

Chapter 35: Princess Louise of Sweden-Norway & Denmark-Iceland (1851-1926).

Princess Louise Josephine Eugene of Sweden-Norway, "sessa" called, was born on October 31, 1851, in Stockholm and died on March 20, 1926 in Copenhagen as dowager queen of Denmark-Iceland.

There is a longer biography (Steensig 2015) and a number of short biographies (Cronhamn 1889; Dietrichson 1891; Almén 1893: ss. 285-290; Sandell 1894; Mindeblad 1894; Thorsøe 1896; Jaya 1913: ss. 74-83; Engelstoft 1923, 1938 & 1981; Knagg 1932: ss. 305-319; Elgklou 1978; Ohlmarks 1979: ss. 110-111; Lager-Kromnow 1982; Sundberg 2004: ss. 229-230; Pantmann 2013; Norlin 2015: ss. 116-118). She also appears in special studies (Friis 1963), as a secondary character in the Karl XV & Fredrik VIII biographies (Bååth-Holmberg 1891; Thyselius 1910; Hallendorff 1924; Eriksson 1954; Bramsen 1992: del 2, ss. 258-289), Queen biographies (Rogberg 1873; Braun 1950; Riiber 1959) & memory literature (Dietrichson 1901; Edholm 1906; Dardel 1911; Edholm 1919; Wrangel 1924; Edholm, 1944).

Important dates in the life of "sessa" are 1869 (when she married), 1881 (when she inherited her Dutch grandfather and became financially independent), 1898 (when she became Denmark's "first lady") & 1906 (Queen).

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Louise had an upbringing similar to her mother's: Learning to appear simple, natural & friendly without compromising her royalty. Her upbringing was severe. She would be the perfect daughter. From an early age, Louise was convinced of her own uselessness, as she was never as perfect as her mother demanded. Like many in that situation, she was a manipulative charmer, "Lysalfen" (≈tinkerbelle) called, alternately immature & older than her years. "A lively and cheerful person, with a hint of precocious wiseacre."¹ Come summer 1864 Louise turned 13. The relationship between mother-daughter was like this: "The Queen spent all her free time in the company of her daughter, and as the Princess' room at Ulriksdal was right next to the Queen's own, it was easier there, than in the city, to follow the Princess with a watchful eye and with a joke or in earnest give her the advice and rebukes, a child needs."² Louise appears (when she got the chance) as a real chatterbox: "Sessa (13 years) gives me [Marshal of the Court Edholm] a long audience and speaks with surprising ease about all kinds of inconsequentials, concerts, balls and spectacles. I thought her dressed like that hardly so precocious."³

All of Louise's intercourse with her peers took place under supervision. Every week a circle of approved such were invited, and her mother led their games & dances. Birthdays dowager queen Josephine arranged child balls, with time upgraded to juvenile balls, with a smattering of cadets. Reasonably Louise would have been invited home to someone, but there is no information on it. She was too old to hang out with her cousins, and others were not allowed. Due to lack of intercourse, she read a lot. Her moral education included paying half of the allowance to a child in need. Reasonably she would have met this child. F. U. Wrangel, the brother of one of Louise's playmates, summed up the home atmosphere as "she was often

¹ Elgklou 1978: s. 93; Sundberg 2004: s. 229.

² Rogberg 1873: s. 38.

³ Edholm 1944: s. 125. [1865-01-08.]

serious and timid and was raised in incredibly simple circumstances; when you were invited on a weekday and served herring, meatballs and crispbread, you did not think it a festive occasion.”⁴

When she had the time the mother sat in on her daughter's lessons. Most importance was attached to history & modern languages (French, German & English). Louise had three "governess": English "Miss Brown", Swedish Hilda Elving (1827-1906; employed 1857-1860) & German Charlotte Kyber (1828?-1918; m. Malmström; employed 1861-1868). The subject teachers were the choir leader Johan Didrik Behrens (1820-1890), the historian Carl August Zachrisson (1839-1903), the art historian etc. Lorentz Dietrichson (1834-1917; employed 1868/69), cavalry officer Gustaf Anton Bråkenhjelm (1837-1922; employed 1866-?) & court preacher Herman Björnström (1839-1908; employed 1862-1868).⁵ 1862/63 she learned to swim for Nancy Edberg (1832-1892). Louise actually had an equal-age classmate Anna Braunerhjelm (1849-1918; m. Sverdrup; lady-in-waiting 1869-?), daughter of a bankrupt officer. Unclear how intimate they were, however.

The mother's ladies-in-waiting were her playmates, tutored her in etiquette and conversed her in French: Baroness Eva Lejonhufvud (1824-1899; employed 1859-1861), Countess Louise Posse (1799-1876; b. Bennet; employed 1861-?), Augusta Skjödebrand (1839-1906; 1864 m. Wachtmeister; employed 1863-?), Augusta Reutersvärd (1839-1924; m. von Essen; Louise's own lady-in-waiting 1864-1869).

In 1862, Charles allegedly made attempts to change the order of succession so that the daughter (in the same way as his own mother through the "Pragmatische Sanktion" of Bavaria) could inherit the throne.⁶ This has not been verifiable, but the relationship between Charles and daughter was good and the mother anxious that he would give her ideas, for example when he took her to watch the military drill. However, he had no influence on her upbringing, although at some point he gave her boys toys such as a drum and sabre. A little more in the mother's taste was a toy stove where she helped the daughter to bake small pancakes and other things.⁷

Louise was confirmed on May 30, 1868. The parents, Prince August and his wife, Archbishop Reuter Dahl & the royal court were present. Her Christianity teacher Björnström held the hearing. Louise gave lucid answers. The next day, she received communion before the archbishop and a numerous audience of family, neighbours & invited politicians. Her mother was also present during the tuition. The following month, she became engaged to Crown Prince Frederick (VIII) of Denmark (1843-1912). She and Fredrik knew each other from before, but superficially. They had met in 1862 when Louise was 11. The engagement was supposedly voluntary on both sides, and it certainly looked that way to the spectators, but since Louise was used to obeying her parents in everything, it is difficult to know. It is reported that Bismarck wished for a German wedding and even proposed Prince Albrecht of Prussia (1837-1906) as a suitable candidate. Nothing came out of it, however.⁸ Frederick for his part had in 1865, during his studies in England, explored the possibility of marrying Queen Victoria's daughter Helena, but was rejected.⁹ Louise was a good non-German option.

⁴ Wrangel 1924: s. 187.

⁵ Julrosor 1891; Almén 1893: s. 285.

⁶ Tyselius 1910: s. 588.

⁷ Bååth-Holmberg 1891: ss. 635-636.

⁸ Friis 1963: s. 34.

⁹ Branner 1992: ss. 260-261.

The negotiations began on July 2, 1867. Both governments were in favour. On July 16, 1868, the couple promised each other eternal fidelity under the Bäckaskog engagement linden:

Bäckaskog July 14. ... On the way home the troupe is augmented with the Crown Prince of Denmark, 'who is here on business', and at 7 o'clock we arrive at Bäckaskog. The Prince holds back and Sessan never releases the arm of Mrs Bullerkrona alias Sigrid Lewenhaupt. Like everyone else, I hope for a good tomorrow with happiness and blessings for our good King's only child! -

July 15. The young two are out on a walk, but Frederick does not seem to have dared bite the bullet. In the meantime greetings all around, bath and sunshine all morning, but 'yet nothing noticeable'. We wait, socialize, have coffee, target practice in the arbor, wait some more, the courtship reportedly is on track, returning to Bäckaskog we are informed that the young sod has actually bent the knee. The king is moved: The prince now belongs to the family. Plessen cries. Then carriage to Föhlagen - quod faustum! - to having our hands kissed by the employees. Life is good. Good bless them, us & everybody else.

Bäckaskog July 16. After a peaceful yesterday, a bustling day of announcing the fact to everybody who is interested. In the morning Thott and Lund travel to Christianstad and order the engagement rings. ... All we meet are more or less drunk, and I get invitations to half of Skåne.¹⁰

Since Louise was only 17, the wedding was postponed until the following year. In the meantime, she was taught the Danish language, literature and history by the art historian etc. Lorentz Dietrichson. The intention had been for him to continue Kyber's teaching of modern European literature, history, geography etc., but with the engagement it instead became Danish literature & history. Mother and five ladies-in-waiting also attended. On February 11, 1869, the courts agreed on the marriage contract. On July 28, the wedding took place. Until then, Louise did not at any time express a wish, get her own way or act in any capacity.¹¹

Dietrichson was struck by how tense and attentive Louise was during classes, which a lady-in-waiting explained to him was because Louise thought she would be graded. No examination took place, but when Louise arrived at the Danish court, she was interrogated by dowager queen Caroline Amalia (1796-1881), and a great deal had stuck.¹² 1891 Dietrichson was asked to write an article about his royal pupil, started on what he thought would be a flattering description and found that despite daily interactions for nine months he did not know who she was. Dietrichson lectured and never asked questions. Louise listened & neither she asked any questions.¹³

It is unclear whether Louise received any instruction in the Danish language. Some phrases suggest that she had a native teacher. There are some indication that she received instructions from her future husband.

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¹⁰ af Edholm 1944: del 2, ss. 235-236.

¹¹ Rogberg 1873; Cronhamn 1889.

¹² Dietrichson 1901: del 2, s. 67.

¹³ Dietrichson 1891; Sandell 1894.

Louise's 37 years as a Danish crown princess is often summarized as having given birth, quarrelling with her new family, doing charity, having artistic interests & visiting Sweden. I will start with that and continue with what else there is to say about a replanted Swedish Bernadotte princess of the 3rd generation. Because her husband had few official assignments, they lived a quiet family life.

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The Danish branch of the family was very large and Louise contributed 1870-1890 with another eight children. The fifth child in line, Princess Ingeborg, 1897 married her Swedish cousin Prince Carl. The annual "Glücksburg" family meetings were very lively events, at the end 60-70 people: monarchs, heirs to the throne, princes, princesses & in-laws. Louise is alleged to have had difficulties suffering her sister-in-law Alexandra (1844-1925; 1902-1910 Queen of England) & Dagmar (1847-1928; 1881-1894 Tsaritsa of Russia), maybe because she, with her better education, had little in common with them. She also came into conflict with her in-laws: King Christian IX (1818-1896), Queen Louise of Hesse-Kassel (1817-1898) & Dowager queen Caroline Amalia (1796-1881). According to Steensig (2015), the basis for this conflict was Christian IX's attempt to restore the reputation and dignity of the Danish royal house after the excesses of his predecessor Fredrik VII by emphasizing the ceremonial. Neither Frederick nor Louise believed that this policy had any future, emphasizing a simple civic style, in which spirit they raised their eight children. Louise breastfed at least the first:

1. Christian X (1870-1947), King of Denmark 1912-1947, married 1898 to Alexandrine of Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1879-1952)
2. Carl (1872-1957), King of Norway 1905-1957 under the name Håkon VII, married 1896 to Maud of the United Kingdom (1869-1938)
3. Louise (1875-1906), married in 1896 to Frederick of Schaumburg-Lippe (1868-1945)
4. Harald (1876-1949), married 1909 to Helene of Schleswig-Holstein (1888-1962)
5. Ingeborg (1878-1958), married in 1897 to Louise's cousin the Swedish Prince Carl (1861-1951), Duke of Västergötland
6. Thyra (1880-1945), unmarried
7. Gustav (1887-1944), unmarried
8. Dagmar (1890-1961), married 1922 to Jørgen Castenskiold (1893-1978)

It seems obvious that Louise matured with time, she married while still a teenager, but it has not been possible to reconstruct the process. Her in-laws did not appreciate her increasingly outspoken style, but encouraged her to remain silent and behave. Frederick, according to his mother, behaved like henpecked cuck, not being able to manage his wife. Two anecdotes are usually provided as evidence:

The following anecdote was told to me [1876] by Edholm. The Queen of Denmark, who did not like extremes of toilet, had become angry and caused a scene on account of a Parisian dress, in which her daughter-in-law one day made her entry into the royal parlour. Offended by the sharp tone used by her mother-in-law, the Crown Princess responded with a piece of Danish argot: "Take it easy, Pedersen!" [after a popular theatre play] The Queen, who was angered by this vulgar familiarity, now straightened herself up and haughtily proclaimed: "Do not forget to whom you speak!" "It is you who forget it, I am a royal daughter, you are not!" This went too far, however. H. M. now sought support from her royal consort, who sent the young couple on a few

months' trip to Italy and Vienna, where both the Crown Princess and her husband fell ill with typhus. A lady-in-waiting, also affected by the disease, died.¹⁴

In a second anecdote from 1888, a Swedish student association during a visit to Copenhagen wanted to serenade her, but the Queen forbade it. Louise claimed that the Queen was envious of her popularity, and that's possible - Louise used the advantages she had to assert her position.¹⁵

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In addition to representing, Louise protected a number of old & new foundations for charitable purposes, but seems to have had no board assignment:¹⁶

- *Princess Louise's Memorial Fund.* (Help to poor children. Founded 1869.)
- *The association for healthy and affordable housing for workers.* (Founded 1871.)
- *Crown Princess Louise's refuge for children, Østerbrogade 57 A.* (Founded 1871.)
- *Crown Princess Louise's school for maids.* (Two-year household school. Founded 1872.)
- *Refuge Bethania.* (Orphanages. Founded 1880.)
- *Refuge in the fishing village Sletten.* (Orphanages. Founded 1881.)
- *Heir Prinsesse Caroline's refuge in Aarhus.* (Orphanage. Founded 1836. Bequeathed to Louise on the death of the Dowager Queen in 1881.)
- *Crown Princess Louise's refuge at Grønnegade in Næstved.* (Orphanage. Founded 1836. Bequeathed to Louise on the death of the Dowager Queen in 1881.)
- *The mission among Swedish maids on Laaland.* (Founded by Elsa Borg 1886. On the initiative of Louise.)
- From 1899 fundraising for the *Danish Red Cross* (DRC). From 1900 she protected the women's section of the DRC. During World War I, she founded a DRC sewing association which financed a field hospital for 200 patients.

During her visits to Sweden in the 1870s, she became interested in the revival movement. Time and place are unclear, but in 1879 she met the revivalist preacher Lord Radstock either in Stockholm or Copenhagen and was inspired to learn Greek to read the New Testament in the original language. When her finances through the inheritance of her grandmother in 1876 and her grandfather in 1881 improved, she had an extensive private charity. This seems to have been organized in accordance with the principle of "help to help oneself" and operated in cooperation with the Danish internal mission. Pastor Christian Sørensen at Garnisonskyrkan in Copenhagen & Queen Louise maid of honour Wanda Oxholm are mentioned as leading persons. Nothing is known about the business.

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She cultivated her literary and artistic interests. When her mother died, she inherited the library. She kept herself abreast by reading newspapers. Nothing is known about her reading habits. She was a talented artist and 1893, she was elected honorary member of the Academy of Arts. She painted & engaged in leather work. The paintings were watercolours of flowers

¹⁴ Dardel 1911a: del 1, s. 228; Meijer-Granqvist 1932: s. 312; af Edholm 1944: del 3, s. 86.

¹⁵ Riiber 1959: s. 142.

¹⁶ Cronhamn 1889.

& buildings. The leather work was illuminated Bible quotes on parchment. Queen Sophia is said to have received a bound volume that it took Louise seven years to complete. She and Frederick collected antique glass and silver. She arranged music evenings with talents like Ellen Gulbranson & Ina Lange.

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Louise's popularity varied greatly over her lifetime. The Swedish publicity increased until the wedding in 1869, declined until 1881, and increased again until the silver wedding in 1894. There is an article:

It is comparatively rare for the Crown Princess to appear in public, but she has honoured the woman's exhibition by serving as honorary president.

At this exhibition, which in many areas will show that woman want to and can compete with men, the Crown Princess is the supreme representative of the areas in which men cannot compete with women. H.r.h. is the *woman* at the women's exhibition.

Everyone know, that the Crown Princess is an unusually talented woman - both head and heart, that she is an exceptional mother and educator. Few could however have imagined that a royal daughter, an only child, could be so modest, so hard on herself and so impervious to praise and flattery.¹⁷

In 1911 she was interviewed by the Swedish journalist Eira Hellberg. It was the first time and Louise smiled in amusement at the attention, and that every word of hers was recorded, as if it were gold:

The audience is on account of Charles XV's daughter these days turning sixty.

"Yes," says the Queen, princess of Sweden, that was a long time ago. I have many memories - Ulriksdal, the excursions in the archipelago, the wonderful family life. It was so rich! Our home was the focal point of all intellectual discourse - art and literature. All the different currents of the time, and I shared so many of my parents interests. We had much more in common than the environment thought. My parents talked to each other about everything - and" - the Queen laughs heartily - "small jugs also have ears.

And I'm so attached to my old homeland. Childhood ties are not easily resolved. And I have new ties too. I have my daughter and her children there.

But," the Queen addresses us in earnest, "of adult memories, hardly any. I was so young when I married. Engaged at sixteen, wife at seventeen, mother at eighteen. And now my life is here. I have so many interests in Denmark and so much work here. As Crown Princess, I felt it my duty to familiarize myself with my new country. And now I'm the queen of it.

But Sweden is always in my thoughts, and I read Swedish newspapers every day. My interests -

Yes - I follow foreign policy, especially that of the Scandinavian countries. And women's issues. The Red Cross Women's Committees are under my management, and this work interests me greatly. Then I have our three islands in the Caribbean."

Queen Louise gets increasingly enthusiastic as she speaks. She looks so strong and young, so healthy and ready for work, that one wonders if her sixty years really count.

¹⁷ Göteborgs Allehanda, 1895-06-20, sida 3; Idun 1895:26.

That [the Danish colony in] the Caribbean lies at her heart becomes clear. The Queen tells us how she has organized her work there and how she wants to develop it. She has employed Red Cross sisters in the hospitals and deaconesses to run the orphanages. But she is determined that the natives should be educated to take over. For three years, black women have been educated under the leadership of the Danes, the best of them get to come to Copenhagen, and complete courses in health care, child care and the like, and then return and to assist in the management. It is the Queen's goal to improve the lot of the black woman, help her make a decent living and teach her sanitation in the process.

The Queen speaks of this as a true mother of the country. Not very regal, but with enthusiasm, gestures and a happy face.

From the living conditions of the Caribbean women, we turn to Denmark.

"Yes," says the Queen. "Children and orphanages interest me the most. Perhaps because I have had so many children myself!

But I want to say that I look at woman and contemporary issues in a different way than - one might have wished.

I can't help but think that the future lies with women. And I'm suggesting that childcare will remain her greatest and most important contribution.

For that, she needs to develop her personality and skills. It is imperative. But of course she has also to support herself.

And she should be properly paid.

"Oh!"

The Queen nods firmly.

"She shall not be badly paid. It's not good for anybody if she is short on money.

And the political part of women's aspirations, - I leave to the politicians. I am not sure it is the right way. We women shall fulfil our tasks, bring up our children. I do not think the vote will help with that. There are limits even to politics. Health care, poverty care and child care - that is women's work and we understand it better than men.¹⁸

¹⁸ Jaya 1913: ss. 78-81.