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TIMELINE

The following is a chronological statement of the principal events in Prussian history connected with this volume:

- 1770 Birth of Frederick William III.
- 1776 Birth of Louise.
- 1793 Marriage of Frederick William III and Louise.
- 1805 Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz.
- 1806 Frederick William III declares war against France.
- 1806 Defeat of Prussians at Jena and Aucrstadt.
- 1806 Napoleon enters Berlin.
- 1807 Frederick William III signs humiliating treaty at Tilsit.
- 1809 German War of Liberation.
- 1810 Death of Louise.
- 1812 Frederick William III joins France against Russia.
- 1813 Frederick William III joins in the war of Liberation.
- 1815 Frederick William III joins the Holy Alliance.
- 1840 Death of Frederick William III.
- 1871 William I, Louise's second son, vanquishes France
- 1871 William I crowned Emperor of United Germany at Versailles.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

There have been greater queens in history,—Elizabeth of England, Catherine of Russia, Maria Theresa of Austria, and others,—greater in diplomacy and state-craft and power, but none purer, nobler, or lovelier than Louise, Queen of Prussia, whose pathetic life is narrated in this volume. No queen has suffered more from the calamities inflicted upon her family, from the personal insults of a victorious enemy, and from the misfortunes which visited her country; and no queen has been more deeply beloved.

The brutal attempt made by Napoleon to destroy her reputation is one of the most disgraceful events in his career. The insult was avenged sixty-five years later, when her second son, William the Third, vanquished Napoleon's nephew, entered Paris in triumph, and was crowned Emperor of United Germany at Versailles. She will ever remain in history the ideal of a noble, beautiful woman of refined character, lofty patriotism, charitable nature, and exemplary goodness. The story of her sufferings and of the patience with which she endured them; of her love for her husband and children and country, which never wavered, as told in this little volume, must commend her to all who admire purity, beauty, truth, and love.

G. P. U.

CHICAGO, July 1, 1909.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LOUISE'S YOUTH.....	4
LOUISE AS CROWN-PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA.....	8
LOUISE AS QUEEN.....	12
LOUISE IN MISFORTUNE.....	16
LOUISE AND NAPOLEON.....	26
LOUISE'S PROBATION.....	30
LOUISE'S DEATH.....	35

CHAPTER I

LOUISE'S YOUTH

"The memory of the just is blessed."

The mother of Emperor William the Victorious, Queen Louise of Prussia, a woman of noble instincts, rich talents, and a character purified in the crucible of adversity, the guiding-star of her family and her country in dark and troubled times, was born March 10, 1776, in Hanover. Her father was Prince Karl of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who later became Duke, and still later, the first Grand Duke, of that principality. He served under his brother-in-law, the Elector of Hanover (who occupied the throne of England as George III), as field-marshal, and governor-general. Her mother, Frederika Caroline Louise, was a daughter of Landgrave George of Hesse-Darmstadt. Louise was her sixth child, and lost her mother May 22, 1782, when barely six years of age. In 1784 the Prince married Princess Charlotte, the sister of the deceased; but she died also in December of the following year. This double loss deeply pained the sensitive heart of the child, young as she was. The sense of her loss and the longing for mother-love accompanied her all through life and caused her to give to her children all the tenderness that she had so sadly missed in her own life, and tirelessly to do for them as only a mother can. The twice-bereaved husband took leave of Hanover in 1786 and removed to Darmstadt, where he placed the princesses in the care of their wise and loving grandmother, Landgravine Marie, whose darling the gay and talented little Louise had already become.

A French Swiss, Mademoiselle de Gelieu, was engaged as governess, and proved an excellent guardian for the lively and sometimes passionate, then again very tender-hearted, little Princess. In the education of the German Princess under French influence — which unfortunately has been customary

at German courts and among the German nobility since the days of Louis the Fourteenth — but one thing was lacking, namely, instruction in her mother-tongue and in the German literature, which at that time was so rich in promise. This was a loss which later she could not sufficiently deplore, and which she strove with all her energy to repair. But, on the other hand, her governess instructed her from the beginning in the Word of God, guided her in prayer toward faith, purity of heart, and singleness of character, as well as toward the royal road of charity and good works, from the palace to the cottage of the poor and the bedside of the suffering. Thus she had early training in the practice of that graciousness and benevolence which so endeared her to the hearts of her subjects.

Not only did Louise always retain a grateful devotion to her preceptress, but the King, her husband, also, was warmly attached to her and recognized her as his own benefactress, for the services she had rendered to his consort. When he returned in triumph from Paris in July, 1814, four years after the death of Louise, he took his way through Switzerland and with his second son (afterwards Emperor William the First), drove to Colombier, on the Lake of Neuenburg, in the Prussian principality of that name, to visit Mademoiselle de Gelieu, who lived there with her brother. What a surprise it was for the venerable matron when she saw an elegant equipage draw up before her door and three officers alight from it, in one of whom she recognized the King of Prussia! The King remained long in conversation with the noble woman who had known his Louise as a child and had watched her grow to maturity. Many were the reminiscences they exchanged about the dear departed one, who had been his most precious earthly possession. He took an affectionate leave of her, and among the rich gifts which he left behind, the most precious was a shawl which the Queen had worn shortly before her death, the sight of which moved the old lady to tears. The King had carried with him in the campaign, like holy relics, several objects which had belonged to the Queen and which he particularly prized; among them, this shawl,

from which he parted only as a mark of peculiar favor to one who had been the teacher and motherly friend of his Louise.

The following story shows that the governess moulded the will of the Princess, not so much by command or compulsion, as through the reason, and appeals to her tender and sympathetic heart. After several quiet years in Darmstadt, Louise was allowed to go with her grandmother to the old imperial city of Strasburg on a visit to her aunt, Countess of the Palatinate of Zweibrucken, wife of Maximilian, who became the first King of Bavaria. We may imagine what an impression the splendid cathedral made on the lively young girl. Of course there was no peace until she was allowed to visit the tower. As the ascent of the three hundred and twenty-five steps was too arduous for her grand-mother, she was put in charge of the governess. Delighted with the magnificent views of the Rhine Valley and its surrounding mountains which the platform afforded, she would have been only too happy to climb the remaining four hundred steps to the top of the tower. Now Mademoiselle de Gelieu was loath to oppose her, but felt sure that her grandmother would not approve of her ascent of this difficult and dizzy height. As the Princess kept urging her to consent, she said: "The climb will be very difficult for me; but as my duty demands that I shall not leave you, go, and I will follow."

At this Louise immediately relented and replied: "No, indeed, I cannot, and I am sorry that I have already made you climb so high!" Thus, by an appeal to her sympathies she was easily induced to yield.

Louise particularly enjoyed two visits to Frankfort-on-the-Main, during the coronation ceremonies of the last two emperors of the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation"; one of them was that of the Emperor Leopold the Second (1790), and the other that of the Emperor Francis (1792). Her sister, married to the Hereditary Prince of Thurn and Taxis, lived in Frankfort, and as her guest Louise was enabled to see the last vestiges of glory of the old empire. Wonderful

pageants they were! She beheld the imperial treasure brought from Nurnberg and Aix-la-Chapelle with great ceremony, in a state coach drawn by six horses, to the cathedral; also the crown, sceptre, globe, and sword of the Holy Mauritius, carried to the King; then His Majesty, who had just been chosen by the seven Electors, riding from his apartments in solemn procession to the cathedral; before him, the seven Electors in their official robes, over him a silk-embroidered baldachin, borne by ten councillors of the city of Frankfort; surrounding him, the imperial court, and behind him the splendid procession of the bodyguard and troops of the city with music and waving banners; and lastly, a countless multitude of followers, on foot, on horseback, and in carriages. In the cathedral, kneeling on the altar steps during high mass, the King took the oath on the Sacred Book of Aix-la-Chapelle, was then anointed by the Elector of Mayence, gorgeous in his archiepiscopal robes, and thereby made worthy to bear the sword of Charlemagne. After taking the sacrament, he ascended the throne with the crown upon his head; then, amid the chanting of "Lord God we praise Thee," the tolling of the bells, and the thunder of a hundred cannon, he was acclaimed Emperor. The great coronation procession streaming at last out of the cathedral proceeded to "the Romer," over the bridge laid with cloth of the imperial colors, which, as soon as it had passed, was appropriated by the crowd. The hereditary marshal of the empire, filling a vessel of silver from a great heap of oats in the market-place, presented it to the Emperor in token that the royal stables were provisioned; the royal chamberlain offered the silver ewer, basin, and towel; the dapifer brought a glass from the fountain flowing with red and white wine, and the royal treasurer, in the name of the Emperor, scattered gold and silver coins from great purses among the scrambling crowds. All these scenes Louise had an opportunity of witnessing as a privileged onlooker. With what childish delight, but how modestly she regarded them! As member of a family rich only in children, she made with her

own hands the satin shoes which were then in fashion, and which she wore.

This natural and unassuming young girl was an admirable companion for simple, domestic Frau Goethe, mother of the celebrated poet, whom she and her brothers and sisters were often allowed to visit. On one occasion Louise and her brother found the old lady enjoying a delicious German salad with an omelet. It looked so appetizing that they begged for a portion and never stopped until they had eaten the last leaf. Another time, the fourteen-year-old Louise and her sister Frederika strayed into the paved courtyard, where they discovered the well and began to pump with might and main, until their governess espied them and tried to put a stop to the prank. Their good-natured old friend, Mistress Goethe, tried first to pacify the irate governess, and when that failed, locked her into a room until the sisters had pumped to their hearts' content. She said afterwards, that she would have taken almost anything upon herself rather than have interfered with their innocent fun. When they bade her good-bye, the merry girls declared they should never forget her and the good times they had had in her house. When Louise became Queen, she sent her old friend, among other things, a piece of jewelry which Madame Goethe wore only upon grand occasions, in her honor.

It was in Frankfort also where, not long afterwards, she found the great happiness of her life. The French Revolution, which had broken out in 1789, had grown constantly to greater and more dangerous proportions. In order to assist the threatened kingdom and its allies, who had taken refuge in multitudes along the Rhine, King Frederick William the Second of Prussia entered into an alliance with Austria. The French National Assembly quickly declared war, in April, 1792. Under command of the venerable Duke of Brunswick the campaign in France was so mismanaged that the Allies were obliged to retreat, and the French got possession of Mayence and on October 23, 1792, took Frankfort and burned

it. The city was recovered December 2, but Mayence had to be besieged. The King of Prussia established his headquarters in Frankfort.

On the outbreak of hostilities the Landgravine of Hesse-Darmstadt and her two granddaughters took refuge with their older sister, the Princess of Hildburghausen. From there the Landgrave, who was in the suite of the King, sent for them in order to present them to His Majesty, whose consort was also a native of Darmstadt. When the presentation had taken place, the grandmother intended to proceed with her charges that same evening to Darmstadt, but was detained by an invitation to the royal table. Here the twenty-three-year-old Crown-prince, Frederick William, saw the seventeen-year-old Louise. The charm and graciousness of her bearing, her delicate and youthful figure, and the sweetness of her voice affected him; and when she looked at him with an almost frightened expression in her large blue eyes, an inner voice seemed to say to him, as years afterwards he used to relate, "It must be she, or no one else on earth." Louise had the same feeling; and a clear realization of their destiny (so the King declared in his reminiscences of that exalted moment) brought tears of joy to the eyes of both.

The same evening, Prince Frederick Louis Karl, three years younger than his brother, fell in love with the fifteen-year-old Frederika. The brothers had been close comrades from childhood, and now, through their devotion to the two blooming sisters, they were drawn closer together than ever before.

The Crown-prince, who had borne himself gallantly in the French campaign, was given command of a regiment during the siege of Mayence; but the impression made upon him by Louise was not to be dimmed by the turmoil of war. During several visits to Darmstadt he became more intimately acquainted with the beloved, grew to appreciate her lovely nature, and being sure of himself, he sought and obtained the consent of his father to their union. A month after the first

meeting, April 2, 1793, the double betrothal was celebrated in the palace at Darmstadt in the presence of the King of Prussia and the sisters of the two *fiancées*. Two days later both Princes returned to the field with their father, and six days afterwards the Crown-prince, at the head of his battalion, took the village of Kostheim by storm. His brother, betrothed of Princess Frederika, came very near losing his life one evening from an overheated stove, as he was resting in his tent after an arduous day. Everything about the sleeping Prince was already in flames, when a sentinel who had smelt the smoke rushed in and rescued the unconscious Prince from certain death. The tent was consumed, and the Prince saved nothing but the clothes on his back. The next day the serious and somewhat practical Crown-prince conceived the humorous idea of going to the King and among his suite, and soliciting contributions in aid of the "poor burned-out man."

The Princesses ventured into the camp several times to visit their betrothed. During one of these visits at Bodenbach, near Mayence, May 29, 1793, young Goethe, who was staying there, had an opportunity of seeing them from his tent near by and was so entranced with both sisters that they seemed to him like "heavenly visions" which he could never forget. There is but one voice concerning the gracious charm of Louise, as Princess and as Queen. She appeared to those who knew her almost like a supernatural being. Her intimates called her an angel. The poet Fouque, who saw both lovely sisters on their entry into Berlin, spoke of the "angelically beautiful brides." The King called his gracious daughter-in-law "the Princess of Princesses." Even a man of intellect like the court physician, Hufeland, tells us in after years of that "indescribably blissful feeling "which one always had when in her presence, "as if in the presence of a heavenly being." Old Blucher, on hearing of her death, cried: "Our saint is now in Heaven!" May we not also look up with deepest reverence to her who was glorified while still upon earth?

The Crown-prince, who was now burning to distinguish himself and to prove worthy of his beloved, was particularly valiant in the siege of Landau, at which he had command of the royal guard. However, two months later, November 27, 1793, he and his brother were recalled from the field by the King, who had grown tired of the war in consequence of disagreements among the Allies. In the meantime the Crown-prince's palace, in which Frederick William, as Crown-prince and as King, lived and died, was being newly furnished and made ready to receive the young pair.

CHAPTER II

LOUISE AS CROWN-PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA

On the seventeenth of December, Louise and her sister left Darmstadt, which had become like home to them. Accompanied by their father and the widowed Landgravine, their grandmother, they travelled by way of Wurzburg, Hildburghausen, Weimar, Leipzig, and Wittenberg to Potsdam, where they arrived on the twenty-first of December. In the outskirts of this city of Frederick the Great, they were met by bands of citizens on horseback, carrying the Prussian and Mecklenburg colors, and there sixteen postilions gave them the first salute of welcome.

The Brandenburg arch in Potsdam had been furnished with a special gate of honor by the citizens. The street leading westward from this gateway was renamed in honor of the Princess, and the open square before it was called Louise Square. On their arrival, toward evening, all the windows were illuminated and the streets lighted with torches. The guild of butchers in Potsdam particularly distinguished itself. The masters, in brown coats with gold shoulder-straps, red, gold-bordered vests, and high, three-cornered hats with gold tassels, cockades, and red pompons, carried curved hussar sabres and bestrode horses decked with red trappings, and were preceded by three lusty trumpeters and the waving banner of their guild. In memory of this occasion, when (in 1804) the old banner was discarded, Queen Louise presented the honorable guild with a handsome new one.

The entry of the Princesses into Berlin took place on the twenty-second of December. Both Princes escorted their brides-to-be from Potsdam. The guilds and societies of Berlin assembled in the village of Schoneberg, an hour distant, in order to ride in front of the carriage of state. Six postal secretaries, at the head of forty trumpeters in new festal

garments, led the torch-light procession from Schoneberg. Next to these came the company of carters in blue; next, the Berlin guild of butchers in blue; the sharpshooters in green with peach-colored trimmings; a company of Berlin citizens in old knightly costumes; the brewers and maltsters in blue; two companies of young clerks; and at the end, the merchants of the three guilds in red and blue. The streets were lined with soldiers of the royal guard and gentlemen of the court. Thus Louise, with her sister, was received and conducted to the capital, everything being done to honor and delight her. Poetical tributes were not lacking, and the tact and grace with which she received the homage, her wit, and the sincerity of her manner, laid the foundation for that profound reverence and love with which the people of the city always regarded her. At the gates and in the streets of Berlin, the entry became a veritable triumphal procession. Rows of the civil guard and countless masses of the populace lined the streets all the way to "the Linden" and the Crown-prince's palace, where an arch of honor had been erected, and thirty boys from the French colony and forty young maidens presented her with a festival poem, which ended with the verse:

"Forget what Thou hast lost;
This day of joy shall be the promise of a happier life;
Flail to Thee! mother of future monarchs,
A Queen and blissful wife!"

The young girl who presented a crown of blossoming myrtle and recited the poem with much taste and feeling was so lovely in dress and manner that Louise, yielding to the dictates of her heart, bent suddenly toward her, took her in her arms, and kissed her.

The Countess von Voss, a dignified courtier and Mistress of Ceremonies, standing just behind the Princess, was horrified at this unusual procedure and tried to put a stop to it. But she was too late! How dreadful that the future Crown-princess of Prussia should have embraced and kissed a child of the common people!

"Alas!" she sighed, "what has Your Royal Highness done! It is against all custom!"

"What!" answered Louise, innocently, "can I no longer follow the dictates of my heart?"

Those who witnessed this scene were carried away by the sincerity and sweetness which the kiss and these words so spontaneously and naturally revealed. The procession passed on to the castle through rows of Berlin working-men, and it was not until three o'clock in the afternoon that the Princesses found themselves in the midst of the royal family and by the side of their betrothed.

Two days afterwards, on Christmas eve, 1793, the marriage of the Crown-prince and Louise took place in the White Hall of the castle. It was solemnized by the consistorial councillor, Dr. Sack, who had baptized and confirmed the Prince. In order to allow the citizens to participate as fully as possible in the ceremony the King had given orders that as many admission-cards should be issued as would fill the hall. Most of them fell to officials of the royal household, who crowded the apartments, wearing their gorgeous court uniforms. Out of patience on seeing how his wishes had been misinterpreted, the King said to the Master of Ceremonies: "Could you not gather enough embroidered collars about you? I wish to see the wedding garments of the citizens also; on the day after to-morrow no cards shall be issued, but all shall be admitted who have whole coats to their backs!" Therefore, on the twenty-sixth of December, at the wedding of Prince Louis and Frederika, the multitude which was admitted left so narrow a passage for the rather corpulent King, who was leading the widow of Frederick the Great, that he turned and, thrusting out his left elbow, called genially to his Berliners: "Do not mind, children! No one must expect to spread himself on such an occasion!"

On the evening of the Crown-prince's wedding-day the citizens had planned a beautiful illumination of the city. While expressing his thanks on hearing of the plan, the Crown-prince

said: "It would give me far more pleasure if those who have something to spare would give the money which the lights would cost, to the widows and orphans of those who have fallen in battle." No sooner said than done. The King, the Princes and Princesses contributed large sums, so that the joy of this Christmas and marriage festival was reflected in many a careworn face and many a humble home. The next morning, on Christmas Day, the newly married pair, with their attendants, drove from the castle to the cathedral. After attending the services, and thus having consecrated the first day of their married life, they drove to their own palace.

This was, and still is, an unostentatious building and furnished in exceedingly plain style. But it pleased the Crown-prince, who was simple in his tastes by nature and education; and it also satisfied Louise, who was not at all fond of show. When, after the King's death, Frederick William the Third might and should have removed to the castle, he preferred to remain in the simpler dwelling as long as he lived. When his children became dissatisfied, he would say to them: "You wish to make a show in the world, forgetting how it was with me at your age. On my birthday I received a pot of heliotrope worth three-pence, and when my tutor wished to give me an unusual treat, he would take me to a coffee-garden and order two-pence worth of cherries." To a newly married son, whose house he had fitted up in princely style, he remarked: "I had no such splendors when I married your mother. I can only wish that you may live as happily and contentedly as we have done."

In marked contrast to the usual brilliant, vain, superficial court life of the period, a new life now began in the Crown-prince's palace. A simple, old-fashioned household was established, a shining example of German family life, of simplicity, love, and faithfulness. Both husband and wife avoided as much as possible any contact with the unsavory persons who frequented the court of Frederick William the Second as satellites of the celebrated Countess Lichtenau.

The young couple ignored the French custom of formal address and used the more intimate "thou." The King noticed this with displeasure and called them to account with the words: "I hear that you call the Crown-princess 'Thou!'"

But the Crown-prince answered: "For very good reasons." And on being asked what these reasons were, replied: "With 'Thou' one always knows where one stands, but with 'you' all is uncertainty."

In his exalted station he had, at best, but little freedom, and even when King he "wished to enjoy in his home life some of the independence that belongs to every private citizen." He was not so much in his element at court as at home "with his wife." When she had laid aside the necessary trappings of fashion and stood before him in her plain gown and ordinary attire, he would look at her as upon a pearl newly restored to its pristine purity; then he would grasp her hand with a radiant expression and exclaim: "Thank God! that you are my wife once more!"

And when she would laughingly ask: "How, am I not always your wife?" he would reply, sighing jocosely:

"Ah no! All too often you are obliged to be the Crown-princess."

The unfortunate Mistress of Ceremonies had her troubles in consequence of this disregard of court etiquette. Once she read the Prince a French lecture on the influence of etiquette in the history of the world. With a very chastened air, he said: "Very well, I will submit myself. Announce me to my consort and inquire whether I may have the honor of waiting upon Her Royal Highness, the Crown-princess. Say that I should like to present my compliments and hope that she will graciously receive me." Highly delighted with such a result of her sermon, the good lady went ceremoniously to the Crown-princess to beg an audience in the name of His Royal Highness. But what a surprise was in store for her! As she entered the room she found the Crown-prince, who had

hurriedly preceded her by another passageway, already "with his wife"; and laughingly he calls to the crestfallen lady: "You see, dear Voss, my wife and I meet as often as we like unannounced. This is a good Christian custom, I believe. However, you are a splendid Mistress of Ceremonies, and henceforth shall be called 'Madame Etiquette!'" The good lady had a similar experience afterwards at a festal procession of the Court. The order of ceremonies read that "Their Royal Highnesses must appear in the state carriage drawn by six horses, with two coachmen and three royal riflemen in uniform." The Crown-prince allowed the Mistress of Ceremonies to make all the arrangements according to precedent. Punctually the grand coach drew up before the palace, the Crown-prince appeared with his consort, but instead of entering it with her, he gently pushed the Mistress of Ceremonies inside, closed the door, and ordered the coachman to drive on with the prisoner. With his Louise, he then seated himself in an ordinary carriage with only two horses and drove to the castle, where, according to orders, the coachman drew up behind the state coach, from which at the same moment "Madame Etiquette" was alighting.

Louise, brought up in comparative freedom and in the sunshine of love, was in complete sympathy with this spirit of fun, which was a token of domestic happiness. She had the most fortunate influence over this husband, who was generally silent, reserved, harsh, and often seemingly morose, because of his strict and severe education, which she, with her frank and innocent nature, most happily supplemented.

When she celebrated her first birthday in Berlin, March 10, 1794., the King, who was very fond of her, presented her with the pleasure palace "Oranienburg" and a splendid park on the river Havel. Ladies and gentlemen of the court appeared before her in the costume of Oranienburg and, as it were, in the name of the inhabitants, presented the keys of the castle to its new mistress. Louise was full of joy and gratitude, but she could not keep it all for herself. On the King's inquiring if she

had any other desire, she could only wish for a handful of gold, so that the poor of Berlin might share her good fortune. Smilingly the King remarked that it only depended on how large she imagined the handful of gold to be. Never at a loss for an answer, she quickly replied: "The handful of gold should be just as large as the heart of the kindest of kings." So the poor of the capital received a share of the royal largess, and the birthday joy of the noble woman was complete. As an after celebration she, with her sister, gave a banquet for the servants, each of whom was allowed to bring several guests. The next day, on hearing that there had been eighty at table, Louise scolded them good-naturedly for not having made the number a full hundred.

In the following May, the King and the Crown-prince were obliged to take the field against the Poles. When the news came that at the storming of Wola the Crown-prince had led the company next after the King's against the entrenchments, she said: "I tremble for the dangers to which my husband is exposed; but I feel that as he is next to the throne, he should also be close to the King in the field." Soon after his return, October 7, 1794, she gave birth to a stillborn daughter in Oranienburg. This was in consequence of a fright and fall on the stairs. She was all the happier, when, a year later at the same place, she bore a son who became Frederick William the Fourth.

In spite of the many agreeable features of the castle and the town on the Havel, the young pair did not feel quite at home there. It was too magnificent for them, and the surroundings were too noisy. They longed for a quieter, more retired summer residence, where they could live with fewer restraints, although they often went driving in the forest in an ordinary farm wagon and without any servants, in spite of the protests of the Mistress of Ceremonies, who could never be induced to accompany them. Therefore, when the Prince learned that the estate of Paretz, pleasantly situated among the fields two miles from Potsdam, was for sale, he purchased it

together with the village which belonged to it, for thirty thousand thalers, which the King paid for him. The old residence was torn down and a new one built in plain country style. "Keep in mind that you are building for an ordinary country gentleman," he instructed the architect. It was to be merely comfortable and homelike, without any costly furnishings, embroidered carpets and tapestries, silken covers, or velvet hangings; and afterwards when King, he said that while there he wished to be regarded only as "the squire of Paretz." His wife, too, on being questioned by a visiting princess as to whether Her Majesty was not bored to death by being immured for weeks at a time in this hermitage, answered: "No, indeed, I am perfectly happy as the mistress of Paretz."

The happy pair now enjoyed all the pleasures of country life — hunting and boating, the forests and gardens, harvest festival and country dance. Even as Queen, the lovely, highborn dame often forgot her exalted station and joined the ranks of the peasants and their girls and gayly danced among them. Even "her excellency" Madame von Voss, the Mistress of Ceremonies, led out by the "master of Paretz," was obliged to take part in a dance. Another of the Queen's pleasures was to buy a basketful of cakes at the annual fair of Paretz and to distribute them among young and old. The children who joyfully cried out, "Madame Queen, Madame Queen, give me some too!" she led to the toy booths, where honey cakes and peppermints were raffled off, bought them tickets, and rejoiced with them over their sweet winnings. In the year 1802 she clothed all the children in the village in new garments for the harvest-home; and when the girls and boys leading the procession entered the castle to tender their thanks to the royal giver, she was as happy as any of them. Turning to the King, she quoted: "Ye shall become as little children."

This love and appreciation of nature and child-life always remained characteristic of her. With so many duties and demands upon her, she was obliged to take a few hours'

rest daily to refresh her spirit and renew her strength. This repose she found most readily in the solitude and beauty of nature. "If I neglect this hour for collecting my forces," she once remarked, "I am out of sorts and cannot endure the confusion of the world. Oh, what a blessing it is to be able to commune with our souls!

It is evident that one of such deep emotional nature, at such times did not merely lose herself in dreams or ponder idly on her own affairs. She had been accustomed from childhood to collect and assimilate the best that human art and science have to offer. In proof of this, we have her essays, journals, and letters. The works of the great poets, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, and others, were her companions and the springs of her spiritual and mental refreshment, next to music, which she loved to cultivate. She interpreted the songs of her country with a voice full of feeling. But alas! there were hours in store for her, when all that genius has to offer could not still the suffering of her heart!

The first hour of trial came when her brother-in-law, Prince Louis, died of typhoid fever, December 28, 1796, leaving her sister Frederika an eighteen-year-old widow. She was married a second time, in 1798, to Prince Frederick William of Braunschweig; and after he died, in 1814, she became the bride of the English Prince Ernst August, Duke of Cumberland, and as such, Queen of Hanover, in 1837. A fortnight after Prince Louis's death (January 13, 1797) the widow of Frederick the Great, the unhappy Queen Elizabeth Christine, whom Louise had regarded with tender and filial reverence, passed away in her eighty-second year. "It will be my turn next," said the King, on receiving the news of her death. Two months after this, on the twenty-second of March, 1797, Louise bore her second son, Prince William, and on the sixteenth of November of the same year, the King's prophecy was fulfilled. Frederick William the Second died; his eldest son ascended the throne, and Louise was Queen of Prussia. What a change in so short a time!

CHAPTER III

LOUISE AS QUEEN

The new King took the throne of Frederick the Great, not as his successor, "Frederick the Third," as he was acclaimed, but more modestly, with the title of Frederick William the Third. His wife assured the delegation of citizens who waited upon her to offer the congratulations of Berlin, that she was most grateful for every proof of their love, and that she and the King would both endeavor to deserve it; for, said she: The love of his subjects is the softest pillow for a royal head." The residence and mode of life of the royal pair remained unchanged. The King still refrained, as before, from all stiff formalities and vain and ostentatious display. His father, who had had extravagant tastes, left him nothing but debts, and now they were obliged to retrench. But even had it been otherwise, Frederick William the Third and his Louise were happiest in living a simple life. On a serving-man's opening both the folding doors for His Majesty to pass through, he asked: "Have I grown suddenly so stout that one door is not wide enough for me?" And when the chef put two more courses on the King's bill-of-fare than he had served to the Crown-prince, the King struck them off, with the words: "Does he think my stomach has grown larger since yesterday?"

It was an old court custom that two generals should serve standing during meals, and that the chamberlain should be obliged to attend the ruler until he had tasted his first glass of wine. At his first state dinner, when Frederick William the Third saw the Master of Ceremonies standing behind his chair, he said to him: "You may sit down."

"I am not allowed to," was the answer, "until Your Majesty has taken the first drink."

"Is any particular beverage mentioned?" asked the King.

"Not so far as I know," replied the Master of Ceremonies.

"Wait," said the King. He reached for the nearest glass of water, drank, and said: "Now I have had my drink, and you may be seated!"

Queen Louise in the same manner retained her simple habits. She appeared in robes of state only when the dignity of her station demanded it. Her usual dress at balls and festivals was a dainty muslin gown, her beautiful hair decked only with a diadem, and about her neck a long string of pearls. In the course of time, by setting a new example, she also brought about the disappearance of trains yards in length, of the great hooped skirts, and towers of artificial hair. With her fine tact she knew how to banish all stiff formality from social life, and to secure natural and unaffected intercourse.

The royal pair were often seen, as of old, walking arm in arm "under the Lindens "and in the zoological gardens, without any attendants and mingling with citizens in the market-place. In the Winter of 1797, Louise went with her royal consort to the Christmas street-fair in Berlin. They had made purchases at several booths and approached another, where a woman was bargaining for some wares. She broke off immediately and was going to step aside as she saw the royal pair approaching. "Do not go, my dear woman," said the Queen. "What will the merchants say if we drive away their customers?" Then she inquired about her family and on learning that the woman had a son about the same age as the Crown-prince, she bought several toys and gave them to her with the words: "Take these trifles, my dear, and give them to your crown-prince from mine." When out walking she often took up children who were playing by the roadside, and embraced them in motherly fashion. Even the old dame cowering by the wayside was not unnoticed, and if she did not need an alms, received at least a friendly word. One day a little

boy playing horse in the castle garden ran into the Queen. Her lady-in-waiting was about to scold him roundly, but Louise interfered with: "A boy must be wild." Tapping the little fellow on his red cheek, she said in sweetest tones: "Run and play, my son, but take care not to fall; and you may give your parents greetings from me."

A great many little episodes of this kind made her day by day more beloved among the people. Once while she was Crown-princess, when a Count and a court shoemaker were announced at the same moment, she caused the craftsman, whose time no doubt was the more valuable, to be admitted first, with the words: "Let the shoemaker come; the Count can wait." To an elderly man, who was invited for an evening, she wrote on the invitation card sent out by the Mistress of Ceremonies the words: "I beg that you will come in boots. Silk stockings are dangerous for your health, and as I am fond of my friends, I must take care of them." Old General Kockeritz, who was a daily guest at table during their country sojourn, had a habit of disappearing after the meal, no one knew whither. When Louise learned that he hurried away to his room to smoke his indispensable pipe, she appeared beside him the next day as soon as dinner was over, with a filled pipe, a lighted taper, and a spill in her hand, and said to him: "To-day, my dear Kockeritz, you shall not desert us; you shall smoke your customary pipe in our company."

After she became Queen, she and the King were once invited by one of their ministers to a ball. On their arrival there were several carriages already before the door yard. The gate was about to be opened that the royal carriage might pass through, when the King forbade it and waited until his turn came to alight. The Queen remarked to the minister's wife who was waiting to receive them: "You must forgive us for being late, but my husband was detained by business." At this same ball, when she noticed that a pretty woman had not been asked to dance by the titled gentlemen, because she was a

"commoner," she begged the King, who was nothing loath, to dance with her himself.

At a function in Magdeburg the Queen greatly embarrassed a young officer's wife by asking from what family she came. As the young woman was the daughter of a rich merchant of Magdeburg she did not know what to reply, and stammered: "I am of no family, Your Majesty." The bystanders giggled, but the Queen rebuked their levity with a severe glance, and, turning graciously to the young woman, she said in a loud voice so that all might hear: "Ah, I see that you have answered in jest and I must admit that I used a false expression. Certainly all men are born equal, though indeed it is very gratifying and inspiring to be of a good family. Who would not rejoice to come of distinguished parents and ancestors? But thank God, they are to be found in all classes! Indeed, the greatest benefactors of the human race often spring from the humblest homes. One may inherit high station and its privileges, but inner personal worth everybody must cultivate for himself. I thank you, my dear lady, that you have given me an opportunity to express these thoughts, which are worth while pondering, and I wish you in your married life that happiness which springs only from the heart." She had emphasized these significant words with her little fan and with a significant gesture she dismissed the distinguished ladies who had been presented to her. How consoled and elated she, who felt that she was "of no family," must have been!

The following is a similar incident: At Potsdam, at a church service for the soldiers, a woman strayed by mistake into the place that had been reserved for the Queen, and was taken very harshly to task by the Master of Ceremonies. When Louise heard of this, she was very much distressed, sent for the preacher at once, and as he entered the door, met him with the words: "In Heaven's name, what has happened in your church? I have just learned with great displeasure that a worthy lady of your congregation has been humiliated by Mr. von N. And right in the church, too! I am inconsolable,

although it was not my fault. I beg of you to apologize for me and to bring me at dinner the assurance that she accepts the apology. And to-morrow you may bring her with you — I shall take pleasure in making her acquaintance."

Louise accompanied her husband to Koenigsberg, where the Prussians did homage to their new King on the fifth of June. On the way thither, at Stargard, nineteen little girls in white dresses, with baskets of flowers, were drawn up before the house where the Queen was lodged. Louise talked with them like a mother and they became very confidential and told her that there had been twenty of them, but that one of their number had been sent home because she was so homely. "Poor child!" cried the Queen, "no doubt she had been anticipating my coming with delight and is now at home crying bitterly." Immediately she had her fetched and distinguished the homely little one beyond all the others, with her attentions.

The next day there was a review, and the populace crowded close round the royal pair. The Queen, noticing an old country-man trying in vain to get nearer, sent a servant to bring him to her. At a village near Koslin the burgomaster begged her to alight, as the peasants as well as the citizens were anxious to entertain her. She gladly consented and entered a peasant house which had been decorated for the reception, and enjoyed the omelets which were served her as much as, in the old days, she had enjoyed the one in Madame Goethe's house. It was regarded at that time as an unprecedented condescension, at a banquet at Oliva, that on the Queen's invitation a number of Danzig women were allowed to sit down with the guests of honor. In Koenigsberg and also in Breslau and along the route of her travels, the amiable and gracious lady won all hearts, and it was not a Prussian, nor a flatterer, who wrote after her death: "Few Queens have been beloved as she was during her lifetime, and very few have been thus mourned after their death."

On July 6, 1798, the deputies of Brandenburg paid their homage to the King in Berlin. Eight days after this,

Louise's first daughter was born — she who became the wife of Czar Nicholas of Russia.

During the gala days of the accession Louise wrote to her grandmother: "I am Queen; and what pleases me most about it, is that now I shall not have to limit my charities so carefully." But indeed, for the nonce the King was obliged "to live on the Crown-prince's income" and to contrive means to pay his father's debts. Therefore the Queen had no larger income than the Crown-princess, or about one thousand thalers a month. How could this suffice for one who had calls and solicitations from every side? Indeed, after a few years, she was involved in three times as much debt as her income amounted to, so that the cabinet councillor was obliged to represent to the King that she could not possibly make two ends meet on this income.

The King paid her debts, but ordered that in future she must keep an account of her expenses and that they should be paid out of his purse and the bills be laid before him.

But it was not enough, and Louise was obliged to ask a loan from the treasurer. He applied to the King, but the loan was refused, and he returned to the Queen with the words: "Really, Your Majesty, this can go on no longer; you will pauperize yourself with your charities."

Louise answered: "I love my children; to be the mother of my subjects is as sweet to me as to know that my best of husbands is their father. I must help wherever there is need."

"Very well, then, I will speak to the King," answered the official.

"But in such a manner that he will not be angry!" begged the Queen.

Soon afterwards she found the empty drawer of her writing-desk newly filled, and she asked the King: "What angel has done this?"



QUEEN LOUISE OF PRUSSIA.

Smiling, the King answered: "His name is legion; at least I know no other name, and I know but one angel at which his eye rested on her. But you know the beautiful saying —'to his friends he gives even in his sleep.'"

Thus loving and beloved throughout the broad expanse of her country and among its people, as well as in her home circle, she was the happiest of wives, mothers, and princesses. But all too soon the sun of her happiness began to decline.

CHAPTER IV

LOUISE IN MISFORTUNE

From the abyss of the French Revolution Napoleon Bonaparte arose, to be emperor of the French, the rod of princes, and the scourge of God for the people of Europe. Austria had been conquered, southern Germany lay at the feet of its "Protector," and Prussia too must be crushed. In 1805 Austria and Russia had allied themselves with England and Sweden to bring the conqueror to terms. All the countries were preparing for war. Prussia alone remained quiet and refused every call to arms. Napoleon offered Hanover as the price of an alliance; Austrian and Russian envoys were endeavoring to gain the King over to their side. He, however, could not decide for either, and clung to his neutrality.

Czar Alexander sent word that he should march 100,000 men through southern Prussia and Silesia to join the Austrians. If the King permitted this, it would mean war with France. He had scarcely taken steps to avert this danger when Napoleon made another decisive move. Without either giving notice or asking permission he sent a division under General Bernadotte, October 7, 1805, through the Prussian territory of Ansbach, to avoid a detour and to fall on the rear of the Austrians. The consequence of this violent measure was the penning up of the Austrian General Mack in Ulm and the downfall of Austria. This disregard of territorial rights in thus entering Prussian domain, called forth a storm of indignation in Berlin, and with reason. The King declared that without ample reparation, war with France was no longer to be avoided. And what did Napoleon do? In a message to the King he treated the whole matter as trifling. Perhaps no one was more deeply affected by this indignity and by the misfortunes of Austria than the tender, pure-hearted Queen. She had never been accustomed to concern herself with political affairs; but when her eldest son, on his tenth birthday, October 15, 1805,

appeared for the first time in the new uniform which his father had given him, she expressed the deepest feelings of her heart in the words: "I hope, my son, that on the day when you shall make use of this coat, your first object will be to revenge your brothers."

Russia and Austria wished to take quick advantage of the indignation against Napoleon in order to bring Prussia over to their side. The Czar and Grand Duke Anton, brother of Emperor Franz, both came to Berlin. The result of this conference was the treaty of November 3. According to this, Prussia was to mediate between Napoleon and the Allies. In case Napoleon did not accept the peace proposals, then Prussia promised to join the Allies with 180,000 men. Before the Czar left Potsdam he expressed a desire to visit the tomb of Frederick the Great. After midnight, together with the King and Queen, he visited the Garrison Church of Potsdam and the illuminated crypt. He kissed the coffin, offered the King his hand across it, and swore eternal friendship. On leaving the church he entered his travelling carriage and drove away to join the army.

Unfortunately the man entrusted with the Prussian negotiations was the entirely incompetent Minister Haugwitz. He was completely in the hands of the French party at court and, like it, was without love of country, sincerity, or real devotion, but on the contrary was bent on neutrality. Unfortunately the King, distrustful of himself by too severe education, did not possess enough independence of character and strength of will to see through and to break up the powerful clique which surrounded him and was leading the State to destruction. By nature he was more inclined to consideration and procrastination than to quick decision and prompt execution. The most capable statesmen, like Stein and Hadenberg, who alone could have saved the State, could do nothing against the so-called neutral party. Had the King only had some of the decision of the gifted Prince Louis Ferdinand, a son of the youngest brother of Frederick the Great, it might

have been otherwise. This Prince, full of burning enthusiasm for the honor of the Prussian State and the army of Frederick the Great, was at the head of the patriotic party which Napoleon called the war party. He criticised that so-called highest statesmanship, which wished Prussia to be friendly with all its neighbors, and in consequence of which it was regarded with suspicion by all the States. "By love of peace," said Prince Louis, with clear insight, "Prussia maintains a peaceful attitude toward all the powers, and some day when they are ready for war, it will be mercilessly crushed. Then we shall fall without hope, and perhaps even without honor."

Louise would have nothing to do with Prince Louis Ferdinand, who wasted his powers recklessly in a round of pleasures. Soon after Louise had come to Berlin, he became enamoured of the beautiful Crown-princess and attempted, with the help of her inexperienced sister Frederika, to ingratiate himself with her and thus destroy the happiness of the princely pair. But the virtue of this pure woman spared herself and her family this tragedy.

On which side the Queen stood in this burning question of the day need hardly be asked. Inspired by the glory of Frederick the Great, completely devoted to her Prussia and its people, she was concerned only with Prussia's honor. With all the strength of her soul she held to Schiller's motto: "The nation is unworthy which will not sacrifice all to its honor." It is true that, entirely unfitted by nature and by calling for politics, she had lived in the sweet belief that her country, guided by its peace-loving King, would be able to maintain peace. But now she realized, quoting Schiller once more, that "even the most pious cannot keep the peace, when it does not please his quarrelsome neighbor." She took Napoleon's deed of violence in Ansbach as a personal insult to her beloved husband, and saw visions of a still darker future. Therefore she preferred war or even annihilation to such humiliation. In the Fall of 1805 the celebrated Field-marshal Gneisenau wrote: "The Queen is very much in favor of war. She has told the

French ambassador that the King would himself take command of the troops, and that the nation would sacrifice its blood and treasure to preserve its independence."

When Napoleon heard of the alliance with Russia and Austria he is said to have exclaimed: "The King of Prussia shall suffer for this!" While he was rapidly preparing to take the field against the Russian and Austrian armies in Moravia, Count Haugwitz was not at all in a hurry. He did not reach Brunn until November 28, then found no time during an audience of four hours to accomplish his mission in the spirit of the Potsdam agreement, but allowed himself to be despatched next day, out of this dangerous neighborhood, to Vienna. Here he waited until, on December 2, the battle of the three Emperors, at Austerlitz, was fought, an armistice concluded between Napoleon and the Austrians, and the Russian army forced to retreat.

When at last, on December 13, Haugwitz obtained another interview with Napoleon he was greeted with the angry words: "It would have been far more honorable if your master had openly declared war on me; then at least he might have been of some service to his new allies. But you wish to be everybody's friend, and that is impossible; you must choose between me and my enemies. I want sincerity, or I withdraw. Open enemies are preferable to false friends. My enemies I can attack wherever I find them." Then he laid before the Prussian Minister an agreement whereby Prussia was to enter into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with France to give up Ansbach to Bavaria and Neuenburg to France in exchange for Hanover. On December 15 Haugwitz signed this treaty by means of which Prussia was to become the first vassal of France. What astonishment it caused in Berlin when Haugwitz presented the Schonbrunn treaty, on December 25! The King did not wish to accept it, but could not refuse, for that would virtually mean a declaration of war against the conqueror of Russia and Austria.

Hanover was indeed occupied, but the army was placed on a peace footing, and Haugwitz was to transform the offensive and defensive alliance into a purely friendly understanding. But Napoleon well knew what he could offer the good, undecided, badly counselled King. "No power in the world shall make me uphold the treaty. If Prussia now wants Hanover, she shall pay dearly for it. Your King does not know what he wants; some reckless spirits are urging him toward war. I tell you it cannot end well." On February 15, Haugwitz was forced to sign a still more distasteful treaty, which was likely to cost the friendship of England. The King, who was unprepared for war, was obliged to sign this Paris treaty, March 3. After this first humiliation of Prussia, Napoleon proceeded to exhaust the patience of the most patient, until Prussia was obliged, as Napoleon had desired, to declare war, but now without allies.

Queen Louise was sorely troubled by all this. Her health had suffered during the Winter and in April she was still more shaken by the death of her sixteen-months-old son. With this death her saddest days began, — for one who had looked upon the world so gayly and been accustomed to dispense happiness to others. She first sought and found strength at the baths of Pyrmont, where she met her beloved father, who had become Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Not until her six weeks' stay at the sanatorium was ended did she learn, on returning to Berlin, that war had been determined upon. Concessions had become useless, for Napoleon already treated Prussia as a vassal. On August 9 the King had given orders for the mobilization of the entire army. Negotiations were under way with Austria, Russia, and England in order to effect an understanding. But Austria was too much weakened, Russia too far away, and even England could not give immediate assistance. So Prussia remained isolated, and its shortsightedness and slothfulness during the previous year brought forth sad fruit.

One more attempt was made to conciliate Napoleon. He declared that he would attack Prussia with all his forces before Russia could come to its assistance, but that all might still be well, if Prussia would immediately disarm. What Napoleon expected of the King when he was disarmed was clear to everybody, and to no one more so than to the Queen. When, on her return, she learned what had been determined upon as consistent with the honor and well-being of the fatherland, she advocated the war, highly as she valued peace. The arch-enemy of Prussia learned this and made use of it by charging that she instigated the war. The newspapers which he controlled began rude attacks upon this splendid woman in order to lower her in the eyes of her people.

Had she suspected the real condition of the army, a state of affairs which the King only began to realize when war was at hand, she might have counselled otherwise. But her high opinion of the army of Frederick the Great was confirmed by the confidence of its officers. General Rachel, who had retaken Frankfort from the French, was so fatuous as to declare that the Prussian army had plenty of field-marshal equal to General Bonaparte. A colonel deplored the fact that the heroic army of the great Frederick should be furnished with cannon, rifles, and swords for the battle with the French, instead of clubs with which "to beat back these dogs." "Why do we need fortifications?" asked another. "Our fortress is the army, behind whose invincible ranks we can defy the enemy." Even a few days before the battle, when the Prussian army was virtually surrounded, a Prussian general staff officer declared that the enemy was already cut off by their clever strategy and Napoleon "as certainly ours as if we already had him in this hat." But what was the real state of affairs?

The fortresses were in bad condition, the commanders were weak dotards, the strategical points unoccupied, so that in case of retreat the road to the capital was open to the enemy. The superior officers were old and graduates of Frederick's antiquated school of war, and the younger ones full of

patrician insolence. The army itself was not in training, and consisted principally of recruited foreigners. The commander-in-chief was superannuated.

In the conduct of the war, as in the King's cabinet, there was discord and indecision. The King at length became sadly conscious of this. "It cannot end well," said he. "There is indescribable confusion; the gentlemen will not believe this, and say that I am too young and do not understand. I hope that I may be wrong."

But the clear-sighted Prince Louis Ferdinand uttered these sad words three days before the engagement at Saalfeld, in which he fell: "Alas! we are in a bad way, and so is our whole Prussian army; I consider it already lost, but I shall not outlive its fall."

The Prussian troops were to concentrate in Thuringia under the leadership of the old Duke of Brunswick for a decisive battle against the thus far unconquered one. The previous year, when war seemed imminent, Louise, with her children, had bidden the departing troops a hearty and enthusiastic farewell on the Wilhelmsplatz. Napoleon reproached her with this as though she had been the demon of war. When, in September, 1806, the Queen's dragoon regiment left Berlin to take the field in Thuringia she received it at the Brandenburg Gate clad in the colors of the regiment, and rode at its head through the streets which it traversed. This also gave her enemies food for comment. But when, on September 21, she even accompanied the King, who was lost without her, by way of Magdeburg and Halle to join the army at Naumburg, Napoleon found even more fault with her. The celebrated politician Gentz, who was Austrian court-councillor at the time, had an interview with the Queen in Erfurt. This temperate statesman had heard so many praises of the high-born lady that he was quite prepared to find them only false flatteries. But in a conversation lasting three-quarters of an hour, she charmed him completely. He could not say enough about the decision and independence which she displayed, the

fire and at the same time the wisdom of her language. "And yet, in all that she said she showed such deep feeling that one could not forget for a moment that it was a feminine intellect which attracted one's admiration." This man of the world and of courts declared that he had never seen such a combination of dignity, benevolence, and charm as in this wonderful woman.

Louise was most anxious to be assured that public opinion was in favor of the campaign. "I do not ask to give myself courage — for, thank God! that is not necessary!" said she, during the conversation, in which she showed an astonishing knowledge of even the most unimportant events and minute affairs. Her womanly nature manifested itself most touchingly when her eyes would fill with tears at the mention of Austria's misfortunes. Commenting on the public criticisms of her political conduct, she cried: "God knows that I have never been consulted in public affairs and have never wished to be. Had I ever been asked, I should—I will admit it — have declared for war, as I believed it was necessary. Our condition had become so critical that we were in duty bound, and at all costs, to extricate ourselves; it was most necessary to put an end to the suspicion and reproaches which were heaped upon us, as though the King had not been in earnest in regard to the war all the time. By every principle of honor and therefore of duty, as I understand it, we were compelled to follow that road, apart from any selfish considerations."

The accusation of any partiality for the Russians she denied, and although she did justice to the personal virtues of the Czar Alexander, she did not look upon Russia as the saviour of Europe from the usurper. She sought the principal means of help solely in the close union of all those who bore the German name.

Among those surrounding the King, opinions were divided as to whether or not the Queen should be allowed to go farther. She herself preferred to be at headquarters rather than to hear disquieting rumors at a distance. Since the King

had allowed her to accompany him beyond Erfurt, she was resolved not to leave him until he desired it. Headquarters were established in Weimar, October 11, and there the King and Queen received the first bad news. The vanguard had been defeated by the French and their leader, the brave Prince Louis, had fallen at Saalfeld, October 10. Three days later the Queen left Weimar to follow her husband to Auerstadt. On the way she learned that the road was beset by the enemy, and she was obliged to return to Weimar amid the cheers of thousands of eager soldiers, whose valiant spirit she had imbued with fresh life. Here she was urged by General Ruchel no longer to expose herself needlessly to the dangers of war, and to return to Berlin. This was possible only by means of a great detour, in order to be safe from the enemy's scouting parties. Ruchel designated the road and the stations. The route, which would take four days to traverse, was to be by way of Muhlhausen, Brunswick, Magdeburg, and Brandenburg.

On the morning of October 14 the Queen left Weimar with the Countess Tauentzien. A company of cuirassiers formed their escort for several miles; thick mist enveloped the landscape and the travellers' hearts were heavy with forebodings. As Louise listened to the distant thunder of cannon she trembled for the husband of her heart and the father of her children. She knew that he would shun no danger in this battle and it deeply affected her that she could not share it with him.

The double battle at Jena and Auerstadt raged all day long. On the road the Queen received only uncertain news, sometimes good and sometimes bad.

"I have suffered unutterably," she declared, "between mountains of hope and abysses of despair, and have learned the meaning of we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Not until the fourth day did a messenger sent by Colonel von Kleist, adjutant of the King, overtake her in the

neighborhood of Brandenburg. The rider approached the carriage door and handed the Queen a letter. She opened it quickly, glanced at it, and appeared crushed. The letter contained only the words: "The King is alive; the battle is lost." Tears streamed from her eyes at this terrible news, The handkerchief, wet with her tears in this hour of distress, which she gave as a remembrance to the Prince of Anhalt, her protector, at his request, is still preserved among the treasures of the royal family, and is certainly not one of the least valuable.

"The King is alive"—but where and how? Truly the King considered himself fortunate to have barely escaped being taken prisoner. Napoleon wrote triumphantly to his consort, the Empress Josephine, that he had very nearly taken the King. Although Louise did not know this, she knew that the battle was lost. Dark pictures of the present and future haunted her. She knew what it meant to be vanquished by Napoleon; knew with what boundless arrogance the heartless conqueror treated princes and people, and what terms of peace he was likely to dictate.

The carriage passed rapidly through Potsdam on its way to Berlin, where the Queen arrived late on the evening of October 17. Her children were not there. That morning, Lieutenant von Dorville, adjutant of Field-marshal von Mollendorf, whom the King had despatched to Berlin with the bad news from the battlefield, had arrived, and the Governor, Count Von der Schulenburg, had at once ordered the removal of the royal children to Schwedt-on-the-Oder. Scarcely had the Queen entered her home, when, hearing of the arrival of the Lieutenant, she had him summoned to her presence.

"Where is the King?" she asked.

I do not know, Your Majesty," answered Dorville.

"But is the King not with the army?" she asked again.

"With the army!" answered Dorville. "The army no longer exists!"

So great had been the confidence of victory that the news of the defeat was all the more crushing. Consternation and despair reigned in Berlin. The Governor sought to quiet the inhabitants by the proclamation: "The King has lost a battle: the first duty of the citizens is to be calm. I require this of all our citizens. The King and his brothers are alive." Such were the men in power at a time when all the available strength of the people should have been called forth to enduring devotion and determined resistance.

After a terrible night, at six o'clock in the morning of October 18 the Queen summoned the court physician, Dr. Hufeland. He found her in despair, with eyes swollen with weeping and hair in disorder.

All is lost. I must fly to my children, and you must go with us," she said as he entered. At ten o'clock the carriage was ready and the Queen drove to Schwedt, where her children were. The sight of them renewed and accentuated the mother's distress. They ran tenderly to meet her at the great staircase of the castle, but she whom they were accustomed to see gay and smiling now embraced and greeted them with the words "You see me in tears. I am weeping for the cruel fate which has befallen us. The King has been deceived in the ability of his army and its leaders, and we have been defeated and must fly!"

To the tutor of the two eider children, Delbruck, she said: "I see a structure destroyed in one day, upon whose erection great men have labored through two centuries. The Prussian State, Prussian army, and Prussian glory exist no longer."

"Ah, my sons," she cried to the eleven-year-old Fritz and nine-year-old William, "you are already old enough to understand these trials. In the future, when your mother no longer lives, recall this unhappy hour and let a tear fall in remembrance of it, as I now weep for the destruction of my country. But do not be satisfied with tears. Act, develop your powers! Perchance the guardian angel of Prussia will protect

you. Then free your people from the shame, the reproach, and the humiliation into which it has fallen! Try, like your great-grandfather, the Great Elector, to reconquer from the French the darkened fame of your ancestors, as he revenged the defeat and shame of his father, against the Swedes at Fehrbellin. Do not be corrupted by the degeneracy of the times. Become men and heroes, worthy of the name of princes and grandsons of the great Frederick. But if you cannot with all your efforts uplift the down-trodden State, then seek death as did Prince Louis Ferdinand!"

From Schwedt, the sorrowing but heroic Queen travelled to Stettin. There, on her own responsibility, she caused the arrest of the cabinet councillor Lombard, who had originally been a wig-maker and was now universally considered a traitor, and who had fled from Berlin to escape the threatening anger of the populace. Subsequently the King released Lombard, but deposed him and never saw him again. The King had gone from the battlefield to Sommerda, where he collected a few scattered detachments of troops about him. Learning that the enemy had already passed round his left flank, he went on to Magdeburg, accompanied by a squadron of dragoons, reached Berlin on the eve of October 20, but did not enter the city, and arrived, on the morning of the same day at the fortress of Custrin, where his wife also arrived in the evening at ten o'clock. What a meeting after only a week!

On the road she had not even been able to get fresh horses at Barwalde. Rather than furnish them the steward had turned them loose. So far had some of their subjects already fallen from their allegiance. Bad feeling, cowardice, treachery, and incompetence had spread since the misfortune at Jena, through military, official, and citizens' circles. One fortress and one division of troops after another were needlessly surrendered to the enemy. It became evident that since the last years of Frederick the Great social decay had spread, not only in the army, which was insolently resting on its former laurels, but in official circles and even in the life of the people. Of this

few had had any inkling, least of all the thoroughly upright King and the noble Louise. "Disaster had to come, or we should have burst with pride," acknowledged a Prussian years afterwards.

The whole country between the Weser and the Oder became a prey to the enemy after the reserves under the Prince of Wurttemberg had been defeated and destroyed near Halle. Napoleon arrived in Potsdam October 24 and made his entry into Berlin on the twenty-seventh. Here he gave free vent to his ill-humor. According to him, Queen Louise and the Prussian nobles were to blame for everything. "I will bring these patricians down to beg their bread on the streets." He pursued the Queen with the most violent abuse. He called her the "cause of all the troubles which had befallen Prussia." He brought contempt upon her by pictures and writings. Even when, three years later, Major Schill marched from Berlin with six hundred hussars, called on the people of Germany to rise for their liberties, and fell fighting at Stralsund, this also was attributed to Louise, and Napoleon caused an engraving to appear in Paris, which represented her in the uniform of the Schill hussars. The attempt made by Frederick Staps in Schonbrunn at that time to assassinate the tyrant, Napoleon declared was planned in Berlin and Weimar. When a general doubted this, he exclaimed, "Women are capable of anything."

These unworthy attacks and slanders of course did not injure her in the eyes of her subjects, as Napoleon wished. On the contrary, the Queen grew dearer to every good Prussian because of this abuse, and many heroic hearts were burning to avenge her wrongs. These attacks of her ignoble opponent could not always be kept from the Queen, and cost her much agitation and many tears. "Can this wicked creature not be content to rob the King of his State? Must the honor of his wife be sacrificed also, by this contemptible wretch who spreads the most shameful lies abroad concerning me?"

As prospects for a favorable turn of affairs were very slight, the King thought it advisable to open peace

negotiations. Napoleon already demanded (October 22), at Wittenberg, that the Elbe should be the western boundary of Prussia, and that the King should pay one hundred million francs as war indemnity; but he was willing to permit him to keep Magdeburg. These demands appeared too harsh after but one defeat, and ambassadors were sent to Napoleon at Berlin to secure more favorable terms.

In the meantime, however, Prince Hohenlohe had been obliged to lay down his arms, with twelve thousand men, at Prenzlau. The fortresses of Erfurt, Spandau, Magdeburg, and others were surrendered to the enemy by their cowardly commanders with incredible quickness, and Napoleon would no longer consider the Wittenberg conditions. He determined to keep as much territory as possible, so that he could force the English, as allies of Prussia, to hand over as many of the conquered French colonies as possible. He offered an armistice on condition that the principal fortresses in Silesia and on the Weichsel should be turned over to him, that the Prussian army should withdraw to the northeast corner of the dominion, and the assistance of Russia be declined. By means of this treaty, which the plenipotentiaries of the King accepted November 16 in Charlottenburg, Napoleon would have had Prussia completely in his power. The King who had gone with his consort from Custrin by way of Graudenz to Osterode, held counsel with his generals and ministers, most of whom were in favor of confirming the treaty. Stein, however, persuaded him to reject it, as it gave no guarantee of lasting peace and threatened the very existence of Prussia. At this, Napoleon declared: "If the King will not separate his affairs from Russia, he must take the consequences of the war. Should we conquer the Czar, there will no longer be a Prussian King."

Louise took fresh courage from her devotion to Prussia's honor and favored rejection of the treaty, in accord with the Minister Stein. She had always recognized in him one of the bulwarks of Prussia, and she placed in the King's hands his memorial on the changes in systems of government.

However, the two men did not understand one another, and the King, considering him an obstinate, pig-headed person, gave him permission to resign.

In political affairs Louise held to the faith which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Her motto was: "Only enduring resistance can save us." But on receiving news of one disaster after another; seeing nothing but good fortune attending Napoleon and nothing but misfortune the Prussians; seeing nothing but misery, the strong woman had her weak moments, when doubts tortured her as to whether she had been right in preaching resistance to the conqueror, or whether it was not presumptuous rebellion against the cruel fate which seemed to have overtaken her house and her country. On the way from Koenigsberg, at Ortelsburg, December 5, 1806, she wrote in her journal these verses from Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister":

"Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the darksome hours
Weeping and watching for the morrow,
He knows ye not, ye gloomy powers!

"To earth, this weary earth, ye bring us,
To guilt ye let us heedless go,
Then leave repentance fierce to wring us:
A moment's guilt, an age of woe!"

This was indeed a depth of despair in which the stars of faith and hope seem to have been extinguished. But by God's providence she found just at this time a guide and consoler. This was the pious Madame von Krudener, who at that period exercised such a mighty awakening influence, especially among the higher classes, and also upon the Czar. Five years before, as wife of the Russian ambassador, she had seen the Queen in undimmed splendor at the court of Berlin. Now she no longer found a gay young princess, but a downcast, unhappy woman, who gladly accompanied her through the hospitals of Koenigsberg bringing comfort to the suffering

victims of war. It was under her tutelage that the Queen devoted herself more and more earnestly to religion and the study of the Bible. Louise wrote to her later:

"I owe you a confidence which I am sure you will receive with tears of joy. Your earnest conversation, our talks on religion and Christianity, have left the deepest impression upon me. I have been pondering more earnestly on these things, whose existence and value I certainly felt before, but suspected rather than appreciated. They have been of great solace to me. I drew nearer to God, my faith has strengthened, and so, in the midst of misfortune and numberless insults and injustices, I have never been without fortitude or wholly unhappy. It is surely the mercy of the God of love, which has never allowed my heart to become hardened or permitted me to lose my love and sympathy for my fellow men or the desire to serve and help them. I have seen the vanity of earthly greatness, and its poverty compared with heavenly treasures. Yes! I have attained a quietness of soul and an inner peace, which leads me to hope that I may be enabled to bear with the composure and humility of a true Christian all that God in His providence may send for my purification. From this standpoint I regard all the temptations which beset us here below."

Thus she found at last sure hope, though her ship of life and her heart were to ride stormy seas of trouble, and she was often fain to cry out with Peter: "Lord, save me!"

Under the stress of this time of anxiety her health began to suffer. In Koenigsberg she was stricken with typhoid fever. Her youngest son, Prince Karl, had first succumbed to it. The court physician, Dr. Hufeland, who was called from Danzig to Koenigsberg, tells us:

"Never shall I forget the night of December 22, 1806, when the Queen's life was in mortal danger. I sat watching by her bedside, and a terrible storm was raging that blew down one of the gables of the old castle where she lay. But here, as in the case of Prince Karl, through God's blessing the

treatment was successful, and she began to mend. But suddenly the news came that the French were approaching. She declared emphatically: 'I would rather be in the hands of God than of these creatures.' During a terrible snowstorm and intensely cold weather (January 3, 1807) she was placed in a carriage and taken twenty miles across the marshes of Courland to Memel. We passed three days and three nights, travelling during the days, partly through the surf and partly over the ice, and passing the nights in the most miserable shelters. The first night the Queen lay in a room where the windows were broken, and the snow drifted across her bed. She had no refreshing food. Never has a queen known such hardships. I watched her in constant anxiety, fearing hemorrhages. Her courage never wavered nor her trust in God, and this encouraged us all. Even the fresh air seemed to be restorative; instead of becoming worse, she improved on this terrible journey. At last we espied Memel on the opposite shore. For the first time the sun burst forth and mildly illuminated the city, which was to be our goal and resting-place. We accepted this as a good omen."

The King and the two children also came soon afterwards to this town, two miles distant from the Russian border. The inhabitants gave the royal pair the most touching proofs of their sympathy and loyalty.

The King had gradually gathered together an army of 40,000 men; and they were now joined by 60,000 Russians under General Bennigsen. The new campaign was begun December 26. There was a fresh gleam of hope when, in the bloody battle at Eylau (February 7-8, 1807), the remains of the Prussian army with the Russians fought so heroically against Napoleon that five days after the battle he offered the King a favorable peace if he would desert Russia. But the honorable man kept faith with the Czar, who had come to Memel with reinforcements, and answered in the negative. Louise, filled with fresh hopes, went back to Koenigsberg with her husband.

On the way, one morning a peasant and his wife presented themselves before the royal pair. She brought the Queen several pounds of fresh butter wrapped in cabbage-leaves. She thought, she said, that supplies might be rather low, and would the Queen accept a few pieces of perfectly fresh snow butter from a poor peasant. Louise took the gift with hearty thanks.

But the King interrupted with: "Aha! I see you have brought me the cheese."

But the peasant answered: "No! we Mennonites have learned that Your Majesty's war-chest has a hole in it, and you must have lost your small change. So we have been looking into our savings-boxes and each has contributed to a present for our poor, gracious King."

"No, no, not poor," cried the King; "not so long as I have such subjects."

Greatly to his astonishment he saw the peasant pour out two thousand bright gold pieces. He accepted them gratefully, and afterwards, when the peasant was in need, he paid them all back again with interest.

In Koenigsberg Louise lived in a modest dwelling and devoted herself to charity. She cared for the wounded and assisted the destitute. She visited no theatres, concerts, or balls, but assiduously attended the church of the gifted preacher, the evangelical Bishop Borowsky. The letters which she wrote at the time to her father, Duke of Mecklenburg, show us her inmost heart. One of them, written in the Spring of 1807, reads:

"DEAR FATHER:

"The departure of General Blucher gives me a safe opportunity of writing frankly to you. Ah! how long I have been deprived of that pleasure and how much I have to say to you! Until the third week of my illness, each day was marked

by a fresh misfortune. The despatch of the excellent Blucher to Pomerania, the patriotism which animates every one, — of which the reserve battalions, the first that have been organized in months, are a proof,—all this gives me fresh hope. Some of these reserves are moving to the front, and some have already fought well. Yes, dear father, I am convinced that all will yet be well, and that we shall meet happily once more.

"The siege of Danzig is progressing satisfactorily; the inhabitants make the soldiers' burden easier by providing them with meat and wine in abundance. They will not hear of giving up. They would rather be buried in the ruins of their city than turn traitors to the King. Kolberg and Graudenz are of the same mind. Had it only been thus with all the fortresses! — But enough of past evils. Let us turn our eyes to God, to Him who guides our destinies, who never forsakes us when we do not forsake Him!

"The King is with the Czar and the army. He will remain there as long as the Czar does. This splendid unanimity, founded on unshakable steadfastness in misfortune, gives the best promise of endurance. Surely, by perseverance we must conquer sooner or later; of that I am firmly convinced."

It proved to be so, but this long-deferred hope was not to be realized during Louise's lifetime and not until the Prussian people had made ample penance. On May 24 Danzig was taken by the French after a brave defence under General Kalkreuth. After several engagements Napoleon was victorious over Prussians and Russians in the battle of Friedland, in consequence of which, Koenigsberg and the country as far as the Niemen was occupied by him. Louise, then in Memel, writes to her father, June 17:

"With profound emotion and tears of grateful tenderness I read your letter of April last. How can I thank you, best and tenderest of fathers, for the many proofs of your love, your favor, and indescribable goodness! What a comfort

this is in my trouble, and what a support! When one is so loved, one cannot be wholly unhappy.

"Another terrible disaster has now overtaken us, and we are on the point of leaving the kingdom. Imagine what my feelings are! But I pray you, do not mistake your daughter. Do not think that my head is bowed in cowardice. I am upheld by two thoughts. The first is that we are not the victims of blind chance, but that we are in God's hands, and that He is directing us; the second, that we fall with honor. The King has given proof to the world that he desires honor, not disgrace. Prussia would not bear the chains of slavery willingly. The King could not have acted otherwise in a single point without being untrue to himself and a traitor to his people. What a solace this is, no one who has not a true feeling of honor can imagine. But to the point.

"In consequence of the unfortunate battle of Friedland, Koenigsberg fell into French hands. We are pressed by the enemy, and if the danger becomes greater, I shall be obliged to leave Memel with my children. The King will again join the Czar. As soon as the danger becomes imminent I shall go to Riga. God help me at the moment that I have to abandon my country. That will require courage, but I shall look upward, from whence come all good and evil; and my firm belief is, that He will not send more than we are able to bear.

"Once more, dear father, I repeat, we go down to defeat in honor, respected by the nations; and we shall always retain friends, because we have deserved them. I cannot tell you how comforting this thought is. I bear all this with a quietness and composure that can only come from a clear conscience and pure faith. Therefore be assured, dear father, that we can never be wholly unhappy and that many who are clothed with power and good fortune are not so content as we. God gives peace to the just, and we may always have reason for joy.

"Let me assure you for your comfort, that nothing will be done by us that is not consistent with strictest honor or with our actions in the past. Rest assured of this, and I know it will

be a comfort to you, as to all who belong to me. I am always your faithful, obedient, loving daughter and—thank God that I can say it as your favor assures me of it — your affectionate friend.

"LOUISE"

On June 24 she writes again:

"My letters are still here, as wind and storms have prevented all vessels from leaving port. Now, I shall provide a reliable messenger and continue to send you news from here. The army has been obliged to retreat farther and farther, and on the twenty-first an armistice of four weeks was arranged by the Russians. The sky often clears when one expects only cloudy weather; it may be so now. No one longs for it more than I, but wishes are only wishes and not realities. Everything comes from above, Thou merciful Heavenly Father!

"My faith shall not waver, but I can hope no more. I refer again to my letter, which was written from the depths of my soul. You will understand me thoroughly when you have read it, dear father. I will live and die in honor and even eat bread and salt, if it must be. I shall never be totally unhappy; only I can hope no more. One who has been overwhelmed as I have been, can have no more hope. Should good fortune come, oh! no human being could be more grateful than I should be; but I no longer expect it. If misfortune come, it may surprise me for the moment, but it cannot overwhelm me, if it is undeserved. Only wrongdoing on our part would bring me to the grave, and to that we shall not come, for we are above it. You see, dear father, the enemy of mankind has no power over me. The King has been with the Czar since the nineteenth; and since yesterday they have been in Taugoggen, only a few miles from Tilsit where the French Emperor is.

"I am at your feet, devotedly yours,

"LOUISE"

CHAPTER V

LOUISE AND NAPOLEON

An armistice with Russia was concluded by Napoleon June 21, and on the twenty-fifth of June one was arranged with Prussia also, at Tilsit. The next day an interview took place between the Czar and Napoleon, at which the King of Prussia was present. Napoleon's egotism and haughtiness clashed continually with Frederick William's directness and honesty. The King met the insolent victor with a noble pride and bore his misfortunes with a dignity which seemed to increase the enmity of the French Emperor.

Upon this occasion Alexander conceived the unfortunate idea that the presence of the Queen might facilitate the deliberations and that her graciousness and the nobility of her character would soften the stern purpose of the conqueror. Alexander urged the King to summon his wife to Piktupponen, a village east of Tilsit, where he returned each evening from the conferences. The King was finally persuaded, and wrote to his wife of the mission proposed for her. He withheld his own judgment and wishes, however, and allowed her to decide the matter entirely for herself. The Queen received the letter while sitting with a circle of intimate women friends, glanced at it hastily, and silently left the room. An hour later she reappeared with a tear-stained face and told the company the contents of the letter. Some of those present advised against the action as undignified and useless. But she explained: If there is any one who believes that I can save even one village more to the fatherland by this step, I am in duty bound to test that belief. If I must take this painful step, however, I do not wish to do it unprepared; I must know just what to say and what to demand."

Hufeland tells us that the Queen was beside herself at the thought of meeting the slanderer and defamer, and said:

"This is the most cruel sacrifice that I have yet made for my people, and only the hope of being useful to them makes it possible for me." She wrote in her journal in regard to it: "God knows what a struggle it costs me! For though I do not hate the man, I regard him as the author of the misfortunes of the King and our country. I admire his talents, but I cannot admire his character, which is evidently false and deceitful. It will be very difficult for me to be polite and agreeable to him. But this hard task is demanded of me, and I am already used to sacrifice."

She left Memel and arrived on the evening of July 4 at Piktupponen. Here she received her instructions from Minister Hardenberg as to what she was principally to dwell upon in the interview. On July 5 she received a visit from the Czar, and on the sixth Napoleon sent her greeting through General Caulaincourt, and an invitation to dinner. With a French guard of honor she drove in a state carriage with eight horses to Tilsit, — and stopped at the house where her husband lodged. An hour after her arrival Napoleon, mounted on a white Arabian horse and accompanied by a large escort, rode to her door. The King and the princes received him at the staircase. Napoleon, holding his riding-whip in his hand, took off his hat, bowed quickly right and left, and ascended the steps to the Queen's room, into which the King led him and then left him alone with her. After the first painful moments, the Queen expressed her concern that he had been obliged to climb such a wretched stairway to visit her. Napoleon answered gallantly:

"On the road to such a goal, one should fear no obstacles." She inquired how the northern climate agreed with him. And then she turned the conversation to the negotiations and told him that she had come to try to persuade him to make reasonable terms of peace. And when he loftily inquired: "But how could you go to war with me?" she answered, "Sire, if we deceived ourselves, it was but a natural consequence of the fame of the great Frederick." This reply was overheard by the celebrated Talleyrand, Napoleon's clever minister. He is said to have warned Napoleon of the impression the Queen might

make upon him, in these words: "Sire! shall posterity be able to say that a beautiful queen has caused you to forego the full results of your greatest victory?" But Napoleon scarcely needed any such warning from Satan, he was Satanic enough himself. After the Queen's remark he led the conversation to indifferent subjects, asked about the material of her dress, etc. But Louise would not be turned from her purpose. With warmth and even with tears in her eyes she pleaded with him not to impose upon the country this unreasonable burden of a half billion francs for war indemnity and the numerous garrisons, and especially to promise her that Danzig and Magdeburg should remain Prussian. "I will think it over," he answered, holding out a prospect of an acceptable peace. The conversation lasted a quarter of an hour.

At noon the King and Queen dined with the Emperor of the French; she at his right next to the Czar and the King at his left. Napoleon was very amiable. He was good-humored and talkative, and joked about the danger she had run the previous autumn, when at the King's headquarters, of being taken prisoner by his hussars. The conversation turned on the cession of the provinces, which Napoleon thought the King ought not to take so much to heart. The King replied: "You do not know how painful it is to lose inherited lands in which the dearest memories of childhood are rooted, and which one can as little forget, as he can his cradle."

"His cradle," sneered Napoleon, "when the child has become a man he no longer has time to think of his cradle."

"Oh! yes," answered the King, "one can no more forget his youth than he can deny it, and a man of sentiment will always think with gratitude of the cradle where he lay as a child."

The Queen sought to give the conversation another direction by saying: "The mother's heart is the only cradle which one never forgets." She had in mind the respect which Napoleon felt for his own mother, and pointedly inquired about the health of "Madame Bonaparte."

In the evening the Queen drove back to the village. On July 7 she again received an invitation to dine with Napoleon, but before leaving for Tilsit, she received a letter from the King with the news that the conditions of peace were merciless. Therefore all hopes of the Queen's success vanished, and this second journey to Tilsit was an almost intolerable martyrdom. Exciting discussions took place, and neither the King nor the Queen concealed their feelings and opinions. As she took her leave Napoleon picked a magnificent rose from the vine at the window and offered it to her. Louise was about to refuse it, but quickly recovering herself, she took it with the words: "At least with Magdeburg?"

To which Napoleon answered dryly: "Your Majesty will kindly remember that it is I who offer, and you who accept."

As she threw herself weeping bitterly against the cushions of her carriage, she sighed and, pointing to the house, exclaimed: "In that place I have been horribly circumvented."

Napoleon wrote on July eighth to his Consort Josephine: "The Queen of Prussia is really a charming woman; she is very amiable to me, but you need not be jealous. I am like an oil-cloth, over which such things slide without touching the inside. To play the gallant on such occasions does not cost much." While a prisoner at St. Helena he wrote: "She was perfectly unaffected in her conversation, and remained mistress of it in spite of all the dexterity which I employed and all the trouble which I took. She always returned to her subject, and always with so much tact and delicacy that it was impossible to take offence."

A year after this fruitless sacrifice Louise wrote to a friend:

"I suffer unutterably. Reproaches are heaped upon me over and over again. What can I answer? I sigh and swallow my tears. A year ago yesterday I had my last interview with

Napoleon. Ah! what a recollection! How I suffered, suffered more for others than for myself! I wept and pleaded in the name of love and humanity, in the name of our misfortunes and the laws that govern the world. And I was only a woman — a weak creature, and yet superior to this adversary, so cold and heartless. The King is still greater than his enemy, even though his kingdom has been diminished one-half. He only treated with the wicked one under pressure of necessity and will not enter into an alliance with him. That this will sometime prove to be a blessing to Prussia is my firm belief."

With such lofty sentiments this deeply wounded woman was able benignly to forgive the man who was to her the incarnation of evil, the boundless suffering which he had caused to her, to her family, and to her people. She was too noble to share the petty hatred of Napoleon shown by weaker natures. In former days, when every one belonging to the court joined in scorning the "upstart," she kept silence. Shortly before her last illness, one day when her sorrowful glance fell upon the portrait of the Emperor, a titled lady in her company passionately denounced the oppressor. The Queen quickly turned and rebuked the outbreak with a gentle look and word: "If I have forgiven him the injuries he has done me, what reason have you not to forgive him?" And with a gesture of her hand, as though in blessing to her great enemy, she left the room.

The Tilsit peace, concluded on the night of July 9-10 was more detrimental to Prussia than the previous war had been. The fortresses of Stettin, Custrin, and Glogau remained in the hands of the conqueror as pledges for the war indemnity. This indemnity, which included the support of forty thousand French troops and all sorts of unreasonable extortions, amounting, at the end of the year 1808, to at least six hundred million francs, was ruthlessly exacted from a poor land already robbed of its richest territories. Agriculture and art life were crippled, commerce restricted, and the country impoverished.

Though the King and his people tried conscientiously to meet all these oppressive demands, Napoleon purposely delayed the evacuation of the country, paid no attention to representations made him, treated the Prussian ambassador like a servant, and kept faith with nobody. "Is it not enough to make one despair?" asked Louise in a letter. "Ah! my God, why hast Thou forsaken us?" Her last comforter on earth was Stein, who, with his "great heart and comprehensive mind," she hoped might still find a way out of this misery.

The Queen, supported by the King's brothers and the patriotic Princess Louise Radziwill, a sister of Prince Louis Ferdinand, undertook to persuade the King that Stein was the only saviour in this time of need; and begged him to recall to the head of the ministry the man who had once been dismissed in disfavor. The King agreed; and Stein, generously forgetting the injustice which had been done him, accepted. He arrived in Memel, September 30, 1807, and was at once placed at the head of the government by the King. But he encountered a strong party bent upon deposing him and which put many obstacles in his way. Louise wrote to him at that time: "I entreat you to be patient during these first months, so that we shall have nothing to regret, and all shall not be lost. I implore you to consider this for the sake of the King, the country, my children, and myself. Patience!"

At length the commission appointed to fix the war indemnity finished its work. The poor, depleted country was really to pay "only" one hundred and fifty-four million francs, and until this was accomplished, it must maintain a French army and allow the taxes to be collected by the French in the provinces occupied by them! Even Stein, when he heard of these terrible demands, was turned to stone. This new and dreadful calamity was a crushing blow for a weak woman. It is no wonder that she wrote in October, 1807:

"Even I am losing my fortitude. It is terribly hard, especially as it is undeserved. My future is very sad. If we may only keep Berlin; but sometimes I have an awful presentiment

that he will take it from us also and make it the capital of another kingdom. In that event I have only one wish—to emigrate to some distant land and to live a private life and forget — if possible. Alas! poor Prussia! Deserted through weakness, persecuted by insolence, depleted by misfortune, we must perish. Savary, the French ambassador, has assured us that Russia's intervention would not help us, and he has advised us to sell our jewels and valuables. Think of his daring to say this!"

The mockery of this advice wounded Louise, who was already accustomed to privations and self-denial. During her stay in Memel money was often lacking for daily expenses. At that time many citizens fared more sumptuously than the royal family. The King sent his golden dinner service to the mint to be turned into money to lighten the burden of his oppressed subjects. Only a single golden plate remained of all the inherited antique treasures. The princes and princesses also renounced a third of their yearly incomes. It was at that time that the hard-pressed King sent his eldest daughter, afterwards Empress of Russia, a five-thaler note for a new dress, adding that she must make that do, as it was all he could spare.

Napoleon had been unyielding. Even the mission of Prince William to Paris was in vain. They were obliged to resign themselves to the demands of the conqueror. Stein signed a treaty September 3, 1808, in Berlin, by which it was finally agreed that Prussia was to pay one hundred and forty million francs. The fortresses of Glogau, Stettin, and Custrin were to be held by the French until the debt was fully extinguished. Until the first hundred million francs were paid the taxes were to be collected by the French and the country was to be under their regime, and during ten years the Prussians were to keep only 42,000 men under arms. It was now necessary to raise great sums of money as quickly as possible. By alienation of royal domains and strictest economy in all branches of government, a large amount was at last collected, and by the payment of this and by giving mortgage

deeds, at last, at the end of the year 1808, the French (who continually sought to put obstacles in their way) were induced to evacuate the country.

CHAPTER VI

LOUISE'S PROBATION

As soon as the country between Memel and the Weichsel was evacuated the royal family removed to Koenigsberg, January 15, 1808. It was none too soon, for Louise's health had suffered seriously in the cold, damp climate of Memel. In Koenigsberg she gave birth to a daughter, February 1, who was christened with the name of Louise.

In May the royal family moved to the quiet, simple country-seat, which still goes by the name of the Queen. Encouraged by the Koenigsberg professor Severn, she devoted herself while there to the study of the history of Europe and tried "to live in the past, as the future held nothing for her." The ancient history of Germany was particularly comforting to her. The motto of pious knightly times: "Justice, Faith, Love," pleased her so well that she had a seal made bearing the device. But she said that if she were to choose a motto for herself, it would be: "God is my refuge." Her soul was filled with a new hope, as she saw the perishing faith in God's power and dominion reviving amid the fiery trials of the time, and felt that the German and Prussian peoples would awake, abandon foreign immorality, and arise in their might to shake off foreign domination.

At that time a new light had arisen in Switzerland, a man who was dedicating his life and means to the better education of the masses, from a religious and humanitarian standpoint. This was the noble Pestalozzi, who had evolved a new system of education and written books of instruction for the people, particularly for mothers. Louise read the tale of "Poor Leonard and his Noble Gertrude" with great emotion and found in it a passage that particularly appealed to her: "Misery and suffering are God's blessings, when they are

patiently endured." Pestalozzi and his followers hoped everything from a more natural system of education and the thorough religious training of youth. The Queen firmly believed in him and awaited with impatience the arrival of his pupil Zeller, from Wurtemberg, whom the King had summoned to introduce the new Swiss system of education into Prussia. Louise took great pleasure in visiting his school and educational institute, and contributed to its success by every means in her power.

It was at that time that she wrote this splendid letter to her father, which gives us such a charming glimpse not only into her matured and disciplined mind, but also into her happy family life. The beginning is sad. She judges and foresees like a prophetess, then she rejoices as only a happy wife and mother can.

"All is over for us, if not forever, at least for the present. For myself I have no more hopes. I have become resigned, and in this resignation to the will of Heaven, I am composed and happy, if not with an earthly happiness, at least with what means much more, a spiritual happiness. I see ever more clearly that all had to come as it has come. God's providence works silently toward new conditions and I feel that there is to be a new order of things, for the old has outlived itself and is doomed to decay. We had fallen asleep on the laurels of Frederick the Great, who, as master of his century, created a new era. We did not advance with it and so it has left us behind. We can learn a great deal from Napoleon, and what he has accomplished will not be lost. It would be blasphemy to say that God is with him; but evidently he is a tool in the hand of the Almighty employed to bury the dead past. The world will certainly progress, faith in the Perfect One is promise of that. But the world can only grow better through the good. Therefore I do not believe that the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte is firmly seated on his now brilliant throne. Men of truth and justice alone are secure, and he is only politic and crafty. He does not conform to eternal laws,

but only to circumstances as he finds them. He besmirches his reign with many injustices. He is not honest with the world and not true to himself. His unbounded ambition concerns only himself and his personal interests. He is blinded by his own good fortune and believes that he is capable of all things. Withal, he is without moderation; and he who cannot be temperate is sure to fall sooner or later.

"I believe firmly in God, and therefore in a moral order. I do not see this in the rule of the strongest: therefore I live in hopes that better times will come. It is plain that all that has happened and is now happening is but the preparation for the accomplishment of God's good purpose, and not the end, as it shall be in perfection. We shall probably not see this end, but die on the road thither. But God's will be done in everything. In this hope which lives in the depths of my soul I find comfort, strength, courage, and joy. Truly, everything in this world is in transition. We must learn our lesson, and our only care should be to become better and wiser with each day.

"You see, dear father, that you have a pious and resigned daughter even in adversity, and that the principles of Christian piety which I owe to your instruction and your good example have borne good fruit and will as long as I draw breath.

"You will be glad to hear, dear father, that the misfortune which has overtaken us has not affected our family life at all; indeed, it has strengthened the bonds and made them all the more precious. The King, who is the best of men, is kinder and more loving than ever. He is still the lover and bridegroom. His deeds, more than his words, show how attentive and full of care for me he is. Yesterday he said to me so sweetly and simply: 'Dear Louise, you have become more precious and dear to me in our misfortunes, as I see more and more what a treasure I have in you. Let storms rage outside if bright weather can only prevail in our married life. I have named our youngest daughter Louise because of my love for you. May she become a second Louise.' His goodness moved

me to tears. It is my pride, my joy, and my happiness that I possess the love and respect of the best of husbands, and because I love him and we are so in accord, that the will of the one is also the will of the other. It will be easy for me to preserve this happy understanding, which grows more perfect as the years pass. In a word, he loves me and I love him, and we are happiest when we are together. Forgive me, dear father, if I say this rather boastfully. I should not care to speak of it to others; and this also I have learned from the King. It is enough that we know it ourselves.

"Our children are our treasures, and we look upon them with confidence and hope. The Crown-prince [later Frederick William the Fourth] is full of life and spirit. Our son William [the German Emperor], if I do not deceive myself, will be like his father, simple, sensible, and reliable. He resembles his father most, but will not be so handsome, I think. You see, dear father, I am still in love with my husband."

After picturing in the same graphic manner her son Carl and the daughters Charlotte and Alexandrine, the happy mother continues:

"There is nothing to be said yet about little Louise. May she become like her ancestress, the amiable and pious Louise of Orange, the worthy consort of the Great Elector. Now I have shown you my whole gallery, beloved father. You will say, this is a mother who is in love with her children and can see only the good. But really I do not see any bad tendencies in any of them. They have their faults like other children, but these disappear in time as they grow older. Circumstances and conditions discipline people, and it may be well for our children that they have become acquainted in their youth with the serious side of life. Had they grown up in the lap of luxury and in comfort, they would have thought that it must always be so. But now they perceive that there is another side to life in the grave face of their father and the frequent tears and sadness of their mother. My whole care is devoted to my children, and I ask God daily in my prayers to bless them

and not to take his Holy Spirit from them. If God preserves them to me, he gives me my richest treasure, which no one can take from me. Come what may, united with our good children we shall be happy. I am and remain always your grateful daughter,

"LOUISE"

Thus, happy with her husband and children, communing with God and occupied with the future of her people, Louise lived a blessed life in her family circle, though the little country house was hardly large enough to accommodate them, and in spite of the hardships of the time. "I have good books, a good conscience, a good piano, and so can live more peacefully among the storms of the world than those who cause these storms," she wrote to a friend.

Napoleon had just raised a fresh storm by crushing Spain, as he had crushed Prussia. But this time it was a revolution of the people, a prophecy of the storm which was to arise five years later against the tyrant in enslaved Germany. In the dethronement of the King of Spain at a time of peace, in order to put his brother Joseph on the throne, Louise recognized fresh evidence of the iron hand which rested so heavily on the bowed brow of Europe, and also a warning for Prussia. "What have we to expect in our situation?" she wrote. "Ah, my God! will the time come when the hand of fate shall at last write 'Mene, mene, tekell' on these walls? I do not complain, however, that my lot has been cast in this unhappy period. I have borne children who will perhaps contribute to the good of humanity."

In the meanwhile Napoleon had been holding the fate of Prussia cruelly in the balance, until in September, 1808, the country, with the exception of the three fortresses on the Oder, was at last evacuated by the French tormentors. Napoleon now wished to have the royal family again in Berlin, "as in a mousetrap," surrounded by the armies of France and of the Rhenish Confederation. Instead of immediately returning thither, they gladly accepted an invitation from Czar

Alexander to visit St. Petersburg, December 27. On the journey the King and Queen were shown at Riga the house of the order, founded in 1390, "guild of the blockheads," whose members were obliged to take an oath never to marry.

The King remarked to Louise: "Had I belonged to that guild you would have been spared many unhappy experiences."

"Had they been ten times worse, and had you been able to foretell all our misfortunes, I should not have allowed you to become a master of this guild," she answered.

The royal pair were greeted with all honors and pomp, both on the journey and in St. Petersburg. The French ambassador also feted them at a grand banquet. But Louise was depressed rather than elated by all this pomp and ceremony. A deep melancholy possessed her in the midst of these splendors. Added to this, she fell ill at an evening exhibition of fireworks, which ended with a shower of thirty-four thousand rockets.

On January 31, the King and Queen returned to Koenigsberg. "I come as I went; nothing dazzles me now," she remarked. "My kingdom is not of this world." Two days after her thirty-third birthday (1809) she wrote:

"This has been another day when I have felt the burden of the world with all its sins. I am sick and I believe that as long as things remain in their present condition, I shall not get well. [It was dreadful to her that war had broken out again between France and Austria, and in the end Russia and Prussia would be forced to take the field against Austria.] My birthday was a terrible day to me. In the evening there was a brilliant celebration given by the city in my honor, preceded by a rich, gay banquet at the castle. How sad it all made me! My heart was torn. I danced! I smiled and said pleasant things to the hosts, was friendly to every one, but could scarcely endure my misery. To whom will Prussia belong a year hence? Whither

shall we all be scattered? God, Almighty Father, take pity on us!"

In the new campaign against Austria, Napoleon arrived before Vienna, May 10. After overthrowing the brave army led so gallantly by Archduke Carl, in the battle of Wagram (July 5-6, 1809), he dictated the humiliating peace treaty at Schonbrunn on October 14, which made the return of the royal family to Berlin impossible. Therefore Louise passed another summer with her family at the country-seat near Koenigsberg. Her health grew worse, and an intermittent fever depleted her system. Austria's new misfortune, which completed the enslavement of Germany, increased her illness. —" God knows where I may be buried—scarcely in Prussian soil

Austria is singing her swan song and then adieu, Germania!" she wrote in her journal, fearing the utmost from Napoleon's anger and greed and no longer believing there was any future for them on earth.

Notwithstanding all this, she devoted herself zealously, as far as her strength allowed her to do so, to the schools of the adjacent metropolis of Koenigsberg, as the nurseries of a better future. She was especially interested in the "model institute" installed in the orphans' home by School-director Zeller. She studied detailed reports and took a lively interest in all that pertained to the moral elevation of the people. She clearly perceived that this would cost great sacrifices. To her sorrow she realized that neither reason nor justice, morality nor piety had been awakened by the misfortunes which had overtaken Prussia. She wrote to a friend: "Our natures are too hardened through selfishness and false education for them to be easily shaken or disciplined. Only great revolutions can and will accomplish this."

She watched with great interest during this cruel and sorrowful time, the revolt of the people of the Tyrol under the leadership of the heroic, simple, and pious Andreas Hofer, innkeeper of Passeyr, against the foreigners. "Hofer!" she wrote, "what a man! This Hofer, a peasant, becomes a field-

marshal, and what an able one! His weapons, prayer; his ally, God! He fights with folded hands and bent knee, and slays as with the flaming sword of the cherubim!" How she must have mourned over the fallen hero, when, betrayed by a countryman, he was taken prisoner by the French and shot on the walls of the fortress at Mantua, February 20, 1810!

At the beginning of September Louise had to be taken back to the city castle as the result of a relapse. In those days of suffering she found a comforter in the excellent, liberal-minded Pastor Borowsky. Once, when the King was looking dejectedly into the future, he took him by the button of his uniform and frankly said to him: "Your Majesty must learn faith!" Borowsky describes the Queen thus:

"She is not joyful in this time of trial; but her earnestness is full of quiet cheer, and the insight and composure which God has given her lends to her personality a charm and dignity. Her eyes have indeed lost their former brilliancy, and one can tell that she has wept much and still weeps; but they have gained an expression of sadness and quiet longing which is more beautiful than the mere zest of life. The roses on her cheeks have faded, and a delicate pallor has taken their place; but it is still a beautiful face, and I like the white roses on those cheeks almost better than the red ones. About her mouth, where formerly a sweet, happy smile lurked, one sees now and then a slight trembling of the lips. This shows pain but no bitterness. Her dress is always extremely simple, and the choice of colors shows her mood. Last Sunday I found her alone in the sitting-room, and reading the Holy Book. She quickly arose, met me kindly, and began at once: ' I have now come to feel and appreciate the wonderful one hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm about which we lately conversed. The more I ponder it and try to understand it, the more its grandeur and loveliness attract me. I know of nothing so elevating and comforting, so deep and so sweet, as these precious words. It is full of a spirit of sadness and yet of victory, of resignation and of the most joyful

confidence and trust; it is a hallelujah with tears. I have read it again and again, until it is graven on my memory.' And then the Queen reverently repeated the psalm, with a soft, but clear, firm voice, varying it here and there and applying it to her condition. The tone in which she recited it betrayed how deeply her richly tuned nature had made it her own."

Louise's youngest son, Albert, was born October fourth. At the christening the officiating clergyman spoke of "the dedication of the child to life" instead of the reception of this new soul into the company of God's elect. This shallow and superficial interpretation, which seemed to Louise like a profanation of the holy sacrament, grieved her deeply. Only the certainty consoled her that the worthiness or the opinions of the officiating clergyman had nothing to do with the holiness of the christening and could take nothing from it, for its power comes from God who instituted it, and not from weak men who perform it. But these occurrences gave her an insight into the true causes of Prussia's downfall. She expressed this in the words: "We have fallen away from the faith; hence our misfortunes." All the more urgent it seemed to her that she must never tire in her work, particularly for the religious elevation of the people. In this she was in accord with her husband. Freiherr von Stein, who had been banished by Napoleon, but whom she considered the "foundation stone of justice" and a "jewel among the German people," and had always esteemed so highly because the foundation of his steadfast political character was a serious piety and high morality, expressed her sentiments exactly when he said that "it was the highest duty to foster a moral, religious, and patriotic spirit in the nation, to infuse fresh courage, self reliance, and a feeling of national unity, with a readiness to make any sacrifice for independence." Thus Louise inspired all the efforts and the work by means of which, in the field of religion, of morality, and of scientific education, the Prussian State was to be regenerated.

CHAPTER VII

LOUISE'S DEATH

Although life in Koenigsberg and its environs was peaceful and pleasant, yet Louise often felt oppressed "in this banishment, this climate of raging storms more than a hundred miles from her home." A fit of homesickness for Berlin and her Charlottenburg seized her. When at last the time of return grew near, she wept many tears at the thought of finding all as it had been, and yet so changed. "Dark forebodings trouble me," she admitted, while everywhere the most gratifying and touching reception was being prepared for them.

The King, the Queen, the Princes and Princesses left Koenigsberg December 15, 1809, and during the journey, which lasted eight days, were the recipients of countless proofs of sincere affection from the populace. In Stargard they met old Nettelbeck of Kolberg, who had assisted the commandant Gneisenau so valiantly and successfully in the defence of this fortress, while other Prussian strongholds were shamefully capitulating. He was invited to dinner, and afterward had a long conversation in the adjoining room with the King and Queen. He was so affected at the sight of the long-suffering pair that he cried out: "Ah! as I look upon Your Majesty and my good Queen and think of the misfortunes which still weigh so heavily upon you, it seems as though my heart would break." They all wept, and Nettelbeck, turning to the Queen, said: "May God long preserve you, my good Queen, to comfort my good King, for without you he could not have borne his misfortunes."

On December 23, 1809, the same day on which, sixteen years before, she had made her first triumphal entry into Berlin, she now returned after an absence of two years and two months. In the meanwhile Berlin had been treated as the capital of a French province, and Louise found that her

apartments had been occupied by insolent French generals. The rejoicings of the inhabitants over the return of their King and Queen were exuberant. The Queen with the younger children drove in a magnificent carriage which the citizens of Berlin had given her. The King was on horseback; the Princes Frederick and William followed as officers of the guard with their regiments. The City Council hoped that Their Majesties would give the citizens the pleasure of attending the gala performance at the theatre in the evening. "No," said the King, "the first place I visit in Berlin shall be the church." Not until the following Monday did he appear with his family at the opera house, where they were greeted with great enthusiasm, and many eyes filled with tears at the sight of the beloved King and "the partner of his sorrows." Many Prussians vowed, as they saw their Queen again, that they would not rest until they had caused those angelic eyes, which had so often filled with tears over Bonaparte's insults and injuries, to shine with joy over Prussian victories.

During the occupation of Berlin by the French, all mention of the Queen and any celebration in her honor had been strictly forbidden by the commandant. Nevertheless, on her birthday, the famous actor Iffland appeared on the stage at the evening performance wearing a rose and induced the other actors to do likewise. The audience immediately guessed what the roses meant, and cheered the Queen. Iffland suffered the penalty of a few days' arrest for this. The Queen summoned him to her presence at the theatre to express her gratitude and appreciation. Later the King bestowed on him the order of the Red Eagle.

Immediately after her return, Louise remembered another worthy man, who had stood for the truth when nearly all were bowing before the conquerors and allowing the most shameful scandals against the Queen to be circulated. Upon a certain occasion the local authorities of Berlin were being presented to the French Emperor, and he broke out in abusive complaints against the Queen. The reverend Dr. Ermann

interrupted him abruptly with the words: "Sire, that is not true." The despot hastily turned to the miscreant who had dared to tax him with the lie, but when he saw the tall, venerable figure of the old clergyman and looked into his earnest face, he remained silent and confused and said not another word about the Queen. The King also honored Ermann with an order; but Louise arose from the dinner-table at which the excellent man was a guest and went to him, glass in hand, to greet him, saying: "I cannot deny myself the pleasure of drinking to the knight, who, when all kept silence, had the courage to break a lance for the honor of his Queen. Do you still remember how, on your jubilee, we wished you happiness and long life? God has heard our prayer and preserved you, so that there should be at least one courageous enough to tell Napoleon the truth."

Their terrible enemy continually devised methods for making life uncomfortable for Louise and her family, even in Berlin. He insisted upon the payment of the outstanding war debts more vehemently than ever, and threatened to occupy the country once more with an army to collect them. But all means of help had been exhausted, and it was impossible to make any new loans. Then Napoleon intimated to the King that he could wipe out the debt by ceding the country and its people. Indeed, Minister Altenstein could see in the relinquishment of Silesia the only possible way out of their difficulties. But the King and Queen rejected this idea with indignation, and the new Minister, Hardenberg, succeeded in conciliating Napoleon for the time being, until Prussia had recuperated and liberation was at hand.

But Louise was not destined to see this time of resurrection. She could not rid herself of the thought that fresh misfortunes awaited her family and country, and that the King might be taken from her by some Napoleonic act of violence. On her birthday she said: "I think this is the last time that I shall celebrate my birthday here." Her condition became rapidly worse. She suffered from oppressed breathing and

heart attacks, and had several spells of fever. The anxious physicians advised her to beware of strong emotions and excitement. But how in such times could the heart of a woman so sensitive remain calm and cheerful? She passed the month of May in Potsdam and was so much improved by the country sojourn that she ventured to carry out a long-cherished plan.

She had long wished to visit her beloved father in Strelitz. She started cheerfully from Charlottenburg, June 25, 1810, but soon became very serious, and scarcely knew why she was so downhearted when she reached the frontiers of Mecklenburg. Did she have a presentiment of her early death? Certainly she had said at her last birthday celebration — "I feel that this will be the last time that I shall have a birthday." But this fit of sadness passed and she was filled with joy at the meeting with her dear father. She found her eighty-year-old grandmother, the Landgravine of Darmstadt, also at Strelitz. While there she wished to live only for her own people, and she attended but one court function, at which all those present noted an indescribable nobility and sweetness in her bearing. Her beautiful features bore the stamp of suffering, and when she raised her lovely blue eyes toward heaven, her look unconsciously expressed a longing for the home above. After the meal, Louise joined the circle of more intimate friends, and they admired the pearls which were her only ornaments. She answered: "I am very fond of them and withheld them when I gave up my jewels. They suit me best for they symbolize tears, and I have wept so many." When the King punctually joined her as he had promised, she cried: "Now at last I am perfectly happy." She immediately seated herself at her father's desk and wrote in French the words:

My dear father, to-day I am very happy as your daughter and as wife of the best of all husbands.

NEW STRELITZ, June 28, 1810

"LOUISE"

These were the last words she ever wrote.

Late in the evening she drove with the King and her family out to the country seat of High-Zieritz. On alighting she felt ill and was seized with a severe catarrhal fever. The next day she forced herself to appear at table and in the garden for tea with the family. But the next morning the doctor, whom she had not called, as she was anxious to accompany her husband to Rhinesberg, found her condition serious. After being bled, she fainted. Nevertheless she grew so much better that on July 3 the King, who was obliged to go to Berlin on important business of state, left her, hoping to return in a few days to find her well enough to be taken home. The illness seemed to lessen during the week. Louise bore the sleepless nights patiently; she seemed tranquil. The King, who had himself fallen ill, sent the Queen's own physician, who found that the greatest danger was over. But the disease took another bad turn, though there were times of improvement when the cough abated and the patient was able to talk with her old-time strength and clearness. A letter from the King affected her so much that she kept it on her heart, where she could read it again and again. "How happy is she who receives such letters!" she exclaimed several times. She was also interested in political news and thought continually of her children.

On July 13, the birthday of her daughter Charlotte, she received a letter from her full of tenderness and longing. Her sister Frederika read it to the Queen, but was obliged to pause several times and could not finish it, for the patient was too much agitated by it. After a few comfortable days, on July 16 severe heart paroxysms set in, which continued fully five hours. It was the first struggle with death. The Duke's physician, Dr. Hieronymi, found an incurable affection of the heart and prepared the Queen's father for the worst. Messengers were sent post-haste to the King in Charlottenburg. Instead of Dr. Hufeland, who had been called to Holland, Dr. Heim of Berlin with three other physicians came. The fever and weakness grew worse. Louise could scarcely await the coming of the King, and she was happy when she heard that he would arrive July 19. She was patient

during her terrible pain and thanked God for every moment of relief, but the feeling of her infirmity overwhelmed her. "I am a Queen," she said once, "but I cannot so much as move my arm."

The coughing spells and oppression of breathing grew worse during the night, and Dr. Heim remained at her bedside. About midnight the patient had a burning thirst, drank several times, and often exclaimed: "Air! air!" A cold perspiration stood in great drops on her forehead. At two o'clock, in one of her painful moments, she said to the physician: "Think of it! if I should have to die and leave the King and my children!"

At the break of day, about four o'clock, the King arrived with the two eldest sons. The sky was overcast. Having been advised of the certainty of her death the King was completely crushed with grief. When her grandmother said that with God nothing is impossible, the bitter words escaped him: "Ah! if she were not mine she would live; but as she is my wife, she is sure to die."

When he entered her room she said with a feeble voice: "My dear friend, how happy I am to see you!" Though the King made the greatest effort he could not completely control his grief. "Am I then so dangerously ill?" she asked him. After he had somewhat reassured her, she asked again: "Who came with you?"

"Fritz and William," answered the King.

"Oh, how happy I am!" she said, while her hand trembled in his.

"I will fetch them," he cried, hardly able to master his feelings. He immediately returned leading both sons to their mother's bedside.

"Ah, dear Fritz, dear William, are you here?" she said to them. They wept aloud, went out, and returned when the paroxysm of her pain had subsided.

In the meantime it had come to be nearly nine o'clock. A new paroxysm came on. "Air! air!" gasped the Queen. The doctor came in and tried to raise her arms, but she was not able to keep them there, and as they sank she said: "Ah, nothing can help me but death!" The King sat beside her and held her right hand. Her sister, the Princess Solms, kneeling in front of her, had grasped her left hand. Her weary head rested on the bosom of her friend Madame von Berg. At ten minutes before nine, July 19, 1810, came the last seizure of pain. Louise bent her head gently back, closed her eyes, and cried: "Lord Jesus, take me quickly!"

Five minutes later she had breathed her life away in a last deep sigh.

The King had sunk back, but now drew himself quickly together and, amid kisses and tears, closed the eyes of his Louise, "his life's star, which had guided him so faithfully our life's dark journey," as the poet sang. Then he hurried out and brought his two sons, who, weeping bitterly, kissed the hands of their departed mother.

The beautiful features of the Queen were not in the least distorted. Death seemed to glorify her countenance. Her mouth bore an expression of victory and peace. The features of "the most beautiful woman in the King's lands" have been preserved by Rauch's master hand in the marble monument which he was later commissioned to chisel for her tomb in Charlottenburg.

On July 20 the King left High-Zieritz with his children, and a week later the Queen's remains were brought to Berlin. The whole city was in mourning, not a heart remained untouched; tears flowed, and even men wept as the funeral procession passed by. The body lay in state in the castle until the thirtieth. Then the casket was sealed and laid away for a time in the cathedral. On December 23 it was taken to Charlottenburg and placed in the mausoleum which the King had had built after plans by the famous architect Schinkel. Over the vault rises a building in the form of a Greek temple.

The roof of the antechamber is supported by four granite columns. The light falls from above through blue glass, which casts a magical light over its interior. On the memorial tablet the King caused the simple words to be engraved: "According to God's Will." In the year 1815 the marble figure of the Queen was placed in the mausoleum. The transfigured Queen lies on a couch as though in peaceful slumber. Her head, with its flowing hair crowned with a diadem, is slightly inclined toward the right. The beautiful arms, clad in short sleeves, are lightly crossed below the breast, which the right hand touches expressively. One foot is crossed over the other, and the whole beautiful figure is half revealed by a simple, flowing garment.

Louise was lovely in life and her monument shows her lovely in death. She rests in the chamber, where trials can no longer touch her, until on the day of resurrection her decayed body shall be awakened from the tomb to a more beautiful life. More enduring even than marble is the memory which she has left behind in our hearts. She gave to her people and the whole German fatherland an example of piety, purity, singleness of heart, and true, womanly virtues; a model of humility in fortune, courageous faith in misfortune, of devoted patriotism, of faithfulness in small things as well as in great things. Therefore her influence has been felt, even after the night came, in which no man can work.

The rise of the Prussian people in the great war for liberation from Italian oppression and craftiness, was principally inspired by the memory of the never-to-be-forgotten Queen, "who always carried the banner of hope before us," as the poet Heinrich von Kleist sung on her last birthday. Her memory and example inspired a great multitude of women and girls to sacrifice their gold rings for iron ones, which bore the inscription: "I gave gold for iron."

In the year 1813, on the birthday anniversary of the departed, King Frederick William the Third instituted the highest order of the soldiers of liberty, "the Iron Cross." After the battle of Leipzig (October 18, 1813) he hurried from the

battlefield to the thanksgiving service in the Berlin cathedral and then to the mausoleum in Charlottenburg to place a wreath on the casket of the perfect one. He founded the Order of Louise, August 3, 1814, as a decoration for the most zealous among the army nurses. Since 1840 he has rested beside her.

Her oldest son, King Frederick William the Fourth, said, in the year 1848: "The unity of Germany is dear to my heart; this idea is an inheritance from my mother." But her second son, William, when the nephew of his mother's old arch-enemy declared war against Germany on the anniversary of Louise's death, July 19, 1870, knelt at his mother's coffin in the tomb at Charlottenburg before he went to meet the enemy, and prayed for a blessing from above. It accompanied him through many battles and victories, until he arrived before the palace at Versailles. He returned to Berlin March 17, 1871, as Emperor of the united German fatherland, crowned with laurels, but giving the honor to God alone, and stood once more at his mother's grave in Charlottenburg. How wonderfully through the grace of God had all her hopes been realized!