

## Chapter 23 : Crown Princess and Mother (II) (1824-1844).

At her father's death February 21, 1824, Josephine retired into mourning, confided in her diary, and wrote letters. The archive is thoroughly culled though. I reconstruct her life as a number of knowledge gaps & speculations. There is a tendency to sentimentalize her, but I have tried to avoid that. Unlike Desirée, she was queen material. As the Duchess d'Abrantès used to say: A queen should be guided by her intellect, not by her emotions & her position requires character, cool and knowledge of this world's evil.<sup>1</sup> However, it took her a long time to reach this exalted state of mind, starting as an expatriate 16-year-old child bride. An approximate breakdown of her Swedish life is: 1824/25 Continued schooling, 1825/35 Maternal duties & charity, 1835/44 the Catholic Church, 1844/59 Queen, 1859/76 Widow & harvest time. In 1835, her nerves were shot and she spent the summer at Medevi spa. Possibly it had something to do with Oscar courting artist Emilie Högqvist.

Oscar & Josephine's marriage has been portrayed, by themselves and others, as lightning love, but that has not been possible to confirm. Oscar was looking for an ideal mother for his children. Josephine wanted to please everyone, but it was also the opportunity of a lifetime. She arrived in Sweden accompanied by her father's adjutant. The father was dying, and the mother remained in Bavaria by his side. She brought two servants: Anna Barbara (Bertha) Zück (1797-1868) and her newly graduated house priest Lorentz Studach (1796-1873). They remained in Sweden for the rest of their lives and became Josephine's confidants. Zück advanced to managing her finances. Studach was her confessor and eventually became Catholic bishop. They had a small chapel or prayer room in an attic space at the castle where Studach held bible studies and distributed the Eucharist. In her letters home, Josephine joked about them as "the trio". Her contacts with other Catholics in Stockholm, c. 300 craftsmen and legation workers, mostly Germans & French, were long non-existent.

Josephine's life as a princess, mother, queen and widow is difficult, despite eight longer biographies, to fathom (Müller 1873; Fabritius 1877; Almén 1893: ss. 122-140; Lundebacken 1943; Braun 1950; Ulfstätter-Troell 1996: ss. 85-152; Becker & Blücker red. 2007; Nohrenius & Wiklund 2012: ss. 48-141). Add 23 short biographies, memories & obituaries (Deleen 1832: s. 22; O.A.E.S. 1876; Hamilton 1876; N.N. 1876; NFB 1884; Starbäck & Bäckström 1885: del 11, ss. 60-62; SBHL 1906; NFB 1910; Wimmerström 1937; Lande & Gran 1945: ss. 240-241; Nerman 1952: ss. 348-350; Holm 1973; Ohlmarks 1973: 140-141; Elgklou 1978: ss. 28-...-127; Lagerqvist 1979: ss. 36-53; Heymovski 1995: s. 39; Sundberg 2004: ss. 212- 215; Langslet 2005; Lindqvist 2006: ss. 407-420; Stenborg 2007; Blom 2009: ss. 96-97; Langslet 2009; Norlin 2015: ss. 82-85), some special studies (Lundebeck 1955: ss. 265-281,304-321; Sehlstedt 1981: 6-29; Bengtsson 1988, 1991a, 1991b & 1993; Alm 1999; Dahlström 2006: ss. 36-70; Alm 2010), seven biographies, memoirs & novels in which she is an important secondary character (Reuter Dahl 1920; Söderhjelm & Palmstierna 1944; Lyttkens 1945; Girod de l'Ain 1960; Stensson 1986; Ulvros 2007; Karle 2013).

The main problem is gaps in the narrative.

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<sup>1</sup> D'Abrantès 1831: del 2, s. 154.

The "close-ups" of Josephine's first year in Sweden comes from two sources: The letters of Hedvig Ulrika Sofia (Ulla) Rosensvärd (1793-1857; m. 1814 Lagerbielke; 1826 maid of honour) & Josephine's Diary:

Wherever the young crown prince couple appeared, they aroused admiration. "Whoever has the honour to see the princess at close quarters cannot help but give her unrestricted reverence and affection. I have probably never see anything more morally perfect, but precisely because of this I must admit that my affection has been mixed with the kind of fear, which one always has for those, in which nothing wrong can be discovered," writes the maid of honour Ulla Lagerbielke, who has left many clues to Josephine's character in her letters to the husband "Janne" in Karlskrona, Admiral Johan Lagerbielke. After telling him that one day Josephine had amused Charles John with card tricks, she adds: "The Crown Princess is very amused by such things, and we sometimes do long calculations. She has been gracious enough to say that she will miss me. She is incomprehensibly cute. I have now seen her for almost two months without once finding any blemish but always radiating the same kindness and desire to please. One would rather believe her an angel than a human."<sup>2</sup>

"The king treats her [Josephine] as half grown, flattering her in all manner of ways; She hugs and jokes with him in all naiveté, and this has given rise to several incidents. For example: The king always pockets sweets and the like, and the princess has become accustomed, any time they encounter each other, pretending violence to plunder the supply. Late Christmas Eve [1823], she did the same, until she eventually found something else, a piece of jewellery. As punishment she was sentenced to always carry the stolen merchandise."<sup>3</sup> Desirée was moderately amused by the attention Charles John paid to Josephine and it is said they had several arguments, which Josephine in vain tried to avert:

1824: "I can only in part recall my feelings from last night. My father-in-law received us with his customary kindness, delighted to see us again. - What a contrast to enter the room - D[esirée] received us with a bonjour that was colder than ice, the ladies-in-waiting then greeted us ceremonially and watched us from the corner of the eye. I could hardly restrain my tears."<sup>4</sup>

1825: "Once when the princess was going on a hunting trip, Charles John wanted to surprise her by giving her a delicious mare. The splendid gift caused Desirée to burst into tears, and she began to accuse her husband of neglecting her."<sup>5</sup> Then chamberlain Nauckhoff describes the episode in his memoirs:

On August 21 [1825], the name Day of Josephine, the Queen, Crown Prince, Crown Princess and others present, took a morning walk, in the park at Rosersberg; They dwelt at the bark temple there and, while refreshments were taken, was quite unexpectedly presented and delivered on the king's behalf an Isabell - a real beauty - dressed up in a women's saddle of red maroquin, utterly elegant. The Crown Princess appeared most pleasantly surprised, and also the others; But the joy was quickly disrupted by an attack of spasms,

<sup>2</sup> Söderhjelm & Palmstierna 1944: ss. 167-168; Ulvros 2007: ss. 107. [Brev från Ulla till Johan Lagerbielke. Okänt datum. 1823.]

<sup>3</sup> Söderhjelm & Palmstierna 1944: ss. 160-161; Ulvros 2007: ss. 103-104. [Okänd källa.]

<sup>4</sup> Lagerqvist 1979: s. 44; Ulvros 2007: s. 104. [Ur Josefinas dagbok, 1824-06.]

<sup>5</sup> Ulvros 2007: s. 104. [Okänd källa.]

which overtook the Queen: you've never heard of h. m. being bothered by such, neither sooner nor later, but here it was. I have since not seen or even heard of the beautiful Isabell, and would hold it all for a dream, if I had not seen it myself.<sup>6</sup>

[Possibly it is the same mare depicted in a later French print.<sup>7</sup> Josephine rides a women's saddle dressed in an English riding suit, i.e. long dress & high hat. Like all noble children, she was put in the saddle already as a toddler, but was not very amused by it. She preferred walking.]

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The duty of a crown princess is to give birth to a heir to the throne. The duty of a queen is to be seen and admired. Both shall behave in a manner fitting their position. This has never been easy, requires that the task be for life, and hope for leniency. Contrary to Desirée, Josephine at least had discipline & good intentions. On arrival in Sweden, however, she was about as childish as one would expect from a 16-year-old family girl with a protected upbringing. There are fragmentary accounts in her diary where she complains about being deprived of her doll, that no one took her seriously, and that her godfather Napoleon was bad mouthed. The latter appears to have been due to the fact that Napoleon's St. Helena memoirs were recently published. Charles John was very upset to be accused of incompetence & disloyalty and in his usual way let his environment suffer for it. Josephine: "They said that I cried because they took my doll away - in reality I cried because those whom I had loved and honoured all my childhood, were branded as scourges of the past..."<sup>8</sup>

Josephine's Swedish education continued. It is unclear for how long, but probably until the first child. Many fine words have been spoken about her language skills, but they seem exaggerated. She had an education equivalent to 7-years of public school & her spelling was poor. French was her first language. German her second language. Oscar seems to have seen her as an educational project, in the manner of Emilie Höggqvist, and she got involved in his cultural and social interests.

Although Charles John, Desirée & the Crown Prince Couple lived wall to wall at the castle, everyone kept to themselves. The natural thing was for Desirée to introduced Josephine to Swedish conditions but she was just as much in need of help herself. Josephine was granted her own court, but nothing is known about its role in educating her. In her early years she had great help from her innocent beauty, which was considered to perfectly reflect the true nature of women: Half children, half angels. She was extremely impractical, but improved over the years. Oscar seems to have let her dispose freely of her dowry. As a woman, she was responsible for the household etc. In 1829, the family's financial situation was strained after the renovation of the Tullgarn Castle. Charles John reportedly pointed out to her that if she continued to use up the capital, she would soon have no money left. Josephine is said at this time to have miraculously acquired a private-economic education, started to keep records of her expenses and invest in shares. The only explanation I can come up with is that she received help from Desirée, who was good at such things. The relationship between them seems to have improved considerably over time. The age difference did not mean as much, Desirée made approaches to behaving like a Catholic, for example confessed every Easter,

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<sup>6</sup> 1:e hovmarskalk J O Nauckhoffs memoarer. I: Ahnfelt 1880: del 2, ss. 117-118.

<sup>7</sup> Lagerqvist 1979: s. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Nohrenius & Wiklund 2012: s. 32. [Ur Josefinas dagbok 1824.]

and took her grandmother's role seriously, played with her grandchildren, arranged children's parties & nice family dinners. Josephine also had a friend, the English ambassador's wife Lady Mary-Elisabeth Cartwright (1805-1902; b. von Sandizell), of Bavarian origin & reportedly a childhood friend. The first child was late in coming & Charles John worried that she was sterile. In vain it turned out. Josephine bore five children:

Charles (XV), born 3 May 1826, died 18 September 1872.  
Gustaf, born 18 June 1827, died 24 September 1852.  
Oscar (II), born 21 January 1829, died 8 December 1907.  
Eugenie, born 24 April 1830, 23 April 1889.  
August, born 24 August 1831, died 4 March 1873.

After Charles's birth, on June 4, she underwent the "Thanksgiving Service for surviving the Birth of a Child" (also known as Churching; this was supposed to involve purification, i.e. a religious element; but I have not been able to verify that). Josephine was forced (?) to again kneel before the archbishop and receive his blessing. In the following years he was however content with Josephine attending a thanksgiving service (*Te Deum*). Josephine and her mother are said to have been very upset by this churching, there was an official Bavarian, possibly even papal, protest. According to Post-och Inrikes Tidningar, the churching has indeed taken place, but it is not mentioned in the biographies until 1937<sup>9</sup>, and then the depictions of it become increasingly detailed without it being clear where the information comes from.

Lundebäcken (1943) devotes a whole chapter to the event as an attempt by Archbishop Rosenstein to forcibly convert Josephine to Protestantism, but the book lacks sources.<sup>10</sup> Becker & Blücker (2007) has a half page that appears based on Lundebäck. There are no sources here either.<sup>11</sup> Braun (1950) does not even mention that it took place. Josephine's fellow-believer Sophie Adlersparre has in her necrology a possible explanation for the silence: "1826-1832 ... A noticeable attachment to the religion of the husband, attributed to the influence of one of the most powerful spirits of the Swedish church and the desire of the woman's heart to become in all things one with the beloved. Causing a great unrest in Rome as well as vigorous and successful efforts, to attach the future queen and the royal mother to the chair of St. Petri with permanent ties."<sup>12</sup> Höjer refers to an exchange of letters in the Bernadotte Library. He claims the churching was the idea of her father-in-law Charles John.<sup>13</sup>

Josephine thus seems to have been a tool both in religious and worldly matters for the ambitions of others. In that she resembled all other women of her generation. Her private views on God and religion and whether she in her youth was prepared to abandon them is unclear. There is speculation about an ecumenical approach based on such things as being versed in the history of religion, possessing a copy of the Koran, and attending the Protestant services and rituals of the court. When the Eugénia chapel was completed, she also attended Catholic services, but it is unclear how often. She is said to have abstained during her time as queen 1844-1859. It was in her own interest to keep a low profile. She is sometimes said to have influenced Oscar in a liberal direction towards an increased freedom of religion, but evidence is lacking.

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<sup>9</sup> Wehner red. 1937: s. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Lundebäck 1943: ss. 187-194.

<sup>11</sup> Beckert & Blücker 2007: ss. 76-77.

<sup>12</sup> Adlersparre 1976: s. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Höjer 1960: s. 526.

There are indications that Josephine had an ecstatic-personal attitude to the prayer and a couple of times she was actually found unconscious in the chapel. She was interested in "Christian socialism" and, like Studach, was attracted to mysticism in the spirit of Thomas à Kempis.

Studach is believed to have had a negative influence on her world view. He was - to put it mildly - a reactionary oddball. "He sees in the [Roman] empire and the papacy, which were the pillars of the great medieval order, the highlights of European culture. But as these two powers split, Europe has also fallen into a state of dissolution, which is progressing ever further, the deeper the division becomes."<sup>14</sup> Robert Braun claims that Josephine had a similar hierarchical world view.<sup>15</sup> But that is overstating it. Josephine was a politically conservative naturalist (in the spirit of Buffon) with certain cultural interests. She practised patronage by having her self painted and commissioned copies of famous paintings.<sup>16</sup> She composed, but was not good at it. There are some unprinted scores. The family had a piano teacher Edmund Passy (1823-1830). When the children became better than herself, she stopped playing, but was happy to attend the Academy of Music, the Opera & Private Soirées. Her library is in the same vein:

She had read a Western canon, but her favourite writer appears to have been Countess Ida Hahn-Hahn, who wrote edifying entertainment literature. Josephine also liked Fredrika Bremer, Countess de Genlis & Walter Scott. Unlike Desirée, she had many scientific, social and medical non-fiction books, manuals, and encyclopedias. Even Florence Nightingales Notes on Hospitals had found its way into the bookshelf. But there was little political, historical, religious, artistic or debating literature.<sup>17</sup>

Josephine was a strict mother, delegated child care to the employees & really only socialized with her daughter Eugénie. Oscar occasionally appeared in the nursery and spoiled the children. They followed quickly one after the other and Josephine finally felt exhausted by it all. It has been speculated that their married life ceased for reasons of birth control and that Oscar's relationship with actress Emilie Höggqvist 1836-1842 was a replacement. Josephine herself believed that "woman should suffer in silence"<sup>18</sup>, and that she did. She is supposed to have found out about the relationship by chance and at a late stage, through a forgotten note on Oscar's desk, but there is no source. Another version is that Charles John told her so that she wouldn't act surprised. As Emilie seems to have infected Oscar with her syphilis, but he didn't pass it on to Josephine, Oscar & Josephine's married life most probably was over by 1840/42. Life was languorous:

There have been no parties. We have too few acquaintances and those we have, we meet too often in other circumstances. In addition I cannot say that people here understand how to organize gatherings and soirées. The ability to converse has been completely lost. The young whisper and laugh among themselves... the mature play cards, the older ladies sit next to each other, look around or make comments. I prefer small suppers to such gatherings. You converse, you work, you make music, you read to someone, and the farewell comes inconspicuously closer. We have tried to organize such events, but with regard to etiquette, ranks and respect, you cannot do what you would like.

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<sup>14</sup> Braun 1950: s. 89.

<sup>15</sup> Braun 1950: s. 283.

<sup>16</sup> Bengtsson 1988.

<sup>17</sup> Dahlström 2006: ss. 36-70.

<sup>18</sup> Ulfstätter-Troell 1996: s. 113; Beckert & Blücker 2007: s. 48. [Ur Josefinas dagbok. Okänt datum. 1832.]

My husband often gets up at seven o'clock, but I never get up before eight in the winter. After breakfast, I'll supervise the teaching and manual work of my two eldest sons, read or write. From twelve to half past one, I go out and then occupy myself at home. At three o'clock I dress for dinner that is served at half past three. Half past five we retire and I go to my children or occupy myself. Half past seven is served tea. Between eight and nine the children are with us, from nine to ten we make music, the ladies knit and the gentlemen read the newspaper. At ten o'clock it is supper and at eleven o'clock nobody is up any more. The more you live in the big world, the more you need, in my opinion, from time to time to retreat into yourself and think about what you have seen and done. To be in constant disarray, in uninterrupted movement, always to think of others, of what is moving around you, if one has time at all to think, that is not to live ... I never feel as comfortable as when I sit in my big armchair with my hand work and think about what I have seen, done and thought and come to the conclusion that I have learned something. I am forming a judgment, a plan of how I should deal with this or that, which may happen, so that I am not caught off guard, for I am not one of the bright minds, who always hit things right at the spot - oh, no ... For almost eleven years I have been living in the great world and constantly learning ... I am well aware of my errors ... But knowing them does not mean swiftly overcoming them ... You will forgive this long epistle, as you become aware that I thought I was talking to You, a happiness that I may be forever denied! ... I hope and believe that we will once again see each other and that we will then be happy to have tried to fulfil the tasks that have been entrusted to us! Goodbye.<sup>19</sup>

Like Desirée, Charles John seems to have forbidden Josephine to travel abroad. Perhaps he did not think Josephine would return she either, but more likely the forced Swedish stay was part of a "Swedification campaign". Josephine's apologies to the family are not so clarifying: "It is easier said than done [to come]."<sup>20</sup> - "There are so many things to take into account, which one can have no idea of in Germany."<sup>21</sup> In the diary there is a long exposition preserved about her existential rootlessness:

December 1836. Home of exile.

My beloved homeland, how I love you, how much I'd like to see you again... you who alone would be able to restore my life. All these equally sweet and indefinite emotions are united in this one word: heimat ... But where is this beloved earth to which I would like to turn my eyes, where my soul would like to fly? Is it the land, where my grandfather lived (France), that gave my father life and that again repelled him, because he remained faithful to his honour and duty. No, no, it cannot be my homeland. - Perhaps it is the far-off areas under an azure blue sky (Italy), where I first saw the light of day and first raised my hands in prayer to my Creator? Oh no! Only when I fled from there did I get to know it, and even though only a child, I have to share the lot of the exiles. I have nothing to thank this country for, nor can I be anything for it. - But the hospitable country (Bavaria), which received me, where my inner world was formed, where I learned to love - yes, I feel it like my fatherland if I had a free choice - but it did not know me, I am wandering about without fatherland, without family, admittedly with a name, yes, a beloved name, which I can never forget - but which also never gives me any peace. It was my destiny to travel, with sorrow in my heart, to foreign coasts - duty compelled me to do so, a duty which for me was

<sup>19</sup> Nohrenius & Wiklund 2012: ss. 90-91. [Brev från Josefina till systemen Hortense. Okänt datum. 1834.]

<sup>20</sup> Nohrenius & Wiklund 2012: s. 90. [Brev från Josefina till systemen Hortense. Okänt datum. 1834.]

<sup>21</sup> Braun 1950: s. 91. [Brev från Josefine till sin moster drottning Elisabeth av Preussen, 1835-05-19.]

happiness. These new areas (Sweden) Although I owe them affection and gratitude, are they my fatherland? No and no again. They are neither the earth of my fathers nor the cradle of my childhood, nor the scene of my youth, which is given life by thousands of innocent memories – as I hope they are my grave, for I am tired of constantly wandering about - but my fatherland? Will I therefore never have a fatherland? - O God forgive me, may he forgive me, for I understand and feel it immediately - I will never find it down here, for we are all fugitives on this earth of trials, struggles and tears. – I will give you my heart, to show myself worthy of your love. So I hope one day to enter into the eternal rest and finally find my true fatherland, where we shall all be united before your throne ... Heaven - it is the fatherland of the exiles.<sup>22</sup>

Josephine expressed similar thoughts in her letters 1822-1835 to her father's old secretary, Baron Darney (?-1837). She was homesick and unhappy with the Swedish court, which mainly consisted of militaries, teenagers and old fogies.<sup>23</sup>

It was not until 1835/39 that Josephine regained her family. Her father, eldest brother August and sister Carolina were then dead. Her sisters Hortense, Amélie, Theodelinde & youngest brother Maximilian were favourably married. Amélie was even Dowager Queen of Portugal. Josephine's relations with the siblings were good and they corresponded. As elder sister, she had always been anxious to treat them well. In 1843, when her mother became seriously ill, Charles John allowed her go abroad. However, her the mother recovered and did not die until 1851. Josephine inherited her, but it is unclear how much. She also inherited Oscar & her sister Amélie. Under the unmarried women's emancipation act of 1858 it was by then possible for her to request in a court of law to avoid a guardian, who would have been her son Charles. It is unclear whether she did so, but the later conflicts between her and her son may have been about the money. In any case, Josephine had difficulties in dealing with the situation. She was used to commanding her son, and when he did not give in, surrender the conflict to Oscar or court employees to resolve. No longer an option. The money was long time administered by Fredrik Braunerhjelm (1799-1872) who from simple circumstances had worked his way up in the court hierarchies and had Josephine's full confidence.<sup>24</sup> It is unclear who took over.

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<sup>22</sup> Nohrenius & Wiklund 2012: s. 36. [Ur Josefinas dagbok 1836-12.]

<sup>23</sup> Lundberg 1951, s. 172; Musée Bernadotte. Brev, deposition 465.

<sup>24</sup> Lazarus 1900: ss. 219-226.