. It can be traced back to her actions when Prince Oscar married Ebba Munck. Carl and Eugen supported their brother. Victoria responded by not attending the baptisms. Another reason for the conflict was that they were in competition and she was losing out: Oscar was more religious, Carl was more involved in social work & Eugen was more artistic and his villa Valdemarsudde better known than Victoria's Solliden.

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²² prins Wilhelm 1938: s. 30.

²³ Fjellman 1954: ss. 107-108.

²⁴ Se bilaga 4.

Until 1892, Victoria was often on visits to Karlsruhe and various spa resorts. From 1893 she spent long periods in Rome. The first year in a house, then in a hotel. There are three longer depictions of the envoy baron Carl Bildt²⁵, of the diplomat Ernst Weidenhielm²⁶, and of her lady-in-waiting Anna Brahe.²⁷ Victoria lived in an apartment at the Grand Hôtel and participated in the social life to the extent that her health permitted. As a companion she until 1902 had the baroness Augusta Alströmer, then Cecilia af Klercker. A summary of Carl Bildt's Rome-narrative:

Grand Hôtel's great halls and salons are one of the remarkable works of Rome. Within its walls, all social classes are represented, from royal figures, billionaires, titans of art, politics & science, down to the nameless crowd of travel agency tourists, and even down further the serving brothers of larders, kitchen and stables.

The Crown Princess' floor is not large: a salon, which is also a dining room, a work room and a bedroom; That's all she has for herself. But this small floor, which forms the sunniest corner of the hotel and has its special entry and exit, is also the quietest and most serene one can imagine. The sound of the noisy life below does not penetrate, and if it were not for one trunk or other in the corridor outside, nothing would reveal any difference from a splendid individual dwelling. So long as h.r.h. relative, Cardinal Hohenlohe lived - he died in October 1897 - the cheerful and learned old prelate was a dear companion for h.r.h. and a much needed consolation in the often oppressive loneliness. When her strength permits h.r.h. occasionally receives ambassadors and ministers and one or other compatriot, but purely ceremonial visits are as a rule excluded.

As is the case for ordinary mortals, the life of a royal sickling cannot be very eventful. Fortunately, Rome also offers the bodily infirm a lot of interest. The Crown Princess has been very busy with archaeological and historical studies. When Professor Sam Wide was here a few years ago, he had to be h.r.h. cicerone among the ancient remains of Forum romanum and the Palatinen. As an escort on her walks among the Christian antiquities, she has had none other than the catacomb scientist Joseph Wilpert; among the classical pagan ruins Wolfgang Helbig, another of the great men of science. H.r.h. also walks on her own along Via Appia and the campagna in the hope of finding some forgotten memory of yesteryear. It succeeds more often than one might think. On these journeys, the Crown Princess is always accompanied by her two white Lapland dogs. They are as good antiquities as for other quarries, but they are brave, faithful guardians, and that has some advantages on Rome's campagna.

From 1903, she also spent much time on Capri, an island in the Gulf of Naples, a resort for rich tourists who wanted to be left alone. She first lived in the city of Capri, later in the higher and more rural Anacapri, where her doctor Axel Munthe was constructing his villa San Michele. In the morning she wrote letters. In the afternoon she took walks. There are two longer depictions of her lady-in-waiting Cecilia af Klercker.²⁸

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To summarize: Victoria was able to assert her position within the royal family, but this seems to have been through sheer obstruction and exploitation of her German family. She fulfilled her role as wife, which was to give birth, manage the household and support Gustaf as the head of the family. She neglected her public representation, neither did she appear in social

²⁵ Bildt, Carl. "Kronprinsessan i Rom." Idun 1899:20, ss. 1-6.

²⁶ Weidenhielm 1925: ss. 75-79.

²⁷ Åsbrink red. 1922: ss. 140-143.

²⁸ Åsbrink red. 1922: ss. 144-148; af Klercker 1944: ss. 94-110.

life, but devoted herself to her private interests. It was expected that she as Crown Princess would charm and be noticed. What they had was a bookworm, Wagner enthusiast and amateur photographer. Through her travels, she was also extremely expensive.