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AN INTERNATIONAL BEREAVEMENT.

The news of King Oscar's death come as grievous tidings, not only to Sweden, but to the entire civilised world. After a reign of 35 years, during 33 of which he was monarch of the double Scandinavian throne, his decease came with startling suddenness, although the bulletins issued during the course of His Majesty's indisposition were of a consistently grave tone.

It was not only as a Scandinavian monarch, or as grandson of the famous Marshal Bernadotte, that King Oscar II won a reputation in far wider circles than those which are influenced by considerations of dynasty or descent, for his chief title to the recognition of posterity will be found in the tact with which he had handled delicate and difficult international problems, and the artistic and literary work by which he had been distinguished. Tall and dark, with flashing eyes, and well-moulded head upon a massive pair of shoulders, Oscar II could never have been mistaken for anything but a true Bernadotte. Faced by the constant preoccupations of a domestic struggle whenever he turned to the politics of the two nations, it was only natural that the King should seek what solace was possible, in the scanty leisure of a throne, in those artistic and literary pursuits which had almost wholly claimed his interest as Duke of Östergötland. The list of his published works, which contains poetry, history, research, translations, speeches, criticisms, would not disgrace the reputation of an author whose life had been entirely subordinated to the labours of his pen. Music has lost in him one of its most notable patrons, and His Majesty's fine collection of old printed and manuscript music, ever at the service of the intelligent amateur, is but one sign of the royal artist's enthusiasm for the subject. His keen intellect was versatile to a unique extent; he was a recognised authority on naval matters, and the present high efficiency of the Swedish navy is in no small measure due to the personal knowledge and influence of the late monarch. Nor was his wide culture limited by its merely personal expression. He welcomed many International Congresses to Sweden. He encouraged the universities and the cause of general education throughout Scandinavia, a movement in which he had already become deeply interested before his accession. The progress of parliamentary and of party government in Sweden and Norway, previous to the latter's secession, led to many contentions. But whether the pressing problems for the moment were the question of separate foreign ministries, of separate flags, or of separate consulates, unity under his royal standard was the invariable policy of the monarch. The ultimate break with Norway undoubtedly overshadowed King Oscar's closing years, but statesmen are unanimously of opinion that the dissolution was staved off for so long only by the personal tactful efforts of the King. In questions of international arbitration he was always deeply interested, and on several occasions took a prominent part. Indeed, at various times he acted as arbitrator for Great Britain, the United States, Germany, and Venezuela, and in 1897 accepted the position of decisive umpire in the Anglo-American Arbitration Treaty which was signed at Washington, but did not secure a sufficient majority of votes in the Senate. His peculiar position among the sovereigns of Europe, outside their dynastic complications, yet essential to the balance of their powers, especially fitted him for these international services, to which he brought an acute and scholarly intelligence. But his well-known impartiality did not prevent him from occasionally asserting his opinions with no uncertain voice. In an outspoken declaration published in the columns of *The Times* of 2nd May 1900, he asserted his full sympathy with Great Britain in the course which had been thrust upon

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her in South Africa. The courage with which such sentiments were uttered, at a time when European opinion was almost universally hostile, was only less admired than the evident sincerity of which they were so graceful an expression. But it was in his darkest hour that the regal nobility and forbearance of Oscar II. commanded the admiring sympathy of all the world. Who, having closely followed the sequence of events leading up to the climax in June 1905, can doubt that the will of but one man stood between the contending factions and firmly refused to let the sword be drawn? That man was King Oscar, who, rather than plunge his subjects into the horrors of war,—even at a time when Sweden had everything to gain by a resort to arms,—allowed Norway to withdraw from the union, to the maintenance of which he had devoted his political life.

The new monarch, Gustaf V., must necessarily be a man of high intellect and personal integrity to worthily follow the path that his exalted father trod with an unflinching step. Fortunately for Sweden there is every reason for believing that King Gustaf will not be found wanting in either of the attributes mentioned above. In any case, he is not confronted with the problems which continually cropped up when the dual monarchy was maintained, and it is to be hoped that with his beloved consort, Queen Victoria, he will be permitted to reign long over a prosperous and contented people.

THE MATRIMONIAL MEDIUM.

She had just married an ardent spiritualist. "And how do you like the state of matrimony?" asked her dearest friend. But the bride of a week was thinking hard of her absent husband: "Oh, medium," she replied with a far-off look of rapturous devotion in her clear, blue, Mahatma eye.



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DEATH OF KING OSCAR.

King Oscar of Sweden died on Sunday morning at 9.15 o'clock.

THE NEW KING.

The Swedish Cabinet held a Council of State on Sunday at noon, at which the King took the oath of fealty to the Constitution. The Princes next took the oath of loyalty to the King. The Ministers then placed their resignations in the hands of His Majesty, who returned their portfolios to them, requesting them to remain in office. The Ministers then took the oath of loyalty. When the Council rose, the King delivered an address to the Ministers, the high officials and military and naval officers in the Palace. His Majesty, after speaking of the great loss which he and the country had sustained in the death of King Oscar II., dwelt on the brilliant qualities which he had displayed during his reign of 35 years. Sweden's abundant development intellectually and materially was the result of work which King Oscar had shared with the warmest interest. For his own part, His Majesty declared, he would honourably strive to fulfil his responsible task, and to unite the people of Sweden in working for the Fatherland. Only with a people penetrated by the feeling of the responsibility of all, could progress be made. In conclusion, His Majesty invoked God's protection for his Government and his people, and said his motto would be, "With the people for the Fatherland!"

The Minister of State then called for cheers for King Gustaf V., which were very heartily given. During the ceremony a great crowd had collected in front of the Palace.

NORWEGIAN SYMPATHY.

A Christiania despatch states that as soon as the news of King Oscar's death reached the city, flags displayed over all public and private buildings were set at half-mast. The Norwegian Court will go into mourning for three weeks.

ENGLISH NEWS.

THE EMPEROR AT HIGHCLIFFE.

On Saturday His Majesty the Emperor took tea with Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, and on Sunday morning attended divine service at Highcliffe Church. In the afternoon he visited Mrs. Banks at Kingston Lacey. Yesterday morning His Majesty purposed leaving for London, where he will stay at the German Embassy. The Lord Chamberlain, Count Eulenburg, together with Captain Rebeur-Paschwitz, aide-de-camp, and Court Physician Dr. Ilberg will attend the Emperor during his sojourn at the Embassy.

INDUSTRIAL DEPRESSION IN BELFAST.

A Belfast telegram states that in consequence of depression in the linen market, the textile workers are not working at full time, and wages have been reduced by one-fifth. Over 30,000 employés are affected.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE FAIRMONT MINE DISASTER.

It is reported from Fairmont (W. Va.), that the number of victims of the terrible mine catastrophe is estimated at about 600, but the management place the number at 478, in which are included some hundred boys, employed in wheeling trucks. The after-damp considerably retards the work of rescue, and many of the rescuers have succumbed to the fumes.

DEATH OF MR. TAFT'S MOTHER.

A telegram from Milbury (Mass.), reports that the mother of War Secretary Taft died on Sunday. (Mr. Taft is now on board the Hamburg-American liner "President Grant," on his homeward journey.

The Finest Habana Cigars, English cigarettes and tobacco. L. Wolf, Prager Str. 48.