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KING OF BAVARIA

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Title: Ludwig the Second, King of Bavaria

Author: Clara Tschudi

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Release date: March 24, 2015 [eBook #48578]
Most recently updated: October 24, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/48578

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BY

CLARA TSCHUDI

AUTHOR OF "MARIE ANTOINETTE,"

"EUGÉNIE, EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH,"

"MARIA SOPHIA, QUEEN OF NAPLES," ETC.

ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN

BY

ETHEL HARRIET HEARN

"Certains caractères échappent à l'analyse logique."

GEORGE SAND.

WITH COLOURED PORTRAIT

London

SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO. LIM.

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

1908

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LUDWIG THE SECOND
KING OF BAVARIA

CHAPTER I

Descent and Education

At the birth of Ludwig II., enigmatic as he was unfortunate, of whom I propose to give a sketch, his grandfather, the eccentric Ludwig I., was still King of Bavaria. His father, Maximilian Joseph, was the Crown Prince. The latter had wedded, in 1842, the beautiful Princess Marie of Prussia, who was only sixteen years of age at the time of her marriage, her husband being twenty years her senior.

To all appearance the marriage was a very happy one. Maximilian was an intelligent and right-thinking man, devoted to public duty, but he had indifferent health, and, like the greater number of his race, was the possessor of a sensitive nervous system. For some years it appeared as if the marriage would be childless. At the beginning of the year 1845, however, the people of Bavaria were informed that the Crown Princess was *enceinte*, and on the 25th of August, on the birthday of the reigning King, a hundred and one guns proclaimed the birth of a prince at the château of Nymphenburg.

As a matter of fact, the princely infant had seen the light two days earlier, but the event had been kept a secret in order to give Ludwig I. a pleasant surprise, the King having expressed a wish that a possible hereditary prince might come into the world on that day. The child was named after him, and he held it himself at the font.

The old King at that time was at the height of his popularity. Soon, however, a turning-point set in: the dancer Lola Montez invaded the lovesick Monarch's life, causing a violent insurrection in the Bavarian capital. Then came the democratic rising of 1848, general all over Europe, which threw fuel on the fire. Ludwig was compelled to abdicate, and was succeeded by his son, Maximilian Joseph, who ascended the throne under the title of Maximilian II.

Shortly after these political disturbances took place the young Queen was brought to bed of another son, who was named Otto.[1] The effect on her of the alarm and excitement caused by the aforesaid events, was such that he came into the world three months too early. The physicians declared that it was impossible for the child to live, but they proved to be mistaken in their opinion.

Both the Crown Prince and his brother were unusually good-looking, and it was a brilliant sight when the popular and beautiful Queen walked about the streets of Munich, with her handsome boys beside her. Maternal joy and pride shone from her eyes, and the glance of the people was directed with genuine admiration on her and her children. Otto was the one who most resembled his mother. Being, moreover, lighthearted and accessible, he was also the one to whom the prize of beauty was awarded by popular opinion. Ludwig's beauty was of a more uncommon and intellectual type, a noteworthy feature of his face being the large, brilliant, and dark-blue eye. The boys were always dressed each in his particular colour, which the Queen herself had chosen. Otto in red, and Ludwig in blue—the national colours of Bavaria. Not only were Ludwig's clothes blue in tint, but also, as far as was possible, his various other small possessions and necessities; such, for instance, as the binding of his books, his drawing portfolios, and his volumes of music. This hue always continued to be his favourite colour.

Possessed of good sense in many ways, Ludwig's parents seem to have been deficient in their insight into the difficult matter of bringing up their eldest son. The father was too strict, and made demands on the Crown Prince with which his abilities and strength did not allow of his complying. In season and out of season he reminded him that some time or other he would be a king. He was thoughtlessly punished whether he deserved it or whether his delinquencies were of so insignificant a nature as to demand a certain indulgence. Ludwig was not allowed to be a child. All his toys were early taken from him. He had, for instance, a tortoise of which he was particularly fond, but it was not long before this too was removed by the King's especial order. The Queen made no attempt independently to combat this unnatural bringing up; nor does she or the King seem to have been alive

to the fact that the peculiarities of the Crown Prince's character required handling with caution.

He was simultaneously the object in other quarters of a directly opposite and still more pernicious treatment. His nurse "Liesi" adored and spoiled him. When he became a little older he was given a French governess, who seems to have had a positively unfortunate influence upon him. Her great admiration was the French *Roi Soleil*, Louis XIV., and she made no secret of forming her pupil upon this model. Well-known utterances of the *Grand Monarque*, such as "*L'état c'est moi!*" "*Tel est notre bon plaisir*," and the like, were held up to the royal pupil as models of parlance which ought to be copied; while at the same time the governess gave expression in her looks and words to the subservience which she considered becoming for a subject to show to a future monarch. She never asked if he had been diligent and good. "The Crown Prince is always the first," she repeated invariably. A teacher of the French language, who succeeded this lady, acted and comported himself in a similar spirit, and contributed further to pervert the childish mind. As an example of his method of education may be mentioned the fact that *le très gracieux prince royal*, among other things, was allowed to roll his teacher on the floor like a barrel.

In such circumstances Ludwig's egotism could not but be developed. Episodes from his childhood bear witness that a decided vein of caprice and sense of his own importance were early to be noticed in him. The following is a trait from the time when he was twelve years of age, during a sojourn at Berchtesgaden. He was at play in the park, with his brother. Without the slightest provocation he suddenly threw Otto, three years younger than himself, on to the grass, planted his knee firmly on the latter's chest, stuffed his handkerchief into his mouth, and shouted commandingly: "You are my subject; you must obey me! Some time I shall be your king!" Happily a courtier was witness of this scene, and running forward, he dragged Otto, who was almost suffocated, from his brother's violent grasp. The incident came to the ears of the King. He gave his first-born a sound thrashing in true burgher fashion. This corporal punishment had not, however, the desired effect on the exceedingly sensitive boy; and its result seems solely

to have been embitterment against his father. So much, indeed, did he take the mortification of it to heart, that later he literally shunned Berchtesgaden.

One winter day in 1859 the two princes were together in the so-called "English Garden," in Munich. Otto was rolling a large snowball, and called out to his brother, in glee: "See, Ludwig, I have a snowball that is bigger than your head!" Ludwig took it from him. Otto began to cry. Their tutor came up and asked what was the matter. "Ludwig has taken my snowball," sobbed Otto. "Your Royal Highness," said the tutor, "if Prince Otto has made a snowball it belongs to him, and you have no right to take it." "Have I no right to take the snowball? What am I Crown Prince for, then?" asked Ludwig in dudgeon.

A gentleman well known to Maximilian, and who was frequently invited to his shooting parties, informs me that he very seldom saw the little princes when he visited the King. Once when he was walking in the gardens of the castle of Hohenschwangau, however, he came upon an open space where the King's sons happened to be playing. Ludwig had swung himself up on to a paling, and was running backwards and forwards on it. The visitor reminded him that he might fall and hurt himself. The boy, however, took no notice of the well-meant warning, and its only result was that he increased his antics. The gentleman, who was really afraid that an accident might happen, now took him by force in his arms and lifted him down. The Crown Prince glanced proudly at him; then began to play with his brother, as if no third person was present. Many years afterwards, long after Ludwig had become King, the same gentleman reminded him of this occurrence. "I remember very well," answered his Majesty coldly, "that you touched me at that time," and then turned the subject of conversation.

A strict system of economy formed a part of Maximilian's curriculum. The royal princes were only allowed the plainest food. Sweetmeats the Crown Prince tasted only through the generosity of his nurse Liesi, who was in the habit of buying sweets for her favourite out of her own pocket—a kindness which Ludwig always remembered, and which he rewarded as soon as he became King. When the princes grew bigger they were allowed pocket-money, to the amount of about a shilling a week—hardly a princely

appanage. Otto one day hit upon a means, as he hoped, of improving his financial position. Having heard that sound teeth fetched as much as ten guldens apiece, he betook himself to one of the Munich dentists, and offered him one of his best molars at that price. The dentist knowing who he was, did not, of course, accept the offer. When the occurrence became known to the King, the prince was severely punished. The episode, however, seems to have brought the Queen to reflection, and she caused the princes' pocket-money to be augmented from that day.

On his eighteenth birthday Ludwig for the first time received a sum of any consideration, his father presenting him with a purse containing a specimen of every coin at that time current in Bavaria. The youth, who had never before had anything in his pocket but a few coppers, imagined that he had suddenly become a wealthy man, and hastened off to buy and present to his mother a locket, which she had admired in a jeweller's shop. He made no inquiries as to the price, but when the jeweller observed that he would send the ornament and the bill to the Palace, said with importance, handing him his purse: "No, I have money of my own now. Here, pay yourself for the ornament!"

Between the Crown Prince and his father there was never any great feeling of tenderness, but he was without doubt very much attached to his mother. The circumstances attending the birth of Prince Otto had, however, given her a preference for her younger son; and when Ludwig in his childish years endeavoured to talk to her of his ideas and impressions, the very prosaic Queen showed a remarkable want of comprehension of his poet's nature. Apart from occasional friction, the relations between the brothers were peaceful and good. The younger one always took the second place, and the modesty with which he did this was no doubt the chief reason why the two were good friends. The entire character and turn of mind of the Crown Prince, his ideas, pleasures, and sympathies, were absolutely different from those of Otto, and of any real confidence on his side there could consequently be no possibility. Ludwig preferred solitude. Otto was gay and sociable. Ludwig was interested in art, and occupied himself with flowers; his brother loved military matters, and was a keen sportsman. Two interests,

however, they had in common: both were from childhood first-rate, almost foolhardy, riders, and both loved music and singing.

They had only two playmates, namely Prince Ludwig of Hesse, who spent part of his childhood at the court of his aunt Queen Marie, and Count Holstein, who now and then was allowed to visit them. The Crown Prince was considered to be highly gifted. From his earliest youth his memory was unusually good, and he often reduced his teachers to despair by the puzzling questions he would put to them. Meanwhile he was only diligent in the subjects which interested him, and lazy and indifferent concerning those which did not please him. His teachers were able and upright men, but towards the greater number of them he was very reserved. With a few exceptions they were powerless and at their wit's end before this peculiar character, which perplexed them by its contradictions and alarmed them by its outbursts of violence.

Thus grew up the Bavarian Crown Prince; in surroundings which left him partly neglected and misunderstood and partly perverted his understanding, and in circumstances which were fitted to develop his already naturally marked egotism and feeling of self-esteem.

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1 Otto was born on the 27th of April 1848. He is the present bearer of the title of King of Bavaria. ↑

CHAPTER II

Fundamental Traits of Ludwig's Character

Ludwig's tutor, the Count de Larosée, has expressed his conception of his pupil's character in the following words: "The Crown Prince is intelligent and highly gifted. He is already possessed of abilities which far exceed the ordinary. His imagination is so vivid, that I have seldom seen its equal in so young a man; but he is hasty and exceedingly quick-tempered. A more than strongly developed wilfulness points to a stubbornness of character which is perhaps inherited from his grandfather, and which it will be difficult for him to control." This "character" was written out by the Count on the day upon which Ludwig filled his eighteenth year, and on the tutor's retirement from his responsible position.

The Crown Prince had not merely inherited his grandfather's obstinacy, but resembled in other ways his father's father and his own namesake. Like him he was an idealist and *Schwärmer*, with distinct leanings towards æstheticism.

Henrik Ibsen, in his play of *Ghosts*, allows the characteristics of the progenitor to show themselves already in the first generation. This is not commonly the case. Far more frequently do the good and the bad "family ghosts" come out in the second generation; and it may almost be said that there are daily proofs that the son has more often the faults and good qualities of his grandsire than of his sire. Such was the case with Crown Prince Ludwig. To his careful, intelligent, and conscientious father he had indeed little resemblance; but his grandfather, the eccentric, stubborn, enthusiastic Ludwig I., "walked" in the grandson—not indeed "over again," as the saying is, but in a new edition, changed in various ways though in other points easily recognisable. On his mother's side there was also an enthusiast in the family. Friedrich Wilhelm IV. of Prussia was Queen Marie of Bavaria's first cousin, the son of her sister. There was in Ludwig's tastes and turn of mind much that resembled this Prussian King, who in contrast to the greater number of the Hohenzollerns took a greater interest in science

and art than in the profession of arms. But, nevertheless, Ludwig II. was unique in his way. He was a peculiar, strange figure in the midst of his immediate surroundings—an enigma to his own race, as he was to his own people! He seems rather to have belonged to another race than to the Teutonic one, and another age than the nineteenth century. There are traits in his character which lead our thoughts back to the times of Greek and Roman antiquity. In his instincts and his passions he was closely allied to the Roman Emperor Hadrian. In one respect, however, he was very modern, namely in his love of a mountain life. He loved the alps; and it is characteristic of this shy King, who would hardly undertake a journey that was not to his pleasure palaces, that he repeatedly visited the alpine country *par excellence*, namely, Switzerland.

He inherited from both his parents his delight in the mountains. The royal family were in the habit of spending the summers at Schloss Hohenschwangau, in the Bavarian highlands, not far from Munich. This was in reality an old castle, built a thousand years back in time, but entirely reconstructed by Maximilian when he was Crown Prince.[1]

Many historical reminiscences and legends are connected with the castle, whose halls are filled with memorials of days gone by, and whose walls are decorated with pictures of Lohengrin and the swan in every conceivable aspect. It is said that Hohenschwangau provided Tannhäuser with a night's shelter when he was returning from his pilgrimage to Rome. Martin Luther, too, during the time of the Reformation, when he was in need and danger, is supposed to have sought refuge in this castle, which is also known by the name of the Wartburg of Bavaria.

King Maximilian felt himself in better health after he had spent the summer there, and with his wife, who was a bold climber, was in the habit of going walking tours in the neighbouring country. Hohenschwangau was the Queen's favourite place of residence. She was unassuming, and exceedingly simple in her tastes, the charming Marie finding her greatest pleasure in housewifely occupations. On tablecloths which she had woven herself, she served fish caught by her own hands. When in the country she was in the habit of going about in a large kitchen apron, she dusted her own china and

ornaments, and took an innocent pleasure in washing up the used coffee-cups. Moreover, she caused to be fitted up at Hohenschwangau, a spinning-room in which she diligently turned her wheel for the benefit of the poor of the neighbourhood.

To their son Ludwig these visits were also a source of pleasure, albeit in a manner differing from that of the other members of the family. The great solitude had the effect on the boy's impressionable mind of a release from oppressive chains. Here, with his romantic disposition, the child found food for his vivid imagination; here he could dream himself into the legendary lore of olden days, and give free rein to his longing for the marvellous. On the quiet paths he could immerse himself in the German classics, chiefly in the works of Schiller, which spoke in living words to his heart and mind, and he would at times spend half a day in declaiming the resounding verses of his favourite poet.

Strictly as he was brought up by his parents, he was at times left too much to himself. He would withdraw in his free hours to solitude and give himself up to day-dreams. "How dull your Royal Highness must find the want of occupation," said his tutor, Dean von Döllinger, to him one day when he found him sitting alone in a dark room on account of a slight eye affection. "Why do you not let some one read aloud to you?" "I am not dull," answered the Prince, "I am thinking out different things, and I amuse myself very well in this manner."

There are strange contrasts in Ludwig's character; on the one side a yearning to escape from humanity, with its unnatural and stilted aspects, to unalloyed nature, to the stillness, the prayerful solemnity of solitude; on the other, even in his early years, an enthusiastic love of plastic art, combined with a delight in effective representations, for artificial brilliancy and pomp. So much, indeed, was this the case, that the thought cannot but arise in the mind that he was intended rather for the stage than for a throne. The life of the human community seemed to have no particular interest, and still less attraction, for him. He stood uncomprehending, and in a measure uncomprehended, before even the circle in which he lived.

But the serious moment was approaching. He had filled his eighteenth year; duties and responsibilities awaited him. He was now about to step out into public life.

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1 According to tradition, a knight by the name of Schwangau was the original builder of the castle. Another account, which is probably quite as near the truth, connects the name of Hohenschwangau with the legend of the Knights of the Swan. ↑

CHAPTER III

"Le Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!"

A feeling of gloom and sadness rested over Munich; Maximilian II. was dying.

On the 9th of March, 1864, he signed in his bed the last documents of his reign. The same evening the doctors relinquished all hope of being able to save his life. It had long been known that he was a sick man, but no one had had any idea that his last hour was approaching. The news, which was quickly spread, filled the capital with dismay and lamentations. Immense crowds of people penetrated into the courtyard of the Palace, and gazed up at their ruler's windows.

Snow and rain fell heavily. The wind howled, but no one seemed to notice it. No longer was it possible to expect news which might bring consolation. All were thinking the same thought: "Our good King is dying!" The sorrow over the whole country was indescribable. At four in the morning on the 10th of March the physician-in-ordinary informed the sick man that he must prepare himself for death, telling him at the same time that his confessor was in the Palace. "Has it come to this?" asked Maximilian, who felt exceedingly weak but suffered little pain. "Well, well—God will do the best for me! I have always wished what was right." A believer, he made his confession and received extreme unction.

His despairing wife had spent the night in the sick-room. The eighteen-year-old Crown Prince was now with his father. The King had a prolonged private conversation with him, warning him, counselling him, and endeavouring at the eleventh hour to gain the confidence of his son, who had always withdrawn shyly into himself and whose character was to him a riddle.

He took an affecting and affectionate farewell of the Queen and both his children, blessing them, and expressing a hope of reunion. "My son," he

said to his successor, “I hope for you a death as quiet as your father’s!” These were his last words. It would almost seem as if the veil over the events of the future was lifted at this time to the view of the dying king, and that he saw things which made him suspect or fear his son’s tragic ending. The Archbishop spoke words of consolation to the dying man as he at midday, without a struggle, was called to the eternal rest. Ludwig swooned with the strength of his emotions. Later in life he was heard to say how painfully it had impressed him that he had been greeted as the Sovereign as he left his father’s deathbed. “The Lord has taken a good king away from us! Let us pray that He will give us as good a king again!” said the Archbishop to the assembled courtiers, who were waiting outside. All fell on their knees; tears and sobs filled the room. The capital and the kingdom were weighed down by the pain of their loss.

The sorrow at the demise of a highly venerated prince was mingled with sympathy for his successor, who had been brought up so strictly and in such loneliness. A heavy burden had with the mantle of kingship been laid on his shoulders; the father’s early death was no doubt a misfortune to the son. The seeds of mental morbidness which were slumbering within him would hardly have shot so soon into growth, nor perhaps would Maximilian’s principles of education have brought about such distressing consequences, had not Ludwig become King when he was in the midst of his development. He was too young and unformed to be able to support without injury this forcible and sudden transition. All the doors which previously had been shut to him were now opened wide. All sought his favour. He was worshipped and applauded, while his most commonplace utterances were given the character of winged words.

On the 12th of March he took the oath to the Constitution, in the presence of the royal princes and the members of the Council of State. The Minister of Foreign Affairs made a speech, which the new King answered in the following words:

“Almighty God has called my dear, greatly-beloved father away from this world. I cannot give utterance to the feelings with which my heart is filled. The task awaiting me is great and arduous. I trust in God, Who will send me

light and strength to fill it. I will govern faithfully, in conformity with the oath which I have just taken, and in conformity with the Constitution which has now existed for nearly half-a-century. The welfare of my beloved Bavarians, and the greatness of Germany, will be the object of my efforts. I ask of all your assistance in the fulfilment of my arduous duties."

Ludwig became popular without any effort whatever on his side; the Bavarians are a loyal race, and strong ties knit the people and the royal house together. Nor was the Monarch's sympathetic appearance without its effect. All were struck by his beauty and attractive personality.

An Austrian writer who saw and talked with him soon after his accession, several years afterwards expressed himself in the following terms:

"He was the handsomest youth I ever saw. His tall, slim figure was perfectly symmetrical. His abundant, lightly curling hair, and the slight indication of a beard lent to his head a likeness to those great antique works of art, through which we have found the representation of the Hellenic conception of manly strength. Even had he been a beggar he must have attracted my attention. No person, whether old or young, rich or poor, could remain unaffected by the charm of his whole person. His voice was agreeable. The questions he asked were concise and decided, his subjects were well-chosen and intellectual, and he expressed himself easily and naturally. The admiration he aroused in me has never diminished, but on the contrary has increased with years. The picture of the young Monarch is still imprinted in unfading colours on my mind."

Another German writer, Paul Heyse, met the young King about the same time, and has likewise published his impressions of him. He is not quite so enthusiastic in his admiration, but seems also to have been impressed. "The large eyes," says Heyse, "were dreamy, the glance winning. What he said was entirely without any trace of embarrassment. His judgment of those in his proximity was unusually certain, and his knowledge of human nature wonderful, in view of his lonely education, so far away from the world."

CHAPTER IV

A Plan of Marriage

Shortly after his ascent of the throne Ludwig was visited by the Emperor and Empress of Austria. Elizabeth was his cousin. At the time that she went to Vienna as Empress he was only nine years old. She had, later, often visited her parental home and the Bavarian royal family; but on these occasions the shy and retiring Crown Prince had hardly been allowed to see and talk to the beautiful sovereign of the great neighbouring state. Matters were now changed. Now he was King, and there was soon knitted between these two a bond of friendship which lasted until Ludwig's death. He received the Emperor and Empress with every mark of attention, endeavouring to make their sojourn in his capital as pleasant and gay as possible. From Munich, Franz Josef and his consort went on to Kissingen, where Ludwig paid them a return visit. At this noted resort the young King of Bavaria was received with enthusiasm. Here also he met the Russian royal family. The Empress Maria Alexandrowna met him with motherly kindness, and seems at once to have formed the plan of making him her son-in-law. Bavaria was not, indeed, a great power, but it was a respected kingdom of the second class. The Bavarian dynasty was old and esteemed; and its present head was a brilliant personality, and, as it appeared, noble and amiable in character. To Ludwig also, and the country he represented, a connection of the kind must have presented itself as suitable and desirable; albeit, the Grand Duchess Maria—the only daughter of the Emperor and Empress—was at that time a mere child.

From Kissingen the Russian royal family went on to Schwalbach. After a short stay in Munich the King of Bavaria sought them there, accompanying —their untiring knight—the mother and daughter in their excursions.

This scheme of marriage, entertained by the Russian and the Bavarian courts, extended over several years. It seems to be proved beyond all doubt that Ludwig for a time thought of asking the Grand Duchess's hand. He even had the plans drawn of a Græco-Muscovite palace, which he intended

should be his wedding gift to the bride, and where, as a newly-married couple, they should spend their honeymoon.

The following summer the Tsarina and her daughter came again to Kissingen; there again the King met them. The mutual amiabilities and civilities recommenced, and the Empress and the Bavarian Ministers still seemed eager to have the connection brought about. The announcement of the engagement was expected every day. But it was expected in vain. The King hesitated to say the decisive word; as a matter of fact, he never said it. People tried to guess the reason. Some thought that the Tsarina's too great eagerness for the match had cooled his own ardour for it. Others thought that the beauty-loving youth had hesitated because he had discovered that the little Russian Princess had a higher heel on one foot than on the other. Hardly any one suspected the real reason. It must be sought in Ludwig's restless, undecided temperament, and in his inborn aversion to entering the married state.[1]

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1 The Archduchess Maria married some years later the second son of Queen Victoria, Prince Alfred, later Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. ↑

CHAPTER V

King Ludwig and Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner, in the preface to his *Niebelungenlied*, asks the following question:—"Is the prince to be found who will make possible the representation of my work?" Ludwig of Bavaria read these lines as Crown Prince, and exclaimed, with enthusiasm: "When *I* am a King I will show the world how highly I prize his genius!"

Hardly a month after his accession Ludwig sent his private secretary, Herr von Pfistermeister, to invite Wagner to Munich. The secretary sought Wagner first in Vienna; but the poet-musician had been obliged to flee the Austrian capital for some place where his pursuers could not reach him, having been threatened with arrest for debt. He was traced to some friends in Stuttgart. There the King's emissary delivered to him a photograph of Ludwig and a ring, set with a ruby, and informed him that, as the stone in the ring glowed, so his ruler burned with longing to behold him.

On his sixteenth birthday the Crown Prince of Bavaria had been present at a representation of *Lohengrin*. This opera had made the deeper impression on him from the fact that the legend of the swan knights was connected with Hohenschwangau, which, as we know, had been from his childhood his favourite place of residence. During the years preceding his ascent of the throne his interest in the "musician of the future" increased. When visiting his aunt, the Duchess Ludovica, at Possenhofen, he had found Wagner's compositions on her pianoforte, and from this time forth he studied his works with zeal. Ludwig was not the possessor of any distinctly musical gifts. A musician who gave him lessons on the piano was even of opinion that he was wanting in ear; and Wagner's works probably attracted him more from their fantastic poetry than on account of their musical qualities.

It was with feelings of joyful expectation that the master accepted the young King's invitation. He arrived at Munich at the beginning of May (1864), and was received with consideration. His personality made a strong

impression on Ludwig, who assured him of his favour and warm interest. “The unthinkable, and the only thing that I required, has become a reality. Heaven has sent me a patron. Through him I live and understand myself!” exclaimed the poet-musician to friends who were awaiting him on his return from the Palace. After staying a few days in the Bavarian capital he continued his journey to Vienna, being now able, thanks to Ludwig’s generosity, to discharge his debts. He soon, however, returned to Munich, and Pfistermeister, in the name of his master, bade him welcome to a beautifully situated villa on the lake of Starnberg, where he might live undisturbed for his art.

Ludwig was in residence at this time at the adjacent Schloss Berg, where Wagner frequently visited him, and performed his works before him. The master’s imagination, poetry, his attractive manner, all transformed the royal enthusiast’s admiration into blind admiration. The elder man exerted a superhuman power over the youth, and his proximity had a positively electrifying effect on the King. Their life together became a decisive event in the lives of both. Full of pity for him, and happy in the consciousness of being able to assist him, Ludwig wrote on the day following their first meeting: “Feel assured that I will do all that lies in my power to make reparation to you for your earlier sufferings. I will for ever chase away the trifling sorrows of everyday life from your head. I will give you the repose you require, so that undisturbed in the pure sphere of your art you can unfold your genius in its entirety.... Unknowingly you were the only source of my joys. From my earliest years you were to me a friend who as no other spoke to my heart, my best teacher and upbringer.” In spite of their difference in age it is placed beyond a doubt, that Wagner from the first moment warmly reciprocated the feelings of his protector. He thus writes to his friend Frau von Wille (May 1864): “He (the King) is unhappily so handsome and so intellectual, so full of soul and so glorious, that I fear his life must disappear like a fleeting dream of gods in this commonplace world. He loves me with the tenderness and warmth of first love. He knows me and all about me, and understands me as he does his own soul. He wishes me to live with him altogether, to work, rest, and have my works performed. He will give me everything I may require for this purpose. I am to complete the “Ring”; and he will have them put on the stage in the

manner I desire. I am to be my own master, not *Kapelmeister*, nothing except myself and his friend!... All need is to be taken away from me, I am to have all that I require, only I am to remain with him!... You cannot imagine the charm of his glance. I only hope he may live; it is a real marvel!" Of their personal intercourse he writes, on another occasion: "I always hasten to him as to a loved one. It is a glorious intercourse ... and, in addition, this kind care of me, this charming modesty of the heart when he assures me of his happiness in possessing me. We often sit for hours lost in the contemplation of one another." The same feeling of exuberant joy is apparent in a letter written on the 20th of May to his friend Weissheimer: "Only two words to assure you of the indescribable happiness which has become my lot. Everything has happened in such a manner that it is impossible to imagine it more beautiful. Thanks to the affection of the young King, I am for all time insured against every pecuniary care. I can work, I need not trouble myself about anything. No title, no functions, no duties! As soon as I wish anything staged the King places everything I require at my disposal.... My young King is a wonderful dispensation of fate to me. We love one another as only master and pupil can love one another. He is happy in having me and I am happy on account of him.... And then he is so beautiful, so profound, that daily intercourse with him carries me away, and gives me an entirely new life."

Already at this time, however, he adds: "You can imagine what a vast amount of envy I meet with!"

The same year he addresses Ludwig:[1]

> "O, König! Holder Schirmherr meines Lebens!
> Du, höchster Güte wonnereicher Hort!
> Was Du mir bist, kann staunend ich nur fassen,
> Wenn mir sich zeigt, was ohne Dich ich war.
>
> Du bist der holde Lenz, der neu mich schmückte,
> Der mir verjüngt der Zweig und Aeste Saft;
> Es war dein Ruf, der mich der Nacht entrückte,
> Die winterlich erstarrt hielt meine Kraft.

Wie mich Dein hehrer Segengruss entzückte,
Der wonnenstürmisch mich dem Leid entrafft,
So wandl' ich stolzbeglückt nun neue Pfade
Im sommerlichen Königreich der Gnade."

At the beginning of October, Wagner moved from the lake of Starnberg to Munich, Ludwig having given him a furnished villa in Brienner Strasse. The royal gardeners transformed an adjoining garden into a pretty park, and he was granted a considerable monthly pension. The intercourse between the friends continued apparently undisturbed; they spent their days in each other's society, and often remained together half the night. The Monarch showered gifts on the poet-musician, and fulfilled all his wishes.

On the 25th of November the newspapers of the capital published an official announcement, which ran as follows:—"His Majesty has decided that a school of operatic music shall be founded, under the direction of Wagner, in which male and female singers who wish to prepare themselves for the stage may receive the necessary practical instruction. The royal Residenz Theater will be placed at the disposal of the pupils for purposes of rehearsal."

Der Fliegende Holländer was given at the Hof Theater on the 4th of December. The house was filled to overflowing, and the audience followed the opera with interest. Wagner, who made his first public appearance that evening as conductor in Munich, was recalled after the second act and the conclusion of the performance. In order further to seal the position he had won, it was decided that he should give a concert the following Sunday in the Hof Theater, where several of his compositions would be performed. It was, however, badly attended; and the critics deemed Wagner more a poet than a musician.

A few weeks afterwards the King received in special audience the architect Semper, who had come to Munich at the suggestion of Wagner, it being the latter's wish that a large new theatre after his own notions should be built in the Bavarian capital. It was intended that this edifice should be situated on the highest part of the Maximilian Anlage, a bridge in Renaissance style

being thrown across the river. The cost of the theatre was estimated at a million guldens, and including the projected bridge and laying out of the adjacent ground, Semper further calculated the sum necessary at five millions of guldens. His plans and drawings met with Ludwig's fullest approval. The officials of the privy purse, however, used to the economy of former reigns, strongly opposed the scheme. The King, therefore, thought himself constrained to postpone indefinitely the execution of his plans; and later on entirely abandoned them.[2] The capital of Bavaria was the loser by this, for the theatre would not only have been an embellishment to the town, but would have attracted thither a countless number of visitors. The outlay in course of time would have been covered many times over.

The real opposition against Wagner began in Munich on the day when his extensive theatre plans became known. The nobility saw in him the bad genius of the young King, one who would prevent the aristocracy and gentry from having access to the presence. The clergy were incensed against him because he was a freethinker. Among musicians there was a considerable number who admired the composer of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tännhauser*, but who, nevertheless, frankly opposed the "music of the future" as an aberration. Others of his fellows looked upon him as the greatest musical genius of that day; but they envied his ability to bask in the favour of royalty, and dragged his personal weaknesses forth before the public.

Wagner, on his side, was not without blame in these enmities. The exaggerated luxury displayed by him incensed the thrifty burghers. At every turn he boasted of the royal favour. It was generally said that he misused his protector's open purse. He was in the habit of buying articles on credit and referring the purveyors for payment to his "royal friend," and it was feared in extended circles that he was leading Ludwig into profligacy. He, moreover, caused a considerable amount of ill-feeling by his irritability and impatience where the execution of his plans was concerned. A large part of the press began to show hostility towards him; the comic papers occupied themselves with him; and he suffered much under the forging of these links: On the 7th of March 1865 he wrote to August Röckl: "All I want is to get away to a pretty corner of Italy ... so as to be able to nurse my poor nerves.

But how, on the other hand, can I leave this poor young King, in his abominable surroundings, and with his heart so wonderfully fastened on me?"

At Wagner's suggestion the King summoned Hans von Bülow and several of the musician's other adherents to Munich. Bülow was appointed court choirmaster and "leader" to his Majesty. He treated the artists of the royal chapel like schoolboys. They were received in the best society of the capital, and their displeasure was implanted further. On the 7th of May 1865 the following announcement appeared in the *Neuesten Nachrichten*: —"Men whose veracity we have no reason to doubt inform us that at a recent rehearsal of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* Herr von Bülow demanded an extension of the orchestra. The stage manager, Herr Penckmayer, answered that in such a case thirty stalls would have to be done away with. Bülow thereupon observed: 'What does it matter if there are thirty rascals more or less in the theatre!'" The overstrung musician frequently let his sharp tongue run away with him, and could not deny that he had made use of this expression. He found himself obliged to declare publicly that in saying so he had in his mind only that portion of the public who had taken up a hostile attitude towards Wagner. The general dislike of Hans von Bülow, despite his admitted ability, was very detrimental to the poet-composer; moreover, others of his friends who had come to Munich at this time wounded the inhabitants of the city by their frankly expressed contempt for its music, and by permitting themselves criticisms at its expense. But more than anything else public opinion was incensed against Wagner from the fact that Frau Cosima von Bülow, *née* Liszt, had attained the part of lady of the house at the villa in Brienner Strasse.

It became known that the mutual admiration between her and Wagner had taken the form of a *liaison*, and the judges of morality on this ground sided vehemently against him. Only at the court did his position appear to be unshaken. Ludwig did not hear the reports which were current with regard to Bülow's wife and his friend, nor had he more than a slight knowledge of the hostility of which the latter was the object. Articles in the different newspapers which had come to his knowledge had, however, greatly embittered the sensitive youth. "Forgive them, for they know not what they

do," he wrote, with reference to this, to Wagner. "They do not know that you are everything to me, and will continue to be so until death." In another letter he exclaims: "Ah, my friend, how difficult they make things for us! But I will not complain. I have him, my friend, the only one."[3]

At the Hof Theater in Munich the master's glorious composition *Tristan und Isolde* was being studied, no theatre up to this time having attempted to produce it. The well-known singers Ludwig and Malwina Schnorr von Carolsfeld came from Dresden to take the title parts. Bülow, whom the composer called "his other self,"[4] was to conduct the opera. The rehearsals began in Wagner's house, but were later transferred to the royal Residenz Theater which was placed at his absolute disposal for this purpose. The master instructed each one of the artists himself. The little man with the great head was all fire, carrying everyone with him. When a difficult passage had been performed with especial success he would spring up and kiss and embrace the singer, male or female; and at times even stand on his head on the sofa from sheer delight.[5]

The performances of *Tristan und Isolde* had been fixed for the 15th, the 18th, and the 22nd of May, the latter day being Wagner's birthday. His followers, and representatives of the press, had come from all parts of Germany and from abroad, to be present at the representation, which was considered an event in the musical world. But Frau Schnorr von Carolsfeld suddenly fell ill, and the performance had to be postponed.

It was not until the 10th of June that the first performance could take place. Early in the forenoon all the seats in the house were sold at considerably increased prices. The royal boxes, flanking the stage, were filled with spectators: among those present being Prince Luitpold with his elder sons, Prince Adalbert with his wife, King Ludwig I., and Duke Max, who nearly all remained in the theatre until the conclusion of the opera.

At ten minutes past six the King appeared in the so-called "Imperial box." He was received with loud acclamations, and the orchestra added its quota of fanfares. Ludwig was evidently pleased, and thanked his people by

bowing cordially to all sides. The next moment Hans von Bülow stepped into the conductor's place, and the performance began.

It was not at that time usual to applaud the actors and actresses when the Sovereign was present, until the latter had given the signal. After the first act, however, a great number of those present were so delighted that they could not refrain from recalling Herr and Frau Schnorr von Carolsfeld. No sooner had they done this than hisses were to be heard, though deadened by applause. After the second act the two chief singers were recalled, this time amid unanimous recognition. At eleven o'clock the performance concluded. Once again there was a difference of opinion, and applause and hisses sought for mastery. Herr and Frau Schnorr von Carolsfeld led Wagner on to the stage. He was received with a storm of ovations, though here and there hisses were audible. The King, who had followed the performance with the most strained attention, and who in the third act had been affected to tears, trembled with emotion. He stood up in his box, and clapped enthusiastically.

At last there was quiet; the curtain fell. Wagner's genius had conquered.

There was not in the whole of Europe a newspaper of any consideration, still less one for the criticism of music, which did not mention this evening. Opinions as to the work were divided, but there was only one opinion as to the excellence of the orchestra under Hans von Bülow's leadership and the singing of Ludwig and Malwina Schnorr von Carolsfeld. A Frenchman who was present wrote[6]: "I doubt that Wagner's *Tristan* will ever be popular, for it is not remarkable for clearness and simplicity. On the other hand, musicians will find treasures in it.—I have never been present at an opera which so quickly wearies the attention and which demands such an immense amount of mental strain. But neither do I know any with such lofty and enchanting beauties.

"We must do the young King the justice to allow that without him the representation could never have been possible. He has worked for it with all his might, and Wagner's triumph is in truth his. Ludwig's behaviour during the five hours that the opera lasted was likewise a feature in the play. Be

sure that this young man will cause the world to talk about him! A Monarch of twenty years more open-minded than his Opposition, whom he drives forward—a King who does not draw back before the highest problems in art is a rare figure in history!"

Wagner received from his royal protector a letter in which was written:

> "UPLIFTED, DIVINE FRIEND,
>
> "I can hardly wait for the morrow, I long so already for the second performance.... Is it not so, my very dear friend, the courage to create new things will never leave you!... I ask you never to lose heart. I ask it of you in the name of those whom you fill with joy—a joy which otherwise only God grants!
>
> "You and God!
>
> "To death and after death. In the kingdom on the other side I remain,
>
> "Your faithful,
> "LUDWIG."

To Hans von Bülow likewise he expressed his thanks in a flattering letter, which was accompanied by a diamond ring; and he also caused diamond rings to be conveyed to Herr and Frau Schnorr von Carolsfeld, in which souvenirs of the festival were ingeniously set.

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1 In a dedication of the pianoforte score of *Die Walküre* (July 1864). ↑

2 Semper some years afterwards made use of the same plan, though somewhat reduced in scale, when he built the Richard Wagner Theatre in Bayreuth. ↑

3 Ludwig II. and Richard Wagner continually exchanged letters. They are written in an exceedingly warm and exalted tone, but turn chiefly on musical subjects. Only a very small number of them are accessible to the public. After the death of the King the Bavarian Government and Wagner's heirs agreed that Ludwig's letters should be given up to the Bavarian Government, which now preserves them under lock and key. Wagner's letters, on the other hand, were sent back to his relations.

The periodical, *Die Wage*, published in its second year several interesting letters from Ludwig to his friend which are affirmed to be absolutely authentic, and which I have cited in part as above. ↑

4 In a letter, dated 5th May, to Herr Uhl, the editor of the *Wiener Botschafter*. ↑

5 Frau Herwegh in the *Gegenwart*, 1897. ↑

6 In the *Progrès de Lyon*. ↑

CHAPTER VI

Ludwig's First Visit to Switzerland—Richard Wagner leaves Munich

We know that Schiller, from Ludwig's childhood, had been his favourite poet. At Munich, as in all other theatres, the master's works had hitherto only been given in an abridged form. But the "romanticist on the throne," commanded that in his own theatre they should be played as the poet himself had intended. On the 18th of October 1865 *Wilhelm Tell* was performed for the first time in its original shape.

After this representation the King was taken with the desire to know the people and the country which Schiller had glorified in his work. Accompanied by his aide-de-camp, Prince Paul of Thurn and Taxis, he started on the 20th of October for Switzerland. In Lucerne, which he made his headquarters, he went to the hotel Schweizer Hof. His arrival being unannounced, and no one recognising him, he was given a room on the third floor. The consternation among the *personnel* of the establishment may be imagined when it became known the following day that it was the King of Bavaria who had been lodged so high up. The landlord, in dismay, hastened upstairs to make his apologies, and offered Ludwig the suite of rooms on the ground floor in which royal personages were usually accommodated. Ludwig declined the offer with his kindest smile, declaring that he was satisfied with his little room on the third floor, with its pretty view over the lake and mountains, and that he would not leave it.

From Lucerne he made excursions to places in the woodland cantons rich in legendary lore: to "Rütli" "Tells-Platte," "Stauffachers Kapel," to the Küsnach gorge, and several other places.

The hearts of the inhabitants went out to the handsome, enthusiastic youth. The *Schwyzer Zeitung* published after his departure some hearty words of

appreciation and farewell. This he answered in an autograph letter which ran as follows:—

"HERR REDAKTEUR!

"It was with the greatest pleasure that I read to-day the warm farewell from "William Tell's" land, and I answer it from my heart.

"I send my greeting likewise to my dear friends in the forest cantons, for whom already as a child I had a particular affection.

"The recollection of my visit to the glorious interior of Switzerland and of the honest, free people, whom I pray God to protect, I shall always prize.

"With the kindest feelings, I am,

"Your gracious,
"LUDWIG.

"Hohenschwangau, November the second, 1865."

On his return home Ludwig invited Richard Wagner to visit him; and on the 10th of November the two friends were again together in the "Swan Castle." It was intended to open at the beginning of the year 1866 the new school of music and dramatic art, with Hans von Bülow as Principal. Wagner had much upon his mind which he desired to ask of his royal friend, and was so satisfied with his stay at Hohenschwangau that after his return home he telegraphed to one of his adherents:

"The year 1866 is ours!"

Meanwhile there were forces working from different quarters to destroy the friendship between him and Ludwig. The Secretary and the Keeper of the Privy Purse, who had enjoyed the late King's confidence for years, considered it to be their duty to counteract the tendency to extravagance which was showing itself in the young Sovereign. They received support from the numerous opponents of the poet-musician. The opposition grew into a perfect tumult; for the people, who could neither understand his relations with Ludwig nor his artistic objects, believed in the alarming pictures of him which his enemies sowed broadcast in words and writings.

“Well-informed persons,” wrote the *Volksbote*, “affirm that Wagner within less than a year has cost the privy purse no less than a million and nine hundred thousand guldens. We do not vouch for the accuracy of the amount stated; but we may mention it as certain that Wagner some weeks ago once more demanded forty thousand guldens in order to satisfy his expensive habits. Herr von Pfistermeister has advised the Sovereign not to grant this new and excessive demand. As a result of this Richard Wagner has written in his anger a letter very far from polite to Herr von Pfistermeister; and finally he has in spite of everything received the sum he desired.” Ministers, Councillors of State, burgher representatives, all took part against him. Among the general public opinions were, however, somewhat divided. The following episode occurred in a railway train. A Catholic priest expressed disapproval of his Majesty for making so much of “Lutheran musicians.” To this a peasant who was sitting in the same carriage, replied: “I would rather see the King with musicians than with priests.”

The Secretary was looked upon by Wagner as the instigator of all the opposition the latter met with, and on many occasions he expressed himself in disparaging terms of this greatly respected man. In the other camp, on the contrary, Pfistermeister was greatly admired on account of the bold stand he was making against the inconsiderate demands of the master, the Conservative papers siding strongly with him.

On the 4th of December an address of confidence was laid out in the business houses of Munich for signature, which it was intended should be presented to Herr von Pfistermeister by a deputation. It also contained a request that he would continue to stand fast by the King’s side. Ludwig received official information of these facts, and at the same time it was made known to him how unpopular Wagner had made himself. On the 5th of December he moved from Hohenschwangau back to the Royal Palace at Munich. On the same day his mother, his great-uncle Prince Karl, Archbishop Scherr, and the Premier, Baron von der Pfordten, went to the Palace. In his capacity as Minister of the Royal Household, the latter handed him a memorandum in which he threatened to retire if Wagner did not leave Bavaria. Prince Karl gave forcible expression to the belief of the court that this friendship would have disastrous consequences. The police

would no longer answer for the poet-composer's safety. Lacqueys who were questioned let fall hints that a revolution might break out under the present condition of affairs.

The King had weak nerves, and was not a man of conspicuous bravery. Wagner's violence and exactions had many times caused him difficulties. He felt himself, moreover, greatly hurt by the manner in which his name had been mixed up in the matter. The attacks of the press and the threats of his relations and councillors would hardly, however, have been sufficient to separate him from his friend, had not another reason been added to them: he had received incontrovertible proof that the poet-composer had a *liaison* with Frau Cosima von Bülow. These proofs, for which he was quite unprepared, made a far more painful impression on him than the meddling of his friends and the malicious fulminations of the press.

Schwärmerei was a prominent trait in his character, and he had fixed all his affections on Richard Wagner. The predominant feeling of the latter was primarily gratitude to his royal patron; but there is no doubt, judging by the letters and poems from his hand, that he also cherished very great sympathy for the gifted youth. But Ludwig was of a jealous nature. He wished to be loved for his own sake; and he wished to possess his friend alone. The connection with Frau von Bülow, therefore, became a source of bitter and continual disappointment to him. The same day that he ascertained the fact with certainty, he sent the Premier a document in which he made known his desire that Wagner should at once leave Munich. "I will," he said on this occasion, "show my dear people that their confidence in, and love for, me stands higher than any other consideration." To von Lutz, later his Minister, was allotted the task of verbally informing Wagner of the decision which had been taken with regard to him. The same evening he visited the Hof Theater with the Queen-mother. Instead of the warm welcome he was in the habit of receiving when he had been absent for some time, a murmur of displeasure was heard. He thought to see in this a confirmation of the current of public feeling. The following morning he sent Wagner an autograph letter, which ran as follows:—

"My dear Friend,

"Greatly as it pains me, I must ask you to comply with the wish I expressed yesterday through my secretary. Believe me, I was obliged to act thus! My affection for you will last for ever. I ask you, also, always to keep your friendship for me. It is with a good conscience that I dare say that I am worthy of it.... Who has the right to part us?... I know that you feel as I do, that you can perfectly measure my deep sorrow. I could not act otherwise, be convinced of this! Never doubt the faithfulness of your greatest friend.... It is not for ever.

"To death,

"Your faithful,

"LUDWIG."

Even before the official organ of the Government had announced this sensational banishment, the news had been disseminated with lightning rapidity. The 8th of December was a holiday. Nevertheless, a meeting of magistrates was convened to discuss the propriety of sending a deputation to the King, to express the city's thanks. The debate was protracted and sharp; it was finally agreed that the deputation should not be sent. Nor did a torchlight procession which had been thought of, take place.

While the Clerical and some of the Liberal papers were overjoyed at Ludwig's action, the Progressive organ observed that "the august relatives, members of the nobility, and officials of Church and State who had informed the King of the prevailing condition of public feeling had been incorrect in their statements. Wagner's presence had done nothing to alarm the people, and had in no way diminished their love of the King. Wagner's person had had nothing whatever to do with the internal affairs of the country, and with the efforts of the Progressive party."

On the 10th of December the master left Munich. Despite the cold of winter and the dark early morning hour, the railway station was filled with people anxious to see him and bid him good-bye. Ludwig had sent him a last farewell letter, brimming over with sorrow:

"MY PRECIOUS TENDERLY LOVED FRIEND,

"Words cannot express the pain gnawing at my heart. Whatever it is possible to do to refute the abominable newspaper accounts shall be done. That it should have come to this! Our ideals shall be faithfully cultivated—I need hardly tell you this. Let us write often and much to one another. I ask it of you! We know each other, and we will not give up the friendship which binds us. For the sake of your peace I had to act as I have done.

"Do not misjudge me, not for a moment; it would be the pangs of hell to me.... Success to my most beloved friend! May his works flourish. A hearty greeting with my whole soul from

"Your faithful,

"LUDWIG."

Wagner went to Switzerland and took up his abode there.

Neither the King nor his advisers thought that the banishment would be for ever. The poet-musician did, indeed, return to Munich, on visits of short duration, but he never stayed there again for any length of time. The good relations between him and Ludwig were never broken, and the gallant Monarch continued to hold his protecting hand over him. He worked zealously for the inauguration of the Wagner Theatre at Bayreuth, and the royal pension was paid without reduction out of the privy purse until the death of Wagner in 1883. Frau Cosima, however, who had been one of the causes of the friends' separation, was unable to congratulate herself on any favour whatsoever; she might not have existed as far as the ruler of Bavaria was concerned. As a widow she sought an audience of him, to thank him for the proofs of affection he had shown her husband. Ludwig refused to receive her. "I do not know any Frau Cosima Wagner," he said coldly.

Although he had voluntarily sent the master away, and although, as we have seen, other reasons than the voice of opinion had influenced his decision, Ludwig never forgave the citizens of Munich for the part they had taken in disturbing a friendship which had been the source to him of so much consolation and pleasure. The aversion which he showed the capital on many later occasions was first awakened by this circumstance. The severance not only left behind it a profound feeling of loneliness, but also, in his sensitive heart, a bitterness which boded ill for the future.

“His too great love for me,” wrote Wagner, on the 26th of December 1865, to Frau Wille, “made him blind to other connections, and therefore he was easily disappointed. He knows nobody, and it is only now that he is learning to know people. Still I hope for him. As I am sure of his enduring affection, so I believe in the development of his splendid qualities. All he requires is to learn to know a few more people. He will then rapidly learn to do the right thing.”

On the 1st of July 1867 he wrote in a letter to Malvida von Meysenburg:

“The only thing that kept me back in Munich was affection for my friend, for whose sake I have suffered more than for any other person.... I have saved him, and still hope that I have kept in him one of my best works for the world.”

Among Wagner’s contemporaries there were but few who were disposed to share his belief that he had saved the young King. On the contrary, public opinion affirmed that it was he who had given Ludwig a taste for the nocturnal life which entirely undermined his nervous system, and that by his exaggerated poems of homage he had laid the foundation of the megalomania which later developed in him. At the time of Ludwig’s death it was even declared that this friend was concerned in the tragedy of the Starnberger See. The latter is, of course, an unproved and improvable affirmation. With quite as much reason might it be said that Ludwig II.—morbid as he was—had need of some person who by the power of music could soothe him in his suffering condition. Certain it is that from the day when the separation from Richard Wagner took place the King’s spirit became less, and his life more joyless than it had been before.

It has also been thought that Wagner meddled in the guidance of political affairs. This, however, is incorrect. There were, indeed, many who credited him with an all-powerful influence over the King, and he himself mentions this in a letter to a friend: “I pass for a favourite who can bring everything about. The other day even a murderess’s relations addressed themselves to me!” It is also said that, at the time when war seemed to be imminent between Prussia and Austria, an endeavour was made through Wagner to

induce Ludwig to remain neutral. All, however, who are in a position to know, are agreed that in the fulfilment of his duties as a ruler the young Monarch never allowed himself to be influenced by him. Wagner has on countless occasions declared that he never talked politics with the King, because the latter had forbidden him to do so. When he touched upon a topic which might in any way have led the conversation into this channel, Ludwig would gaze up at the ceiling and whistle, as a sign that he did not desire a continuation of the subject.

Finally, in summing up the relations between the two friends, it must not be forgotten that, after Wagner's genius, it is to the affection of the Bavarian King for him that the world owes to-day the possession of the *Meistersinger*, *Der Ring*, and *Parsifal*. His help at a time when it was most needed, gave back to the master his strength and courage. Ludwig's magnificent generosity enabled him to create these new and glorious works. Moreover, the royal protection did much further to attract attention to Wagner and to the music of the future. His enthusiastic admiration for the composer of *Rienzi*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and the above-mentioned operas, has caused the name of Ludwig II. to be honourably connected with the history of music.

Little more than twenty years have passed since his death, in the year 1886. But the prophetic words which he uttered on the 4th of August 1865, in a letter to Richard Wagner, have become reality. "When we two are no more, our work will serve as a shining model for posterity. It will delight centuries. And hearts will glow with enthusiasm for the art which is from God, and is everlasting."

CHAPTER VII

The Political Situation—The Schleswig-Holstein Question—The War of 1866

The sixties were in political respects a time fraught with fate for the German people.

The future Emperor Wilhelm I.—"*der Siegeskaiser*," as he was called—had in 1861 succeeded his romantic, and in the end, insane brother, Friedrich Wilhelm IV., as King of Prussia. The year afterwards Bismarck was constituted the leader of Prussian politics. He had long borne within him the scheme for the federation of the German states under the Prussian sceptre; and his political watch-word was, as we know, "iron and blood." In 1863 an opportunity occurred for the great statesman to take the first step on his projected way. The Danish King, Frederik VII., had died, and as a consequence of this the Schleswig-Holstein question had peremptorily come to the fore. Bismarck invited the hereditary enemy, Austria, to go hand in hand with Prussia in her war against Denmark. In the situation brought about by this war the position of the medium-sized and small states of Germany became serious, and the neutrality which they had adopted became more and more untenable. Bavaria had kept outside the struggle in the Schleswig-Holstein question. Its then reigning Monarch, Maximilian II., had made an attempt to negotiate between the conflicting parties, and shortly before his death endeavoured to mediate in favour of the Duke of Agustenborg's claims.

Matters had by this time entered on a new stage: the two great powers could not agree as to the prize gained by the conquest. Dark storm-clouds gathered, threatening a more far-reaching and bloody issue than the Schleswig-Holstein one. Ludwig II. desired to take up the thankless part of peacemaker, and follow in his father's footsteps. This was of no avail, for Bismarck wished for a decision of the question whether Prussia or Austria should play first violin, and a war was a necessary link in his scheme.

Bavaria in general, and the King in particular, seem long to have considered it possible that the storm might abate without the shedding of blood. Nevertheless he issued orders on the 10th of May, 1866, for the mobilisation of the Bavarian army.

On the 22nd of May, at Schloss Hohenschwangau, one of the Ministers held a lecture before him on the position of affairs. Ludwig went a turn in the park with his counsellor, and parted from him with manifestations of friendliness, after having offered him a cigar. The Minister had hardly taken his departure before Ludwig mounted a horse, and rode off, accompanied by a single groom. He galloped to the railway station of Biessenhofen, reached Lindau unrecognised, and passed thence unnoticed into Switzerland. The journey concerned Richard Wagner, who was living at his villa "Triebchen," close to Lucerne, and whom he wished to congratulate on the occasion of his birthday. The Landsturm was meanwhile about to be called out in Bavaria, and the King's signature was required. Not a syllable as to his intended excursion had crossed his lips while he had been talking to the Minister. When the latter again returned to Hohenschwangau, his Majesty had disappeared. Inquiries were made; but no one knew whither he had ridden, or how long he intended to be away. After a time tracks were found leading to the lake of Lucerne, and it was discovered that two riders, late at night, had been admitted to Richard Wagner's villa. There was no longer any doubt as to where he was to be sought. The Premier telegraphed to Wagner that the King's presence in Bavaria was necessary. Ludwig at once went back to Lindau, whither the royal train was sent to meet him. It is true that he had been absent only a few days, but not without reason this excursion was looked upon with great disfavour. His gratuitous disappearance at such a critical moment was commented on and criticised in foreign and Bavarian newspapers. The only circumstance to explain and excuse his conduct was his youthful confidence that his kingdom would not be involved in the struggle.

On the 27th of May he opened the Chamber in person, expressing in the Speech from the Throne the hope, which he would not yet relinquish, that Germany might be spared a sister war. This was, however, on the eve of breaking out.

The sympathies of Bavaria were on the side of Austria, and on the 14th of June a military alliance was concluded with that country. The same day Prussia declared in Dresden, Hanover, and Cassel its ultimatum: Alliance or war! The Grand Duke of Hesse, who would not allow Prussia "to put a pistol to his breast," was a Prussian prisoner of state five days later. King George of Hanover declared himself, "as a Christian, a monarch, and a Guelph," to be against Prussia. But so rapid was the Prussian advance that the Hanoverian troops surrendered without conditions on the 29th of June, in spite of their victory at Langensalza.

On the 16th of June the war broke out in Bavaria. Austria had undertaken, in an agreement with this country, not to conclude peace on her own account. On the 25th of June Ludwig went for a day to the headquarters of the army, at Bamberg. He issued a proclamation to his troops, in which he said, "I do not bid you farewell; my thoughts will be with you,"

He left the command of the army to his father's uncle, Field Marshal Prince Karl, then seventy-one years of age, who, together with Prince Alexander of Hesse, led the troops of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden-Baden, and Hesse—the so-called *reichs-armée*, which consisted of nearly a hundred thousand men. In spite of his bravery and his military experience from the wars of Napoleon the Great, in which he had taken part, Prince Karl could do nothing against the dissensions of the allied troops, which hastened the enemy's victory. The Prussians conquered the *reichs-armée* in a number of small battles.

Inactive, powerless, Ludwig was witness from his capital of the defeat of his faithful soldiers. His people were a vanquished people, and himself a vanquished King. Austria concluded peace with Prussia in Nikolsburg without paying any regard to the fate of her ally. Bavaria now also concluded peace. She did not lose any province, had only to renounce a strip of country hardly worth mentioning; but she was compelled to pay thirty millions of guldens for the expenses of the war. The Bavarian troops went each in their own direction. The war had lasted a month, but this month had been long enough to lay fields and woods bare, and to fill thousands of hearts with loss and sorrow.

CHAPTER VIII

The King makes the Tour of his Kingdom

A couple of months after peace had been concluded Ludwig made the tour of his kingdom—the first and the last of his reign.

He appeared with great brilliance, his suite consisting of no less than a hundred and nineteen persons. Although the war had brought Bavaria neither honour nor advantage, and although the King had taken no active part in it, he was everywhere received with the greatest rejoicings. The enthusiasm he aroused was so great, that his journey literally resembled a triumphal progress, and this conquered and peaceful monarch might have taken to himself Cæsar's celebrated words: *Veni, vidi, vici*.

The sympathy of the people during the war of 1866 had been markedly on the side upon which the Government had placed itself, namely, that of Austria. The young King's personality was, moreover, as if created to awaken interest and devotion. He was twenty-one years of age. He united to his youth a beauty which was widely celebrated. Nearly every illustrated paper in Germany, nay, the whole of Europe, published a picture of him at that time, and to these was added a text redundant with admiration and praise. The romantic light which rested on him, the legends current as to his gifts and his intellect, his æsthetic and artistic tastes, even the many half-true half-fictitious stories of his caprices and peculiarities—all contributed to increase the interest taken in him. Added to this was the fact that this official journey was for the purpose of making acquaintance with the wounds caused by the war, and in order, as far as possible, to bring healing and relief to them.

It was a winter journey. The snow lay like a white coverlet over the afflicted provinces traversed by the railway. But from behind the wide plate-glass windows Ludwig saw, whenever a group of houses came into sight, that a flag was hoisted on every roof and that from every window a hearty welcome was being waved to him. The noise of the train was put to naught

by the jubilant clangour of the village trumpets and clarionets. In the towns the reception was on a grander scale, and not less hearty. All the streets were decorated with flags and banners, and all the bells were pealing. The sounds of cannon, music, and cries of hurrah mingled one with another. The Monarch was the recipient of loyal speeches, verses, state dinners, and parades of troops. Concerts and balls were given in his honour. Young girls with awed admiration presented him with nosegays. The poor and the rich, the young and the old, gave proof-positive of their devotion by the zeal and impatience with which they sought to approach him. The joy of the people broke through police-guards and etiquette. Everyone asked to welcome this conquered man who was making a triumphal progress though the conquered provinces. "Never," a Bavarian officer who was with him told me—"never was a King worshipped as was Ludwig on his tour in his own country." The jubilations were equally deafening, the heartiness just as spontaneous, in Bayreuth, in Bamberg, Hof, Schweinfurt, Kissingen, Aschaffenburg, Würzburg, and Nuremberg.

The snowstorms now and then reduced a plan to nothing; Ludwig's health sometimes failed and prevented him from enjoying the festivities as much as he might have done; he was unable now and then to appear at some entertainment which had been given in his honour. But he was never-failing in his amiability, and he visited all the places where there had been battles with the enemy, laying flowers with his own hand on the soldiers' graves, and rewarding those who had helped to nurse the wounded.

On the 30th of November he arrived in the most glorious winter weather at Nuremberg, welcomed by crowds of people and shouts of "Long live the King!"

In the evening the citizens gave a brilliant ball; it was so numerously attended that it was only with difficulty space could be kept for the dancers. Nevertheless, Ludwig danced for four hours running. He conversed with ladies of all ages, and with men of the most varying grades of society. He was pushed into the very midst of the crowd, and he laughed and joked at the incident. It was not till long after midnight that he withdrew from the ball. He remained a whole week in Nuremberg. The castle courtyard, and

the neighbouring castle hill, were besieged by people from morning to night, who could not look often enough on their King. From the adjacent country places people came in troops to the town; and every day he gave audience in the hall of the Kaiserburg.

Throughout the journey magnificent gifts of money poured out of the privy purse for the assuaging of poverty and need. Criminals were pardoned, and the countless petitions which were sent in were nearly all granted. The police endeavoured to keep the obtrusive supplicants away. But the Monarch had a sharp eye for that which it was desired to keep from him. He discovered for himself among the crowds of people the pale and careworn forms who hung together with petitions in their hands, and he would then send one of his equerries to find out the nature of their wishes. Wearing a field-marshal's uniform he held a review of the troops on the Ludwigsmark, and sewed with his own hand the war memorial on four standards. The general in command made a speech in his honour, after which the troops broke out into vociferous cheering.

In response to a special invitation Prince Otto joined him at Nuremberg; the interest of the inhabitants from this moment was divided between the two brothers. Otto also was genial with all with whom he came in contact. He was handsome; and he was the possessor of a gay and lively temperament, in which his brother was wanting.

At last the end came of the royal days in Nuremberg. On the afternoon of the 10th of December the King, accompanied by his brother, left the town. He promised soon to repeat the visit—a promise which was never fulfilled! Despite the demonstrations of love and devotion which were so often and so unstintingly lavished on him by the population, he never again during his reign of twenty-two years travelled in his kingdom.

CHAPTER IX

Ludwig's Betrothal

At a court ball which took place during one of the first years of Ludwig's reign, he said to one of his gentlemen-in-waiting: "There are many pretty women at my court, are there not?" and added, as his glance full of tenderness sought the Queen-mother, "but my mother is the prettiest of them, and the one whom I admire most."

Queen Marie had many good qualities, but though her sons both loved her, she had no lasting influence on them. She hardly took the trouble to try to enter into Ludwig's train of thought, or to hide his weaknesses and peculiarities from others, nor does she seem to have had the ability to understand his strange and composite nature.

As we are aware, the young King took great interest in art and literature. At the beginning of his reign he endeavoured to influence the Queen's taste; but when he talked to her about books, inquired her opinion of this or that work, she would usually answer: "I never read anything!—I cannot understand why people should always want to be reading." Ludwig regarded her want of understanding as an indirect reproach to himself; and his disappointment in her had a depressing effect upon him. Both mother and son were fond of a country life. Both had a particular affection for Hohenschwangau. The Queen-mother had spent her happy married life at this place: the King's best childish memories were connected with the castle. But even this similarity of taste gave rise to disagreements. Whereas Ludwig infinitely preferred to be alone at Hohenschwangau, the Queen-mother preferred to collect people around her. While her thrifty mind was able to content itself with a bunch of Alpine roses, picked by herself, the King required gardens and parks, created by art. Life within the family circle, however, went on in very much the same manner as in the lifetime of her husband: Queen Marie retained her housewifely habits, and the King and Prince Otto shared her life at the royal summer residences in the vicinity of the capital.

King Maximilian had built a Swiss châlet, “Pleckenau,” some little distance above the Marienbrücke, and about five miles from Hohenschwangau. During the first years of her widowhood Queen Marie regularly used this house as a resting-place on her trips in the neighbourhood, and as an object for small excursions. Ludwig and Otto, with their attendants, would come out and spend quiet evenings with her. The King’s nineteenth birthday was celebrated at Pleckenau. A meal was partaken of in the garden, and the utmost gaiety prevailed. “All the same,” said the Queen, “something is wanting to increase the pleasure of the day.” She looked inquiringly round the circle to see if no one guessed her thoughts. As she nodded at the same time to Ludwig, he said:

“You mean music, mamma! We will have some later!”

“I mean something else,” answered his mother, “something that we want particularly to-day!”

Prince Otto, then sixteen years old, suddenly called out:

“I know, mamma!”

“What is it, then?”

“Your spinning-wheel!”

Those present were vastly entertained at the Prince’s answer, for the Queen-mother’s weakness for practical occupations was the object of much amusement. This time, however, her thoughts had carried her in another direction. She confided to the circle that she had been thinking of a *fiancée* for the King.

Despite Ludwig’s youth, not only his mother, but also his people had begun to occupy themselves with the emotional side of his nature. His love of the mountains and their solitude had caused a rumour to become current that a postmaster’s or ranger’s daughter in Schliersee had taken possession of his heart. This report was entirely without foundation. Apart from his mother and her court ladies, his old nurse and his governess, he had before his

accession hardly come in contact with women. As the young King he was amiable and courteous, but exceedingly retiring in his behaviour towards them. It was perhaps for the very reason of this retiring attitude that he set flame to a countless number of hearts. Many ladies wore lockets containing some souvenir of him; such, for instance, as a flower his foot had trodden on, or some of the hairs of his riding-horse.[1]

Some years passed by after the above-mentioned birthday party took place, and still the wish of the Queen-mother and the people was ungratified. The Empress of Russia's matrimonial project had become known, had been much discussed, and had again been nearly forgotten. The King was now twenty-two years of age.

The world was at this juncture surprised by the announcement that he was engaged to be married to his cousin, the Duchess Sophie Charlotte. She was young, pretty, well-educated, very musical, and the possessor of a fine voice. In defiance of the feeling against him which prevailed at court, she had openly shown her admiration for Richard Wagner, and was usually present at the Hof Theater when his works were performed. Ludwig looked forward to finding in her an ally in the struggle for his friend. Although the cousins were on a friendly footing, their mutual relations had never given any ground to suppose that a matrimonial alliance between them would ever come about. The evening before the report was circulated there had been a ball in the "Museum," at which Ludwig had been present. The young ladies belonging to the court had been remarkable for their charming dresses. Sophie, in particular, had displayed all the magic of her beauty.

At six o'clock the next morning the King hastened to his mother, and requested her, in his name, to ask the Duchess's hand.

Queen Marie had since her marriage been on terms of warm friendship with the young Duchess's parents and their family. She was pleased at her son's prompt decision. She drove in the early morning hours to the palace of Duke Max and the Duchess Ludovica. Nothing had occurred to prepare the Duke or his wife for what was about to happen, but they were proud at the unexpected offer of marriage. One of their daughters was an empress,[2] they

had seen another of their daughters a queen.[3]; now the youngest of them, and the one nearest her mother's heart, would have her place on the throne of Bavaria. The young Duchess, too, gave her consent without hesitation. Eye-witnesses have, however, declared that her face, otherwise so fresh, became exceedingly pale when she promised the Queen-mother to marry her son. At nine o'clock Ludwig himself arrived. An hour later the formal engagement was celebrated.

The news, which was rapidly spread through the capital on this morning, became certainty in the evening. On the 22nd of January, 1867, there was given at the Hof Theater a new play by Benedix. The King was present at the performance. After the conclusion of the first act, the Queen-mother came in. She and her son walked across to the ducal box, where Sophie was sitting with her youngest brother, and together they fetched the young girl to the "Imperial box," where she seated herself between the two. There are still alive in Munich elderly persons who remember the memorable night when the Princess walked in on Ludwig's arm, and gracefully bowed to the public.

The Duchess was born on the 22nd of February, 1847. She was often to be seen in the Bavarian national costume, which was very becoming to her; and she was considered by many to be better-looking than the Empress Elizabeth, who was celebrated for her beauty. A light blue dress of silk clung this evening to her slender figure. Her hair, which was almost too thick and abundant, was dressed in plaits. Her face was radiant and pure. A pair of unfathomable blue eyes, with dark lashes, looked up at the King.

On the 29th of January the engagement was officially announced to the Chamber, which voted an address of congratulation. It concluded with the following words: "May all the blessings which a married life can give grow forth in abundance from the alliance which it is your Majesty's intention to contract, to the happiness of your Majesty, to the prosperity of the royal house, to the blessing of the country!" The deputation was not granted an audience; it had to content itself with congratulating Ludwig and his betrothed on the 6th of February at a court ball.

The country was surprised at the King's choice; no one could understand why he had so suddenly taken this decision. The news was received with sympathy, but at first without real enthusiasm. The three former Kings of Bavaria had had Protestant wives, and the Protestant part of the population would have preferred Ludwig to make a similar choice. In the capital itself, however, people were very well satisfied. As he had in no way been influenced, and as there could be no political grounds for a marriage with a member of the royal house, it was assumed that inclination alone had dictated his proposal; and this assumption seemed in accord with his leaning towards the romantic. It was hoped, moreover, that the marriage would chase away his love of solitude, which had already begun to show itself, and also that the court would gain in brilliancy.

Ludwig understood how to throw glamour on his alliance; and, little by little, people began to show interest in his bride. Double portraits of the young couple were to be seen everywhere; and men and women of the populace would stand for hours in pouring rain to catch a glimpse of the Duchess. During the Carnival the young Monarch gave a series of balls; and on the 28th of February the engaged couple were present at an entertainment given in their honour by the Minister of the Royal House and of Foreign Affairs, Prince Hohenlohe. On the 23rd of March they took part in a masquerade at the Casino.

The King appointed the 12th of October as the day of his wedding; both his father and grandfather had been married on that day. On the occasion of Maximilian II.'s marriage, a respectable couple in poor circumstances, chosen from each of the provinces of the kingdom, had been given 1000 guldens from the royal exchequer. It was decided that a similar sum should be distributed on Ludwig's marriage. In all circles of society and all parts of the kingdom wedding presents were in course of preparation. The city of Munich built a coach decorated with cupids, which cost 100,000 guldens. The Palatinate sent some fine horses from the noted stud of Zweibrücken, and a cask of noble wine. In the royal Palace the so-called garden suite was fitted up for the reception of the future Queen. This had formerly been used by Ludwig I. and Maximilian II.; but Ludwig intended to retain his old apartments, which were situated above those destined for Sophie. The

painted ceiling in the vestibule, which dates from the seventeenth century, was tastefully restored; and the Palace was soon brilliant with truly royal lustre. In the chief workshops of the city workmen were designing, hammering, carving, and forging household utensils and articles of ornament. Commemorative medals were struck bearing the heads of the King and his bride, and the most skilful engravers of the country drew the young Duchess, in order that her picture might be spread abroad on the marriage day in hundreds of thousands of copies.

Ludwig I. was still alive: the news of the betrothal reached him in Italy. He was pleased at this marriage between his sister's youngest daughter and his grandson. Shortly before he had seen at Pompeii a fresco depicting Venus and Adonis, and having thought to find a likeness between Ludwig and the beautiful youth, he now embodied his idea and good wishes in some verses which referred to the aforesaid picture. They conclude thus:—

> "Des Lebens Höchstes haben sie erworben.
> Nie werde durch die Welt dein Glück verdorben,
> Nie heisse es: die Liebe ist gestorben!"

The King had asked the hand of his cousin in a moment of infatuation; but it was not the fire of his senses which burned within him: his feelings were the joy of the artist at the sight of beauty. More than one trustworthy chronicler of the events of this time has hinted that the Duchess had a serious inclination for another, and that it was the desire of her parents for the marriage with her cousin which influenced her decision in favour of it. Although Ludwig was hardly her first love it was impossible that she could have been insensible to his beauty, which fascinated all women, or to the charm of his manner and personality when in his best moods. All who knew Sophie as a girl speak enthusiastically of her liveliness and buoyancy. Her goodness of heart was also praised, though this did not exclude a light vein of mockery. She was gay; but she was, nevertheless, haughty and proud, and there is hardly any ground to doubt that she was tempted by the brilliance of a royal crown.

Early in the spring the ducal family went out to Possenhofen, and Ludwig at the same time took up his residence at the château of Berg. His little yacht, the *Tristan*, often bore him to the house of his betrothed, where he was in the habit of spending the evenings. He showered costly presents on Sophie. Every morning the royal lover rode round the Starnberger See to offer her in person a bunch of roses. If he came too early he gave the bouquet to her waiting-maid; and on the way back from his ride, stopped to see the Duchess. Thus weeks and months passed by. The idyll had not apparently suffered any break. It was Ludwig's hope that his future wife would be the friend of his loneliness. He talked often to her of Richard Wagner, whom he loved so dearly. He recited to her poems, ancient and modern, and scenes from Schiller's dramatic works. She listened at first with pleasure to his declamations and outpourings; but at length grew tired of them. The King was of a suspicious nature; he suspected Sophie and himself. He sent her notes and presents in the middle of the night, exacting long letters of thanks by the returning messenger. If she forgot to fulfil a single wish of his he was sulky for days. Unwarrantable fits of violence alternated with profound melancholy. He suffered from headache; and his excited nerves required solitude. After the intoxication of the first few weeks was past, his betrothed saw in him a total stranger. His extraordinary caprices gave her anxiety; and his intellectual life was a closed book to her superficial nature. If she was wanting in the ability to follow his flights of fancy, he on his side was incapable of satisfying her need for love. There was in the whole of this connection something which was artificial, and which did not ring true. The Duchess had a hasty temper. The restless state of mind induced in her by his changing moods made her capricious and unable to govern herself. Misunderstandings which at first had gone unheeded, began to arise between the young couple; disagreements separated them still more from one another. Long before Sophie knew for certain that the engagement would be broken off, a presentiment must have warned her that it could not possibly endure.

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1 Frau Louise von Kobell says, in her reminiscences, that infatuation went so far that several ladies lost their reason, although the King had not given them the slightest ground to suppose that their feelings were reciprocated. ↑

2 Elizabeth, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary. ↑

3 Maria, Queen of Naples. ↑

CHAPTER X

The King goes to Paris—Disharmonies between the Engaged Couple—Ludwig meets the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Eugénie in Augsburg—The King breaks his Promise of Marriage

In the midst of the preparations for the wedding the King made several journeys. At the beginning of June he went with Prince Otto to Eisenach, in order to see Wartburg. Later in the summer he went to Paris, where an International Exhibition was going on.

The Paris paper *La Situation* had long in advance announced that the King of Bavaria would visit that city. His arrival was looked upon as an event which might be of political importance. Although he at once paid a visit at the Tuileries, he made no secret of the fact that he had come to France as a private gentleman, and wished to preserve the strictest incognito. The Empress Eugénie was in England; but Napoleon received him as an honoured and welcome guest. He invited him to his magnificently restored palace in the Bois de Compiègne, where a review of troops was held in his honour. At the lunch which followed this there were present the King of Portugal and Prince Anton of Hohenzollern-Siegmaringen and his son, the Hereditary Prince Leopold, whose candidature for the Spanish throne three years later caused Napoleon to risk his crown.

The King of Bavaria appreciated but little the pleasures of the Imperial court. He spent the greater number of his evenings at the "Grand Opera" and the "Theâtre Lyrique." The chief part of the day he spent in the Exhibition, where the sections devoted to art and education particularly attracted his attention. It was his design to remain in the French capital until the Empress Eugénie's return. His visit was, however, cut short by the news

that his father's brother Otto, the former King of Greece, had died at the castle of Bamberg, where he had passed his latter years. Ludwig hurried back to Munich, and was present on the 30th of July at his uncle's interment.

The business houses of the capital were meanwhile at work on wedding gifts for their King. Letters and presents continued to be exchanged between the engaged couple; and nothing hinted to the outer world that storm-clouds had arisen. In the month of August Napoleon and Eugénie came from Paris to Salzburg, to meet the Emperor and Empress of Austria. They stopped a day in Augsburg. Napoleon in his youth had been a pupil at the College of St Anna in that town, and wished to revisit well-known spots. Ludwig met the Emperor and Empress at Augsburg and accompanied them to Munich, where the Queen-mother received the august travellers. The tie between the engaged couple seemed far as yet from being loosened; the King presented Sophie to the Empress, who heartily kissed both the young people.

Still Ludwig continued his rides along the shores of the lake of Starnberg.

One morning he stopped earlier than usual outside Possenhofen with his bunch of flowers. As usual he went up to the ground floor of the castle. At the top step he met a lady's-maid, who rushed past him, and at the same moment a washing-basin was flung after the fugitive. The water streamed out of it just as his Majesty was setting his foot on the threshold. Near-sighted as he was, Ludwig nevertheless saw who was the cause of this scene: his betrothed, who rapidly disappeared behind the next door, looked at this moment more like a Fury than a Venus! He stood a moment aghast; then hurried down, swung himself into the saddle, and rode rapidly away. He was expected in vain that evening at Possenhofen.

Judging by the later development of Ludwig's character, it is probable that a marriage between him and Sophie would never have come about. The scene above described meanwhile hastened on the break. Autumn was at hand, and the day appointed for the marriage drawing near. The wedding coach was ready, eight splendid horses having been bought to draw it. The new

Queen's court had been appointed. The programme of the marriage ceremonies had been made out by the court officials and submitted to his Majesty for approval. All the preparations respecting the court entertainments and popular rejoicings with which the alliance was to be celebrated had been made.

Then one day in September the Minister of the Royal House and Foreign Affairs, Prince Hohenlohe, received a letter in the royal handwriting.[1] "Here is some news for you," said he to his secretary, handing him the letter. Ludwig briefly informed the Minister that he had decided not to marry the Duchess. He left it to the Prince's well-known diplomacy to arrange the matter to mutual satisfaction. Hohenlohe at once asked for an audience with the King; but he was informed that his Majesty had left for the highlands a quarter of an hour earlier; his plans were unknown, and his return uncertain.

"This," observed the Prince, shrugging his shoulders, "is evidently a fixed determination. At any rate, it is better than setting me a year hence to bring about a separation."

"But there is absolutely no reason for the King's step," remarked the secretary.

"For that very reason matters must be arranged in such a manner that she may find a pretext for withdrawing. Go at once to the mint and order them to stop striking the marriage medal," answered Hohenlohe resolutely.

It was first officially announced that the day of the wedding was postponed, but that the alliance was by no means broken off. Duke Max asked in the name of his daughter when the marriage was to take place; and on his request that a time should be appointed, was informed that "this was impossible on account of the King's state of health." The answer gave the ducal house a reasonable pretext for declaring that they would "in such circumstances prefer to consider the engagement at an end." The King received this declaration "with the deepest regret."

The rupture was hardly so unexpected by the general public as the engagement had been; for, thanks to Hohenlohe's care, the public mind had been prepared. Nevertheless, the event was for long a standing subject of conversation. Opportunity had been given for the most varied surmises, and stories and hints were not lacking. Some sought the reason in a mutual want of sympathy. Others knew better, affirmed that the Duchess loved another, and that the King had discovered this fact.

But all were loath to think that their beloved Ludwig was in any way to blame in the matter.

Sophie's reputation was hardly treated. Gossips and court sycophants threw suspicion on her. Disparaging and marvellous accounts of her conduct were circulated, and were never lived down. It is little to the King's honour that he never took any step whatever to do justice to the woman he had wished to make his wife and the Queen of his kingdom.

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1 "Otto, Freiherr von Völderndorff: Vom Reichskanzler, Fürsten von Hohenlohe" (Munich 1902). ↑

CHAPTER XI

After the Parting with Sophie—Episodes from the King's Excursions in the Highlands

Though Ludwig's initiative had dictated the rupture with Sophie, it is certain that at the end the parting was not easy to him, and that it was not without influence on his future life. A marked change in his manner took place from this time.

Immediately after this event he retired to his most secluded castle. He was free, but he was not happy. He became more suspicious and shy than before; and it was plain to all that he was harassed by inward disquiet. His good relations with the ducal house were, of course, destroyed. He had not a single real friend, not one person in his *entourage* with whom he could talk confidentially. The break cast a deep shadow even over his relations with his mother. She avoided him, in her disappointment and anger, instead of endeavouring to win his confidence and help him in his mental struggles, and his love of solitude increased with his bitterness at her coldness.

Duties, however, called him back to his capital; by New Year 1868 he was again in Munich. The people showed signs of pleasure at having him amongst them once more; the windows of the Residenz were lighted up on the dark winter evenings, crowds of the curious besieged the entrances, admired the vestibules and staircases, which were filled with flowers, and listened to the music as they caught snatches of it from inside.

The King was holding court; he gave concerts and balls. The festivities, however, were short-lived: Ludwig I. died at Nice. All entertainments were cancelled; and again the troubled man was able to retire from the world. Those, and there were many, who desired an audience of him were compelled to put their patience to the proof, and in the end the greater number of these aspirants had to take their departure without having been granted one. Even here, in retirement, he was unaccountable. He refused

foreign potentates the sight of his magnificent palaces and winter gardens; but took round one of them a Swiss student, and showed him all its beauties. He was caprice itself, unaccountable as the most changeable of women. One day he would be affable, the next inaccessible and silent. These qualities, however, were chiefly apparent in his relations with the heads of society. Among the peasantry he was amiable and straightforward; and he retained his popularity among the working classes to the end of his reign. The country people round about those places where he chiefly resided to this day tell many charming stories of him. Thus a gentleman who was touring in the mountains came one day to Hohenschwangau. As he was wandering about in the vicinity of the castle he saw a young man coming towards him. The latter wore a short black coat, had a Tyrolese hat on his head, and carried a large fish in his hand. The stranger took him for a gardener, and asked him if it was possible to see over the castle.

"When the King is there no one dares to enter it," answered the young man; "but as he is not there just now, I can show you round if you wish." The offer was naturally accepted with gratitude. The fictitious gardener very obligingly showed the stranger through the apartments, where all the servants bowed respectfully. They stopped before the King's bed-chamber, the young man explaining that visitors were not allowed to enter it. After they had seen everything, he took a complaisant farewell of the stranger, who concluded by asking where his Majesty was at the time.

"The King was in the castle when we went over it," was the answer.

"And we did not see him?" exclaimed the gentleman in surprise.

"You did see him. I am the King!"

One day when Ludwig was walking alone in the mountains he met a goat-herd. "I am going to drive my goats home," said the boy, "but I don't know what time it is."

"Have you no watch?" asked the King. "How could I have a watch?" answered the child. Ludwig told him, smiling, what the hour was, and the day afterwards sent him a watch as a present.

When on his lonely drives he often passed through a village where he had noticed a cottage belonging to a shoemaker. The man was always to be found tending his flowers in the little patch of garden. One day Ludwig stopped the carriage outside the village and walked to the shoemaker's, where he remained outside the fence watching the man, who was busy in his garden.

"Master," said he, "you are not quite successful with your lilies."

"No," answered the shoemaker, who did not recognise the King; "I have not grudged work or expense these five years to get pure white lilies, but they always have a green tinge about them. If I could only get into the royal garden—I hear they have such beautiful white lilies there!"

"It would not be any help to you, master," said Ludwig, "for it is hardly your intention to steal plants there, I think. Nor would you have the opportunity of doing so."

"What do you think of me, good sir?" exclaimed the man indignantly. "Do you think I would touch my King's property? All I want is to see this beautiful flower in its full perfection."

"You might be able to do that. I know the head gardener, and I will put in a good word for you."

"If you would do that I would willingly make you a pair of boots for nothing."

"I want no return for such a trifling service," said Ludwig, taking leave of him with a friendly nod.

The next morning a servant brought the cobbler a large bunch of white lilies from the King.

CHAPTER XII

The Empress of Russia visits Bavaria—The Duchess Sophie's Engagement and Marriage—An Unexpected Meeting with the Duchesse d'Alençon—A Last Attempt to forge the Links of Hymen around Ludwig

In the latter half of September, 1868, the Empress of Russia came to Munich accompanied by a numerous suite. Her unsuccessful matrimonial project did not seem to have diminished her interest in the Sovereign of Bavaria.

Ludwig received her with the same respect and warmth as before, and entertained her with a magnificence the like of which had not been seen before in his realm. He had caused the apartments in Schloss Berg which were placed at the Empress's disposal to be done up in exact similarity, according to description, to her rooms in the Russian Palace. A state luncheon at the Palace at Munich and a state performance at the theatre, alternated with excursions to his castles in the vicinity of the capital.

The Tsarina spent an evening with the royal family on the "Roseninsel," where her young friend had arranged an Italian night with music and singing, and at which the singers of the opera took part. The whole of the lake of Starnberg was illuminated with Bengal lights. In the gardens and courtyard of the château were erected allegorical statues. Every rose-bush hid a surprise. Countless numbers of rockets were sent up into the air above the lake, and moved, many-hued, in the wind. Music was played on a vessel, so clothed in leafage that it resembled an islet, and on which the inhabitants and summer visitors to Starnberg had taken up their position, adding by their applause to the general festivity of the entertainment. It was like a tale from the "Thousand and One Nights." The Russian Empress

expressed the opinion later that she had never experienced anything so romantic as this evening.

The Grand Duchess Maria did not accompany her mother on this occasion. The King's engagement to his cousin, and his breaking off of it, had convinced the Empress that, amiable as he was as a friend, she would probably do wisely in cooling her ardour to possess him as a son-in-law.

There is no doubt that the broken engagement had injured the Duchess Sophie's reputation; but it proved, nevertheless, that the incident had by no means diminished her chances of making another advantageous match. A reigning German Prince—a near relative of the King—went in the summer of 1868 to Munich with the intention of learning to know her, and of asking her hand. Another suitor had meanwhile been before him. On the 1st of July, 1868, the Duc de Nemours and his son had visited Possenhofen; and on the 11th of July of the same year, during a visit to Baden-Baden, the engagement of Sophie to Prince Ferdinand of Orleans, Duc d'Alençon was publicly announced.[1]

Shortly afterwards the Prince and his father went to England to make arrangements for the new home. The wedding took place on the 28th of September, 1868, at eleven in the forenoon, in the royal chapel at Possenhofen. At the marriage, which was performed by the Abbé Haneberg, were present, besides the bride's parents and brothers, the Count and Countess di Trani, the Hereditary Princess Helene of Thurn and Taxis, and several of the Bavarian princes and princesses, also the Duc de Nemours, with both his daughters, the Comte de Paris, the Prince de Joinville, with his wife and son, and other members of the house of Orleans. The Empress of Austria and the ex-Queen of Naples, the latter with her husband, who had shortly before visited their paternal home, had left Bavaria immediately before the wedding.

The *Neuesten Nachrichten* of Munich, from which I have gathered these details, is silent on the subject of an episode which has lately become known through Freiherr von Völderndorff's reminiscences of Prince Hohenlohe. In the midst of the ceremony Ludwig II. suddenly appeared,

accompanied by the Empress of Russia, who was his guest at the time. His entrance had the most painful effect on all present. The King remained for over an hour in the home of the bride, apparently without in the least noticing the feeling of constraint which his presence occasioned. His determination to congratulate his former *fiancée* on her wedding-day was without doubt one of those momentary impulses which were continually fluctuating in the neurotic man's restless mind.

The Duc and Duchesse d'Alençon went to England, where they lived during the first years of their married life. But Sophie often came back to Possenhofen. Ludwig avoided meeting her with the greatest care. Many years later they accidentally encountered one another at Seeshaupt on the lake of Starnberg. An accident had happened to his horses, and he had alighted from his carriage and had got up beside a peasant who was driving past, in order to return to Berg. At that juncture the Duchess Ludovica, with her youngest daughter by her side, drove past. The King ordered the peasant to make way for her equipage. He turned his head aside and took no notice whatever of the ladies.

After the marriage of the Duchess, a rumour was spread abroad that Ludwig was again about to become engaged. He made a trip, in the strictest incognito, from Hohenschwangau to Friedrichshafen on Bodensee, travelling under the name of "Graf von Schyren," and accompanied by a single servant. The King and Queen of Würtemberg had invited him to visit them. Queen Olga, a Russian princess, who had relinquished with regret the hope of seeing the Archduchess Maria Queen of Bavaria, had at this juncture planned a new engagement. Princess Emma of Waldeck-Pyrmont[2] was on a visit to the royal couple. The Queen had made up her mind that this young lady, who was exceedingly musical and a great admirer of Wagner's compositions, should make the acquaintance of the King of Bavaria, with the view of a possible matrimonial alliance between them. Ludwig appeared to be attracted by the Princess, who in her turn was charmed with the gallant and intellectual Monarch. The day spent at Friedrichshafen passed quickly and pleasantly. Evening came, and Ludwig thought of returning to his home. While he and the Princess were still sitting together at the piano he became restless. He remarked that it was getting

late, and that the time for his departure was at hand. Almost immediately he rose to depart. He took a warm farewell of the Princess, and a no less hearty one of the King and Queen of Würtemberg, promising that he would soon come again and perhaps stay longer. From the steamer, which had been waiting for him, he waved several times to the King and Queen, and the Princess, who were standing on the quay looking after him.

He never came back, however, and apparently forgot both the charming day in Friedrichshafen and Princess Emma of Waldeck-Pyrmont.

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1 The grandson of King Louis Philippe of France, and eldest son of the Duc de Nemours and Victoria, *née* Princess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. ↑

2 The present Queen-mother of Holland. ↑

CHAPTER XIII

Ludwig and the Artistes of the Stage—
Josephine Schefzky

His subjects began to give up the hope of seeing their King a husband. Several political parties, however, hoped that they might be able to influence him through a mistress. Their expectations were disappointed also in this. After the breaking-off of his engagement, the fair sex played but a small part in the King's life. He seems to have looked upon women with the same eyes as the poet Holberg, who in one of his letters writes that he regards them as "pretty pictures"—to be looked at, but not to be touched! Those who knew Ludwig are entirely agreed that he never felt real love for any woman, not even for his betrothed wife, though at one time he appeared to do so. To Richard Wagner, he said at one of their first meetings: "You do not like women either, do you? They are such bores!"

Ludwig's indifference did not, however, prevent him from feeling friendship for several women.[1] His artistic interests, moreover, brought him into contact with others of them; and in his youth he often summoned actresses and women-singers to his palaces in order that they might recite and sing to him. He astonished them by his remarkable memory, for if they left out but a single word he would immediately supply it. Not infrequently he would himself take a part in a dialogue, and his gifts of elocution are said to have been charming.

Some of his experiences with the artistes whom he invited to his palaces can hardly have contributed to increase his respect for women. The fêted actress, Frau von Bulyowska, declaimed before him at Hohenschwangau fragments of Schiller's dramas. For some time he delighted in Mary Queen of Scots; he had her engraved, he had her painted, he had her acted at the theatre. The aforesaid actress, who had taken the part of Mary Stuart, had to stand as model to the court painter, who made sketches of her for use in a painting of that unfortunate Queen. Frau von Bulyowska thought this was

the outcome of an interest on Ludwig's side in her person; and she unreservedly avowed her intention of seducing the young Monarch, and of playing the *rôle* of a Madame de Pompadour at his court.

One day, when visiting him on the Roseninsel, she appeared in a costume which was evidently calculated to show her outward charms in the most advantageous light. Her efforts were wasted; the King's near-sighted eyes did not even appear to see what she was like. His Master of the Horse who accompanied her, however, understood her intentions. The next time she was received at the Palace in Munich, which had been recently restored. The King complied with his visitor's wish to see his private apartments. When they entered his bed-chamber the actress made a tender attack upon his person. Ludwig freed himself from her embrace, rang the bell for a servant, and called out: "Frau von Bulyowska desires her carriage!"

She was not invited by him again. Another actress lost his favour because, on a first visit to one of his palaces, she was looking so attentively at his paintings that she did not hear him enter the room, and consequently neglected to curtsey with deference.

Mathilde Mallinger, the singer, was, on account of her magnificent voice, for a short time the recipient of his favours; but her ignorance of the forms of the great world soon repelled him. When one day she asked for an audience, his Majesty answered that he "only knew a court singer, Mathilde Mallinger, but no lady of that name; and therefore was unable to grant her an audience."

No artiste was for so long a time or so high in his favour as Josephine Schefzky, one of the chief Wagner singers of her day. She was the daughter of a court official, and it was to members of the house of Wittelsbach that she owed the means for her artistic education. Already before her appearance Ludwig interested himself in this future star within the realms of song. Her studies completed, she was engaged by the Royal Opera of Munich; and after some years was appointed court singer. The King was usually present at the opera when she appeared, and she had often, moreover, the honour of singing privately before him, both in his capital

and when he was living at one or other of his pleasure palaces. He had caused to be arranged in the Throne Room building of the Residenz a winter garden, to which he had direct access from his private apartments. Besides magnificent groups of exotics, the garden contained a grotto, with a little cascade, and a pool deep and broad enough for him to row on in a boat, the latter being formed like a swan. Dressed as Lohengrin he lived here in the world of fancy, for a few moments forgetting everything that oppressed his mind.

His favourite singers sang fragments of Wagner's operas to him from behind groups of palms. Here Josephine Schefzky sang often. He permitted her to sail with him in his golden boat, and when one day she had sung the love-song from *Tristan und Isolde*, he suddenly struck up the air from *Rigoletto*: "*La donna è mobile*." This artiste, too, was vain enough to believe that he was in love with her. Many of the inhabitants of Munich expressed in fairly explicit terms their belief that a *liaison* existed between them. In reality, however, he was only her protector, who enjoyed her magnificent singing. So high a place in his esteem as that she was credited with, it may fairly be asserted was never hers. To his daily *entourage* he was in the habit of announcing her visits in the following words: "To-day the goose Schefzky shall come and sing again." One night she sang to him on the artificial lake in the winter garden. The boat was small. An incautious movement on her part caused it to careen. The King scrambled out of the pool with ease, though wet through. "Pull her out of the water," he called to a lacquey, as he disappeared rapidly into his own apartments.

Despite this occurrence, Josephine Schefzky continued to be in his favour, and was singled out for this by his Majesty more often than any other artiste. At his country residences she was received and entertained almost like a royal guest. Ludwig directed that some especially delectable viand or wine, from his kitchens or cellar, should go back with her every time she returned to Munich from Hohenschwangau or Berg. The servants, who saw that their master esteemed her, were at great trouble to curry favour with her in their own behalf. The royal carriage which took her away was invariably stuffed with hams, delicate sausages and patés, with champagne and Rhine wine, so that people at the railway station might have supposed that the

departing lady was about to journey to a place where there was a famine. On one occasion the royal carriage even broke down under the weight of the gifts.

Josephine Schefzky was permitted to give the King presents on his birthday. He received them with evident pleasure, but only on the condition that the sum she had expended on them should be refunded to her out of the privy purse. On an occasion of the kind she had asked to be allowed the honour of giving him a tablecloth. The permission was granted. Ludwig expressed in appreciative words his admiration of the singer's good taste, and sent her an amiable letter of thanks. There had been at this time a change in the *personnel* administering the privy purse. At the head of it there was now a near relative of the shopkeeper where Fräulein Schefzky had purchased her tablecloth; he had by chance heard how much she had paid for it. The lady made her appearance some days later, and demanded a larger sum than the gift had cost her. The official greatly wished his master to become aware of her avarice, and after some circumlocution informed Ludwig how the artiste had enriched herself by means of his present. Generous as he was the King would probably have forgiven the deception, but he was angered when he heard that Fräulein Schefzky was in the habit of asking for money from the privy purse in the following words: "I have spoken to him about it!" His vanity and self-esteem could not bear his person being spoken of without due respect. This *him*, with which in her broad South-German accent she denoted his Majesty, sealed her fall.

In an autograph letter her protector of many years informed her that she was dismissed from the court opera of Munich, and that her salary for the unexpired time of her engagement would be paid to her at once. The title "Royal Bavarian Court Singer," was taken away from her.

Herewith the connection was severed. Several years later, however, she was permitted to enter once more into correspondence with Ludwig.

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1 In the first rank of these was, as is well known, Elizabeth of Austria-Hungary. ↑

CHAPTER XIV

Prince Hohenlohe—Political Frictions

Bavaria had escaped comparatively easily from the war of 1866. Bismarck had had good reasons for this end: that astute statesman foresaw the approaching war with France, and it was of the utmost importance for him to win Bavaria to his side for the furtherance of his plans for the future.

No sooner was peace concluded than he confided to the Bavarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, that Napoleon III., who in 1866 had wished to play the part of self-appointed arbitrator, had demanded payment for this in the shape of a portion of Bavarian land. The Minister told this on confidence to Ludwig, with the result that the King made up his mind to enter into a treaty of defence with Prussia. A few days afterwards he sent King Wilhelm an autograph communication, in which, while referring to other topics, he observed that "a firm and lasting friendship was established between their houses and states."

This alliance between two countries which had so recently carried arms against one another, was not at first made known to the public. Soon, however, reports began to circulate that Ludwig was about to make a change of front in his foreign policy. That these rumours influenced public opinion, he was destined to receive unmistakable evidence. In the autumn of 1866 he opened the Bavarian Chambers. From the Palace to the Landtag he drove in a sumptuous coach drawn by six thoroughbred horses, a stately cavalry guard in brilliant uniforms escorting him. The young ruler had hitherto been used to storms of ovations when he showed himself to the sight-loving and loyal inhabitants of Munich. The police had orders not to prevent the shouting crowds from pressing forward. On this occasion the order was unnecessary. The attitude of the populace was different from its usual one; no shouts of hurrah were to be heard; no hand was raised to doff the cap. His Majesty drove through the streets amid oppressive silence. The whole occurrence was a party demonstration, called forth by the violent agitation of the Clerical party, which was endeavouring to play on the

national strings. The behaviour of the populace deeply affronted the King. He was so much annoyed at the cool attitude of the capital, that he swore that after this day he would not show himself in the streets of Munich oftener than was absolutely necessary.

The demonstration defeated its own end; it did not succeed in inducing him to swerve from the course he had entered upon in his foreign policy. Shortly afterwards his friendly relations with Prussia became an acknowledged fact.

On the last day of the year 1866 he formed a new Ministry. The soul of this was the celebrated statesman, Prince Chlodwig von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, who in his younger days had been in the Prussian service, and who already in 1849 had raised his voice for a German confederation under the leadership of Prussia. By family tradition, by education, and political sympathies he was an out-and-out adherent of the policy of that country; and he was an enthusiastic admirer of Bismarck. With the exception of Ludwig himself, nearly the whole of the royal house strongly opposed the Premier and his views. At the head of the court opposition was the old ex-King, Ludwig I. To this party were united, moreover, almost the whole of the nobility, and a preponderating majority of the Catholic clergy. The nobility mistrusted Hohenlohe not only for his Bismarckian foreign policy, but also, and this perhaps chiefly and primarily, on account of his liberal views. The Catholic clergy hated him because he showed the will and the ability to maintain the ascendancy of the state in ecclesiastical questions, and combated the arrogant claims of the Catholic prelates. Among a large majority of the population in general he was also unpopular. The working classes looked upon him as the "Prussian" and hatred of Prussia was during those years extended and intense within the Bavarian people.[1]

In August, 1867, Hohenlohe announced formally in the Landtag that an alliance of war had been concluded with Prussia. The declaration aroused violent embitterment. One of the deputies, Dr Ruland, fulminated against the "links of slavery" with which the Prince desired to forge Bavaria fast to the aforesaid country. When another speaker mentioned the "brotherly hand" held out by Prussia, Ruland pulled out a shell, which he had picked

up from the field of battle in 1866, and had kept: “See here,” he shouted, “here is the brotherly hand which Prussia holds out to us!”

Great as was the irritation he had excited, Hohenlohe went calmly on with his preparations to enable Bavaria to take part in the Bismarckian scheme for the future. In the foremost rank of these was the reorganisation of the Bavarian army, which had shown itself during the war of 1866 to be on a very inefficient footing. One of his first and most important works of legislation was also a new modern system of conscription, after the Prussian model. Immediately after this he placed before the Chamber a Bill by which it was intended to make the schools independent of the Church. As Prime Minister of the largest Catholic state in Germany he, moreover, regarded it as his duty to step forward when Pius IX. announced his intention of declaring the Infallibility of the Pope.

By this attitude he irritated the Clerical-Conservative party to the uttermost. In the year 1868 violent dissensions took place between the Particularists and the Ultramontanes, on the one side, and the National Liberals on the other. The hatred towards Prussia and the new school laws drove Particularists, Democrats, and Ultramontanes to conclude a league which placed immense difficulties in the way of the Ministry. The assault of the opposition did not, however, shake the King’s confidence in his adviser, and in his relations with Prussia, as well as in the ecclesiastical conflict, he placed himself unreservedly on the side of Prince Hohenlohe.

At the elections of 1869 the Ultramontanes succeeded in gaining a decided majority; and according to parliamentary procedure the Ministry resigned. Ludwig, however, would not accept the resignation, and a violent struggle took place between the Government and the representatives of labour. The opposition majority resolved upon a vote of censure against Hohenlohe, who was as much hated as he was feared. It was the earnest wish of the King that this might be thrown out in the chamber of “Reichsräthe.” Through his Minister of Ceremonies he requested the Princes of the royal house to refrain from voting against the Ministry, and he himself worked upon his young brother with the same view. The Princes were present in full force at the meeting. The King’s cousin, Duke Carl Theodor, entered the

lists on behalf of Hohenlohe. But the others—even Otto—voted with the majority.

Ludwig was incensed. He was particularly embittered by his brother's vote. He knew that his uncles had influenced the Prince; as the head of the family, and in virtue of his royal authority, he forbade him the *entrée* for some months to the court.

A deputation requested an audience for the purpose of handing him the aforesaid address of censure, but admittance was not granted to the presence. The Master of the Ceremonies received the Deputies, and informed them that they must be pleased to let the address reach his Majesty through the hands of his Ministers. The reason for this unparliamentary attitude on Ludwig's side is said to have arisen from the discovery of a correspondence between two personages high in authority, which advocated no less than the dethronement of the Monarch should he persevere in the agreement with Prussia.[2]

For the time being Hohenlohe remained at the helm of office. But the fermentation continued, and the embitterment against the Government increased.

The fateful year of 1870 was entered upon. On the 19th of January Hohenlohe declared in the Chamber that a state of the second rank, like Bavaria, could only exist as allied to another kingdom, and that that kingdom could only be Prussia, under whose leadership the people of Bavaria must be prepared to fight in the event of war. His open declaration called forth a storm. The *Vaterland* newspaper wrote: "Down with Hohenlohe, who is pushing himself between the King and the people!... An evil spirit is making its insidious way through Bavaria." The same journal assured the French that the fall of the Ministry would be synonymous with the neutrality of Bavaria. It continued in a threatening tone: "Is the country again to be subjected to the storms of an election on account of a single Hohenlohe? The Prussians are perhaps counted upon. It is hoped that riots will break out, which will offer the former a welcome opportunity of penetrating into the country as rescuers. Traitors! The enemies of Bavaria

and its people! As soon as a Prussian sets foot across the frontier of our country, six hundred thousand French and four hundred thousand Austrians will put themselves in motion to eject him. Bavaria shall belong to the Bavarians!"

In the Austrian press, and in the newspapers which were under the influence of the Bavarian Jesuits, it was repeatedly said that the King was incapable of governing; he was covered with *lèse-majesté*. "Ludwig II. by his conduct has brought the country into a state of the utmost disquiet! If he will not turn and listen to wiser counsels he will hazard his crown," wrote the *Unica cattolica*. At the beginning of February, 1870, Hohenlohe himself announced that it was his wish to retire. Although the young Monarch still desired to retain him, the Minister found it impossible, after due consideration, to alter the decision he had taken. With great reluctance Ludwig then accepted his resignation. He did it in a manner which showed the utmost appreciation of the Prince; and the marks of distinction which he conferred upon the latter bore witness to his gratitude and confidence.

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1 The following may be mentioned as a characteristic example of this feeling:—The north German poet, Emanuel Geibel, was summoned by Maximilian I. to the Bavarian court. He had been appointed to the chair of literature, history, and poetry at the University of Munich, and the King had granted him a yearly pension. At the time here mentioned he was staying in his native town of Lubeck. King Wilhelm of Prussia came on a visit to the town, and Geibel welcomed him with the following verse:—

"Und sei's als letzter Wunsch gesprochen,
Dass noch dereinst dein Auge sieht,
Wie über's Reich ununterbrochen
Vom Fels zum Meer dein Adler zieht."

This lyrical outburst gave great offence to the "national" party in Bavaria, and was construed as expressing the poet's own opinion that Prussia ought to subjugate the former country, which, of course, was not his meaning.

So strong was the feeling on this matter, that Ludwig felt himself constrained to withdraw the pension which his father had granted Geibel. But this withdrawal aroused displeasure in North Germany, and the King of Prussia granted him a similar pension in compensation.

In annoyance at the insult offered his colleague and friend, Paul Heyse voluntarily gave up the pension which he had hitherto received from the King of Bavaria. ↑

2 Professor Dr C. Beyer, who mentions this correspondence, adds that it came into the Monarch's hands through indiscretion; also that he caused the letters to be copied, after which the originals were put back in their place ("*Ludwig II., König von Bayern. Ein characterbild*"). ↑

CHAPTER XV

A Meeting between Bismarck and Ludwig

Bismarck, after the peace of 1866, had received a visible sign of the Bavarian King's favour. Ludwig II. had conferred upon him the Order of Humbertus, a distinction which, according to the rules of the Order, is only to be given to men of royal blood or to those who have in some particular manner served the Bavarian state or throne.

He wished greatly to meet the young Monarch. Bavaria was, if not a great state, still great enough to weigh very considerably in the scale in the adjustment between North Germany and France which the Prussian statesman foresaw in the near future. It was, however, not an ordinary official conference, with ceremonies and in the presence of witnesses, which he desired, but a confidential *tête-a-tête*. He wrote to his old friend Prince Hohenlohe. The latter, in his turn, addressed himself to Count Holnstein, who was in close relations with the King, and who had been the latter's playmate in childhood. He was now Ludwig's trusted deputy, with the title of Chief Royal Master of the Horse.[1]

Although not a man of prominent parts, Count Holnstein made himself almost invaluable as a court diplomat. It was arranged that a meeting between the King and Bismarck should take place at the Count's house. Both parties desired that it should be private, and, as it were, accidental. The Prussian Minister came to Munich. He was invited to drink tea at Count Holstein's; and he arrived punctually. Immediately afterwards Ludwig came to call upon his Chief Master of the Horse, and proved to be greatly interested in the meeting with Bismarck. It was not long before the host took an opportunity to disappear. Ludwig and the "Iron Chancellor" were alone.

Verily, two contrasts! The one a man of will and action, who in the course of a few years had set Middle Europe in fire and flames—a warrior as well as a statesman, ruthless, cold-blooded, undaunted at the table of council as

well as in the turmoil of battle, and at the time here mentioned in the full strength of his manhood. The other—King Ludwig—still so young in years, vacillating and shy, a hater of war, a dreamer, who enjoyed life most in the solitude of nature and in the world of fancy. One might be tempted to say that realism and romance had here set themselves a trysting place!

Great as was the dissimilarity between these two men, a common tie bound them together: the thought of the future of Germany and the desire for the greatness of Germany filled the minds of both.

The world cracked its brains in vain to discover what was talked of and agreed upon that evening at Count Holnstein's house. No person was present; and nothing has ever been known with certainty as to the details of the conversation. It may be assumed with confidence, however, that the relations with France and the foreign policy formed its chief topic. The great statesman and diplomat, who knew how to be eloquent when it suited his projects, no doubt unfolded his plans in vivid colours and fired the imagination of the romantic *Schwärmer*. The meeting, which lasted long, seems to have satisfied both. On both, no doubt, it left lasting impressions, and it can hardly have been without significance in the development of the history of the world.

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1 Count "Holnstein aus Bayern" used the Bavarian arms with a bar sinister in his signet ring, which would intimate that he was the illegitimate descendant of a Duke of Bavaria. He was also connected with the ducal court of Possenhofen; and he has been mentioned as the object of the Duchess Sophie's first love.

He was married to a granddaughter of Prince Karl of Bavaria and the latter's morganatic wife, Countess Bayersdorff. ↑

CHAPTER XVI

Outbreak of the War with France

When Ludwig on the 17th January, 1870, opened the Landtag, he said, in his Speech from the Throne: “The agreement I have concluded with Prussia is known to the country! Faithfully, in conformity with this alliance, for which I have pledged my royal word, I will, when my duty bids me do so, together with my powerful ally, answer for the honour of Germany and therewith also for the honour of Bavaria!”

As mentioned in a previous chapter Hohenlohe had retired at the beginning of 1870. This did not, however, betoken any change of system, but was merely a personal change. Count von Bray, formerly the Bavarian Minister at Vienna, who succeeded him as Minister of Foreign Affairs, stood in all respects on the same political footing as his predecessor, and the attacks of the Ultramontanes on the Government were continued.

Apart from party dissensions the first half-year, however, passed quite quietly. There were probably but few in Bavaria who suspected that a war was near at hand. Ludwig himself seems after Hohenlohe’s resignation to have been comparatively unconcerned at the political fermentation in his kingdom. He read and rode, made excursions to his hunting-boxes, did the work his Ministers expected of him, and lived his usual quiet life. Accompanied by his Master of the Horse, Hornig, he set off for the highlands on the 18th of July. It was his intention to be away five or six days; his private secretary had received orders only to send for him in case of the extremest necessity. Suddenly came the news that France had declared war on Prussia. As the Monarch’s return was delayed longer than had been expected, a messenger on horseback was sent after him with the most important documents. On the 15th of July he returned to Berg, the same evening at eleven he sent for his secretary, Eisenhart. He received him in his balcony room on the first floor, where he paced up and down the floor, as his habit was, sitting down occasionally for a moment. Hours passed by, while they considered the position together. The King, then

hardly five-and-twenty years of age, was still in full possession of his acute receptive powers, which in certain respects he retained to the end. But he was no lover of war. Repeatedly he said: “Is there then no means, no possibility of avoiding war?” He finally recognised that it was inevitable. The question became now: Whether Bavaria could remain neutral, or whether his kingdom—in conformity with the treaty of 1866—should fight by the side of Prussia. The secretary observed that neutrality would threaten the independence of Bavaria. To take a position by the side of France against Prussia would be undignified. He, moreover, regarded the agreement of 1866 as pledging Bavaria to fight with Prussia and for Prussia. The Monarch was also of this opinion. “Before I make a decision I will wait for Berchem’s arrival. Let me be awakened as soon as he comes!” It was half-past three in the morning before the cabinet secretary left the château. Day was breaking. An hour and a half later, Count von Berchem arrived from the capital. The two men had a consultation together on the position of affairs, and the secretary again returned to the King, who received him in his bed-chamber. He was lying in his blue four-post bed. The secretary read out loud a letter from Minister Bray, which Count Berchem had brought with him. Once more they touched upon the chief points in the great question. “Prompt help is double help, your Majesty,” said Eisenhart. There was a pause. Then the King said: “*Bis dat, qui cito dat!*”—“Draft my command for the mobilisation of the army. Invite the Ministers Bray and Pranckh to come to me this afternoon at four o’clock, and inform the press.” The secretary immediately prepared the required document. He handed it to the King, who provided it with his signature.

The political attitude of Bavaria was sealed. Ludwig’s action on this day had a significance which extended far beyond the military dispositions he had made. The result of the war would probably have been the same without Bavaria’s assistance. But the future of Germany was decided by the stroke of the King of Bavaria’s pen on the morning of the 16th of July, for the alliance between Prussia and the greatest of the South-German states had as its consequence the federation of Germany and the German Empire.

“I have never seen the King so satisfied as to-day,” declared his Minister Pranckh after the audience the same afternoon. And when the equerry in

attendance, von Sauer, congratulated his Majesty, the latter said: “Yes, I have the feeling that I have done something good.” A warm telegram of thanks was sent to the Monarch by King Wilhelm in Berlin, and from hundreds of others came enthusiastic telegrams.

The following day, a Sunday, Ludwig travelled by special train to Munich. There was immense movement in the streets; the enthusiasm grew from minute to minute. The crowds felt the need of thanking and congratulating their King. “*Heil unserm König, heil!*” was sung in chorus outside the Palace. The enthusiasm rose indescribably when he showed himself at the window. Everyone pressed forward to see him, and give expression to their rejoicings. “*Hoch, Ludwig! Hoch!*” rose like a single cry from the Bavarian hearts. The homage of the people made a deep impression on Ludwig. “Shall I go to the window once again?” he asked, after showing himself many times, as the shouts outside became louder and warmer. He was received with ovations in the evening, when he appeared at the performance of Wagner’s *Die Walküre*. The shouts of hurrah for the King continued to ring. Day after day, till far into the night, the crowds surged backwards and forwards. One cannot know how the dice may fall,” said the Bavarian Minister of War. “But this I can already say for certain: the army will come out of the battle with honour!”

Inner strife was smoothed away for a time under the feeling of fellowship which had seized upon all parties. Those in chief command, however, did not dare give themselves up to too great illusions. It was not, indeed, on account of the military ability of the Bavarians, but on account of the moral support coming from that land, that the Prussian leaders, with Bismarck at their head, so highly praised King Ludwig’s action. The commanders of the South-German army, whom the Prussians derisively called *les flaneurs batailles*, had shown themselves to be incapable in the war of 1866. Only the mere semblance of a command was given them in 1870, all real authority was being invested in the hands of the Prussian generals.

The Crown Prince of Prussia received orders to take chief command of the South-German army. That Friedrich was not without anxiety is apparent from the following expression in his diary: “It is a difficult task for me to

fight the French with troops who do not like us Prussians, and who are not educated in our school." On his way to the army he paid visits to the allied Princes whose troops he was to lead, going first to Munich and thence to Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. At all the stations where the train stopped preparations to welcome him had been made. Ludwig II. went part of the way to receive him, and the two Princes met each other with cordiality. Together with the King and Prince Otto, he drove in an open carriage through the streets of the capital of Bavaria. Waving handkerchiefs and shouts of hurrah followed in their train. In the evening the King and his guest were present at the Hof Theater, where Schiller's *Wallensteins Lager* was given. Shouts of delight filled the house when the Crown Prince showed himself by Ludwig's side. The Queen-mother, too, who but very rarely visited the theatre, was also present. The curtain was raised. The actor Possart repeated a prologue:

> "Denn was im Drange der Gefahr auf's Neue
> Ein edles Fürstenpaar zum Kampf vereint,
> Das Königswort, es heisset: Treu und Treue!
> Mit diesem Feldgeschrei verjagt den Feind!
> Heil! Dreifach heil! dem hohen Fürstenpaar,
> Dem Deutschlands alte Treue heilig war!"

At the words "*Treue um Treue*" and "*Heil! dreifach Heil!*" there was a movement which spread all through the theatre. All were deeply affected.

The King of Bavaria stepped forward with his guest. They shook hands with one another, and formally sealed their compact in the eye of the people. At this indescribable moment the warmth of popular feeling rose to a storm of rejoicing.

Seized by the solemnity of the moment, the two Princes stood hand in hand.

CHAPTER XVII

During the War—The German Empire is Proclaimed

The blue and white Bavarian and the black and white Prussian banners were waving side by side in the streets when the Crown Prince proceeded on his journey that same evening. The King accompanied him to the railway station; Prince Otto and Prince Luitpold followed him to war.

Never before had Ludwig felt himself more beloved by his people, never before had he been regarded with greater respect by the whole of Germany. But the demands which were made at this time on his powers of work, the representative duties which he had not been able to avoid, had over-taxed his strength. His physical sufferings took possession of him to so great a degree that he found it not only impossible to proceed to the seat of war, but also to remain in his capital. The great victories which succeeded one another aroused a feeling of the utmost joy among his people. But he who was not on the field of battle, felt the good tidings as almost a reproach. He was not master of his moods; the public which satisfied him one day displeased and wearied him the next.

On the 1st of September he came from Berg to Munich. The day afterwards he called upon a Russian Grand Duchess who was passing through his capital. It was the day of Sedan. The news that the French army had surrendered and that Napoleon was a prisoner reached him the following morning. Everywhere the victory was celebrated, for it was thought to be the precursor of a conclusion of peace. In the towns and villages of Bavaria there were illuminations, flags and banners, music and showers of flowers. Only the ruler of the country did not participate in the general rejoicings. Despite the earnest representations of the Minister of the Royal House and of his equerry, he could not be persuaded to remain in Munich on the 3rd of September. He said to his Minister, “As there is neither a German Empire nor a German Republic, as hitherto there has not been any German

Confederation, it is my wish that only Bavarian flags, or better still, no flags at all, shall be hoisted on the Government buildings."[1]

He returned to his solitude. The procession which the same evening defiled past the Royal Palace greeted the Queen-mother, who was standing at the window, with lively shouts of hurrah. But it pained all parties that the Monarch disdained their homage on this day. No sooner had the Crown Prince of Prussia left Munich than he received a letter from Ludwig in which the latter expressed the wish that "the independence of Bavaria might be respected at the conclusion of peace." The handwriting was bad, and the lines uneven; but the contents bore witness to the warmth of his patriotism. Friedrich ridiculed this "patriotic" letter. Amiable as the King had been towards the Crown Prince of Prussia during his short visit, the impression received by the guest had not been altogether favourable. In April 1868 he had visited him when on a journey to Italy, and had enjoyed being in his company. Now he was "alarmed at the alteration two years had made." He noted in his diary that Ludwig gave the impression of being very nervous, that he was less handsome than formerly, and had lost one of his front teeth.

The young King knew that comparisons had been made between him and the King of Prussia, who led his army in person. He could not possibly be blind to the fact that this comparison was not to his advantage, hiding himself away as he did, and shunning the love of his people. Good and bad feelings were fighting for the mastery in his soul. He was a faithful and honourable ally. After the victory at Metz he congratulated the King of Prussia as "William the Conqueror," and he sent the Crown Prince the Order of Max Joseph. But he gave his Ministers contradictory orders where the negotiations with Prussia were concerned. Although his mother was a Hohenzollern, his personal sympathies were by no means wedded to this house.

The thought of a German Empire had arisen. At the headquarters at Versailles the project was discussed, and it was thought that King Wilhelm should be the Emperor. This was the object of both Bismarck's and the Crown Prince's labours. With regard to details, however, their views were at complete variance. Friedrich desired a German unified state; he thought of

the Emperor as surrounded by responsible ministers. The German Princes would, of course, govern within the limits of their countries, but their power must be considerably curtailed; and those who would not voluntarily make sacrifices for the federated fatherland must be made to do so by force. The Chancellor, on the other hand, was of opinion that the Princes ought to be protected as far as was possible, and that they ought to retain their rights. He greatly desired that the Empire might arise from a free agreement on their side. "If only the South Germans would take the decisive step!" he often said.[2] The King of Prussia had up to the last moment little desire to accept the Imperial crown. Should it, however, prove to be necessary, he wished that it might take place on the invitation of the King of Bavaria. Ludwig was pressingly invited to come to Versailles. Shortly before this he had, through a fall from his horse, twisted his ankle, with the result that it caused him excessive pain to sit on horseback. Still, for a short time, he considered the question of proceeding thither. Bismarck's secretary, Busch, tells us in his memoirs that it was thought to summon a congress of Princes on the 11th of October, and that it was hoped that the King of Bavaria would be present. The historical rooms of Versailles were to be placed at his disposal, as it was considered that he would appreciate this mark of attention. "I never thought that I should come to play the part of a major-domo at Trianon," said Bismarck. "If only the King will come!"

But the King did not come.

On the 19th of October the Ministers of Würtemberg, Hesse, and Baden went to Versailles. On the 20th the King of Bavaria sent his Ministers Bray, Pranckh, and Lutz to the headquarters.

It appeared at first as if the negotiations would be crowned with success; the desire that South Germany should offer King Wilhelm the Imperial crown seemed to be nearing its fulfilment. The leaders of the national party developed a restless energy. Large meetings of the people accepted resolutions which made for the same end. The press warmly advocated a German Empire. The greatest enthusiasm in favour of the project was shown in Prussia and in Baden; but it spread from land to land.

On the 7th of November negotiations took place between the Ministers of Würtemberg, Hesse, and Baden. The Bavarian Minister was not invited to take part in it, no agreement having been come to with Bavaria. This annoyed Ludwig. "Why do they conclude agreements with Würtemberg, Baden, and Hesse and not till later with my Government?" he exclaimed in anger. He was tired of the throne, tired of European politics. His nerves were overstrung, and he demanded that Prince Otto should at once leave the seat of war; he awaited his arrival at Hohenschwangau with impatience. "I look upon my brother as the King," he said to those about him. "Matters hang on a single thin thread, and then it will be, '*Le roi Louis II. est mort. Vive le roi Othon I.!*'"

On the 5th of November the Prince arrived; not without danger had he travelled day and night to fulfil his brother's wish. The King talked much and excitedly to him of abdicating the throne. Otto dissuaded him from such a step in the most affectionate manner. He asked permission to return to Versailles; but it was not until peace was all but concluded that he obtained the Monarch's consent to this step. Ludwig soon changed his mind with regard to his abdication. "Fancy," he said shortly afterwards to a gentleman of his *entourage*, "Count B. really believes that I am seriously thinking of abdicating." He enforced the necessity on several influential personages, "of using every effort in order that these rumours should be definitely put a stop to."[3]

By the 15th of November an agreement had been come to with Baden and Hesse. Accord with Würtemberg seemed likewise near at hand. But suddenly steps were taken from Munich which caused the Government in Stuttgart to assume a waiting position; the Würtembergian delegates received a telegraphic message to the effect "that they were to go hand in hand with their Bavarian colleagues."[4] It became known that this later change of front was owing to the intrigues of the Austrian Chancellor, Count von Beust, who was at this time a visitor at Munich, and who had always been the enemy of Prussia.

Ludwig made strenuous attempts to preserve the independence of his country, demanding during the negotiations not only independent

sovereignty with regard to home affairs, but also that Bavaria should continue to have an independent army and her own foreign policy. As he would not give way an inch in the matter, the question of the German Empire stood for some time on an exceedingly critical footing.

The Crown Prince of Prussia was filled with indignation over the protracted nature of the proceedings, and wished to break down the opposition of Bavaria by force. The wise Bismarck, however, advised a considerate course. “With the Bavarian troops fighting with the Prussians against France, Prussia can hardly coerce their country.” The Grand Duke of Baden had come to the headquarters; he sent one of his confidential friends to Munich to persuade Ludwig to proceed to Versailles. The Bavarian Ministers likewise exerted themselves to induce him to make the journey. “I know well that in many respects it would be advisable for me to make this journey,” said the King. “It need hardly be said that it would also be of political advantage. But I feel myself too suffering. Whether or not I take the journey depends, moreover, on the guarantees which I desire. Without them I will not go! Here the matter rests—it is my will!”

“Ludwig is not coming to Versailles, firstly, because he cannot ride just now without discomfort, and, secondly, because he does not like playing second fiddle,” wrote Bismarck’s secretary, Busch, in his journal.

No one could deny that he had done Prussia invaluable service by the rapidity with which he had decided to mobilise his army. He now thought his action entitled him to ask a service in return from this country. One of his wishes was to extend the frontiers of his land. His Ministers inquired whether the Palatinate of Baden, which in olden days had been the territory of the Electors of Bavaria, could be ceded to Bavaria, Baden receiving as indemnity a portion of Alsace-Lorraine. To this Bismarck answered decisively that “Baden was a ‘*noli me tangere*,’” and that neither King Wilhelm nor the Archduke of Baden would ever agree to it.”

On the evening of the 23rd of November he had another meeting with the Bavarian Ministers. An agreement was at last come to. After they had left him, at ten o’clock in the evening, he said in a satisfied tone: “German unity

is a completed act, and the ‘Emperor’ likewise. It is an event!... The agreement has its weak points; but as it is, it is more tenable. I consider it to be the most important thing we have accomplished this year. With regard to the ‘Emperor’ I made him more acceptable during the negotiations, as I represented to the Ministers that it must be easier and more convenient for their Kings to allow the German Emperor certain privileges than to allow them to the neighbouring King of Prussia.”

Ludwig made a last attempt to maintain his position. Prince Adalbert pressed him to put forward a claim that the Kings of Bavaria and of Prussia should alternately wear the Imperial crown; and Prince Luitpold was pushed forward to make this proposal. Bismarck scouted the idea, remarking: “The King of Bavaria lives in a world of dreams. He is hardly more than a boy who does not know his own mind!” The Prussian statesman, it need hardly be said, was careful not to say this directly to Ludwig. He wrote a long and exceedingly deferential letter to him, in which he emphasised how necessary it was that the Imperial crown should be *offered* to the King of Prussia, and that it was for the King of Bavaria to take the first step. If the last-named would not make the proposal, the Princes of the smaller states would do this, and Ludwig in such a case could not avoid following in their footsteps.

The descendant of the thousand-year-old House of Wittelsbach, which had counted three emperors among its forefathers, bent before the force of circumstances. He telegraphed to his Minister, Count Bray, that the latter was to inform Bismarck that Count Holnstein would arrive at Versailles within three days, to discuss with him the details of the matter. “Not till then”—he expressed himself—“shall I be able to make a final decision.” Holnstein hurried off. Without losing a moment’s time he sought out Bismarck, and made him acquainted with his errand, after which he immediately returned to Hohenschwangau.

Ludwig was in bed with a toothache, and would not be disturbed, but the Count knew how to arouse his curiosity in such a manner that he was received in audience all the same. He brought with him two sealed envelopes; the one contained a renewed demand to Ludwig to offer

Wilhelm the Imperial crown; the other was the draft, composed by Bismarck, of a communication from the King of Bavaria in which this was done. The application was favourably received. Ludwig at once decided to follow the Prussian statesman's instructions. With his own hand he wrote the letter which transformed Germany into an empire. Count Holnstein now rode to Munich, in conformity with the King's command that he should confer with Secretary Eisenhart, whom he found in the Residenz Theater. He presented the aforesaid letter from Ludwig to the King of Prussia, also one to Eisenhart in which his master inquired whether he considered it desirable that another communication, couched in terms more suited to the circumstances, should be sent: in such a case the King gave Eisenhart a free hand to retain his own letter. The secretary sent it on without alteration. Holnstein swung himself up on his horse again and rode off to Versailles. In accordance with Ludwig's express command, his communication was handed to the King of Prussia by Prince Luitpold.

"The King of Bavaria has copied Bismarck's letter word for word," noted Prince Friedrich in his journal.

The delight was great all over Germany. It was known that it was the young King of Bavaria, who had spoken the word at the right moment. Only the initiated were cognisant that he had done it under pressure and after hesitation. Hardly a dinner was given, and no political meeting was held, but the health of "Ludwig the German" was drunk with enthusiasm. The greatest satisfaction prevailed at headquarters. He was no longer now "the boy who did not know his own mind." Both Bismarck and the King of Prussia expressed themselves in terms of the warmest recognition of the Bavarian Sovereign.

The proclamation of the Empire was to take place at Versailles on the 18th of January, 1871. Three days before this date the future emperor summoned the court chaplain to him. He spoke of Ludwig II.'s idealism, and added: "Whatever his abilities may be, he must at any rate be very highly considered." Bismarck at an entertainment rose to his feet, and made the following speech:—"I drink to the health of his Majesty the King of Bavaria, and to the prosperity of his dynasty, which has extended through a

thousand years! I can only repeat that as long as I have a voice in matters, a step shall never be taken which might wound Bavaria in its rightful position. His Majesty the King will find in me, as long as I live, a servant as attached as if I were still his vassal."[5]

After the death of Ludwig II. the Chancellor of the German Empire declared: "In 1870 Ludwig was our only influential friend in Germany."

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1 Louise von Kobell: "*König Ludwig II. und Fürst Bismarck im Jahre 1870.*" ↑

2 Bismarck's "*Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," v. ii., and "*Kaiser Friedrich in Versailles*," (*Erinnerungen eines Diplomaten*). ↑

3 Louise von Kobell, "*König Ludwig II. und Fürst Bismarck im Jahre 1870.*" ↑

4 Professor Dr. Otto J. W. Richter, "*Kaiser Friedrich III.*" ↑

5 The Emperor "Ludwig der Bayrer" enfeoffed in 1323 his son Mark Brandenburg. Brandenburg remained under the sway of the Wittelsbachs until 1373, when Otto V. ceded it to the Emperor Karl IV. Bismarck mentions in his "*Gedanken und Erinnerungen*" the particular favour shown to his ancestors by the Bavarian dynasty. ↑

CHAPTER XVIII

The Bavarian Troops Return to Munich—King Ludwig and the Crown Prince of Germany

The war was ended; the peace concluded. A great German Empire had been re-established. Germany had been given an Emperor—and that Emperor was the King of Prussia.

With the last-named fact the essence of the new Empire is characterised: Prussia was the paramount country. The other four and seventy states were not to be without a voice in the decision of the common affairs of the realm, and each one was to retain a certain independence, but Prussia was, and intended to be, the state to lead the course of events—the centre of gravity which was to decide the balance.

Thanks to Ludwig II.'s obstinacy, his kingdom had formally received a special position. The new constitution granted Bavaria in a special paragraph[1] the right to all the attributes which are considered as belonging to national independence: she retained, for instance, her own Minister of War, her own army, her own Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the right to independent diplomatic and consular services. The appearance of sovereignty was retained. But Ludwig's burning desire to extend the frontiers of his kingdom had not been fulfilled. This circumstance was the cause, on his side, of much displeasure towards the Royal House of Prussia.

The returning troops were to make their entry into Munich on the 16th July, 1871. The city was filled to overflowing. A number of travellers passing through the capital were obliged to pass the night in the open air or in their carriages. Day had hardly broken before people were seen hurrying forth to secure places for themselves. All were awaiting with excitement the moment which should bring back the relations and friends who had been so sorely missed during the now concluded war. Gymnasts and members of fire brigades, who were to keep the streets open, marched up playing their

bands. Shortly afterwards the students arrived with their picturesque scarves across their shoulders, the artists with green branches in their hats, rifle associations and societies with their banners and flags, their duty being to line the streets for the returning troops, and add to the general rejoicing by their singing. The sun sent forth its rays over the capital, the streets became more and more animated. The bells were rung from all the churches, salutes boomed forth. According to the programme, the King was to hold a review at nine o'clock, but the stands for the spectators were more than filled long before that time. Then a festive stillness fell over the assembled people. Mothers and fathers held up their little children in their arms so that they might witness the scene. Majestically handsome, Ludwig II. rode at a sharp trot from the "triumphal arch" to the statue of Ludwig I., where the troops were to defile past him. A brilliant suite accompanied him. The hurrahs from thousands of throats filled the air. On the royal stand the female members of the royal house were seated. Far away, down at the triumphal arch, the Uhlans'—the so-called "light horse"—blue and white banners were visible. They came nearer and nearer. The Inspector-General of the Army, Prince Luitpold, rode between his aides-de-camp and officers, nodding pleasantly to the cheering crowds. The Crown Prince of the German Empire, who now rode past, was received with audible expressions of welcome. The chief burgomaster of the city made a speech, which the former amiably answered, and three young girls offered the conqueror of Wörth a wreath of laurels. A deep stillness reigned during the speeches, but as soon as they were ended the enthusiasm broke out afresh. The Crown Prince as he continued his ride was pelted with flowers from all the windows. At the Odeon Platz he rode up to the right side of King Ludwig; and both sat their horses while the soldiers defiled past. The Crown Prince was the leader of the soldiery—he had shared danger and hardship with them; Ludwig was their own beloved King; and they did homage to both with equal heartiness. But Friedrich had gained laurels in the war, and had become the heir to an Imperial crown. Ludwig was a sick man who stood jealous and doubting before the homage which was being shown to his cousin. The entrance of the troops lasted for four hours, and was not ended until after one o'clock.

Later in the day a dinner was given at the Palace, where the court displayed all its brilliancy. The King drank to the health of the army and of its leader, who was crowned with honour, after which the Crown Prince returned thanks to Ludwig in a lengthy speech. At seven o'clock the dinner came to an end. The court, and the officers and civilians invited by the Minister of War, then adjourned to a gala performance in the royal theatre, where *Der Friede* by Paul Heyse was the piece given.

The returning warriors, and the citizens of the metropolis and their dames, made merry until far into the night and the following day. The cheers for the King, for the Crown Prince of Prussia, for all who had fought and conquered, were ceaseless.

The military bands which had so long been absent were once more heard in the great Feldherren Halle. Patriotic songs were played on the stands in the Odeon Platz. The houses were illuminated. All were delighted at the success of the reception, and at the friendship between the King and the Crown Prince, which was looked upon as a good omen for the new alliance.

The day afterwards the royal family, with their guest, made an excursion to the Roseninsel, where the roses were in full bloom. Ludwig, wishing to do honour to Friedrich and give him pleasure, asked his permission, as they were walking together in the afternoon, to make him colonel of one of his regiments of light horse. The Crown Prince answered loftily that it depended on the Emperor whether he could accept the offer or not, adding, with a smile: "I do not know if the slim Uhlan uniform would suit my stout figure!" The King was greatly displeased with this remark, and later repeated it to several persons.

After the return from the Roseninsel he informed his secretary that he would under no circumstances be present at the military banquet in the Glas Palast the following day. This banquet, to which nine hundred invitations had been issued, and which was to mark the height of the festivities, was given in honour of Friedrich, but was intended at the same time to be a recognition shown to the Bavarian army. The secretary wrote a letter to his Majesty, in which, with the deepest respect, he endeavoured to persuade

him at least to show himself for some minutes, pointing out that his absence might have extended political consequences. He described in graphic words the pleasure the Monarch would give the brave and faithful defenders of his country if he showed them the honour of being their comrade at table. The King answered that he needed quiet. This, however, did not preclude the hope that at the last moment he might appear.

The dinner, nevertheless, took place without him. Shortly before nine the Crown Prince Friedrich arrived with his suite. The house of Bavaria was represented by the greater number of its princes; but a painful impression was caused by the King's absence.[2]

At four o'clock the following morning the wife of the private secretary was awakened by the tramp of horses in the courtyard, which was otherwise so quiet. She ran to the window and saw the royal equipage standing with the horses harnessed to it. Ludwig entered, and it set off at a quick trot in the early morning hour for the château of Berg.

Four hours later a royal servant brought his Majesty's orders that the secretary should proceed out to Schloss Berg, and hold a lecture for him there.

The Crown Prince of Prussia left the Bavarian capital the same forenoon, after taking a hearty leave of the royal princes, who were all present at the railway station to bid him farewell.

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1 The so-called Bavarian clause. ↑

2 Frau Louise von Kobell, from whose memoirs I have taken these details. ↑

CHAPTER XIX

A Visit from the Emperor Wilhelm—Ludwig Withdraws more and more from the World

Ludwig II. and the Crown Prince of Germany had been mutually displeased with one another. Nevertheless, Friedrich had hardly left the Bavarian capital before information was received that his father, the aged Emperor, desired to meet the King. The last-named, doubtless, was, in his heart, not particularly delighted at the prospective visit; but he put a good face on the matter, and received his guest on Bavarian soil with all the courtesy and amiability that could be desired.

His people gave the Emperor a hearty greeting. The two Monarchs drove together amid hearty cheers into Ratisbon, where a banquet was held at the hotel "Goldenes Kreuz." Contrary to what had taken place during the Crown Prince's visit, the meeting between the young King and the "victorious old man" passed off in the most satisfactory manner, and not even the shade of any unpleasantness was to be traced.

Ludwig returned to Berg the same evening. The Emperor remained the night at the hotel, and the next morning continued his journey to Gastein, where he was going to take the baths.

On his return he again visited the royal family of Bavaria. The visit was this time chiefly to his cousin, the Queen-mother. She was residing at Hohenschwangau, and received him there with both her sons. The weather was splendid. In the evening the picturesquely situated castle was brilliantly illuminated; and the intercourse between the royal kinsfolk was gay and hearty. Wilhelm remained at the castle till the following day. Ludwig and the Emperor talked confidentially together for a long time, and parted with mutual assurances of friendship. The meeting between the Princes was commented on by the whole of the European press. "Now it is King Ludwig's turn to pay a return visit to Berlin," said a friend to Secretary

Eisenhart. “The King is not very fond of official journeys,” remarked Eisenhart. “Nor is it necessary,” answered his friend; “for, according to what I heard in Berlin, the Emperor does not require any return visit. He judges the King of Bavaria by quite a different standard from the other German princes in view of the sacrifices he has made for Prussia. The Crown Prince is said to be of another opinion; when he ascends the throne he will certainly show this!”[1]

The Emperor Wilhelm was one of the few princes who saw and talked with Ludwig II. As a rule, the Bavarian King avoided the visits of his compeers. A number of royal personages came to Munich during his reign, and the greater number of them wished to pay him their respects; but, as a rule, he excused himself from receiving the august travellers on the plea of indisposition. The King and Queen of Saxony, the Queen of Würtemberg, the Emperor and Empress of Brazil, and many other princes and princesses, never even saw a glimpse of him. The Emperor of Austria visited his relatives in Bavaria almost every year, but in spite of the friendly relations between Ludwig and the Empress the King used not to show himself to her husband.

It would certainly be wronging Ludwig to assume that his indisposition was only an excuse to avoid the visitors. As a matter of fact, he was tortured and sick both in body and mind. He suffered from insomnia, and complained of constant and violent pains in the back of his head. He began also to avoid his capital. The noise of the streets, the curiosity of the people, the royal tombs, which he could see from the windows of the Palace—all annoyed him! He hardly ever went on foot when in Munich; and when he drove out in the English Garden sat hidden from the glances of the multitude, leaning far back in a closed carriage. Nevertheless, he continued to be popular. But even the people’s homage sometimes displeased him. He used to speak of himself as “sacrificed to ovations.” Court balls and court festivities were a misery to him; when he took part in them it was only as a duty. In order to avoid seeing the guests at table whom he did not like, he ordered vases of flowers to be placed before them. Sincerely as the people and the court desired that he would remain in the capital, he could not, of course, be prevented from ordering his life according to his own tastes, or from

spending the greater part of his time in the highlands. But though he sought solitude, and more and more gave himself up to it, and though at times he certainly required it on account of the weakness of his nerves, he was, nevertheless, little fitted to live alone. Despite his hermit tendencies he showed an ever-recurring need to talk with those around him on all the things which occupied his thoughts. His lacqueys and grooms were even required to tell him news of the neighbouring country-folk. More than is usually the case with the generality of people, he was dependent in his sympathies on an attractive manner, a pleasant voice, and a pleasing exterior. His relations with Richard Wagner show that he could be faithful in friendship, but, as a rule, he was unaccountable in his feelings. Some persons he judged in cold blood; in the case of others, he permitted his temperament to carry him to extremes of great unfairness. From certain people he would bear much; the slightest contradiction on the part of others would be sufficient to incur his lasting disfavour.

His love of solitude grew by degrees to be a disease, and at times he literally fled from people. In the middle of the seventies the Queen-mother gave a family party at the Swiss châlet "Pleckenau," not far from Hohenschwangau. The King, Prince Otto, their aides-de-camp, the Mistress of the Court, and two ladies-in-waiting, were with her. The little party were sitting at table in excellent spirits when a mounted messenger with a telegram arrived from the castle: the Austrian Archduke Rainer, who was staying at Bregenz, asked her Majesty whether it would be convenient for her to receive him the following morning. She handed the telegram to the King, who grew pale as he read it. The displeasure visible on his features affected the whole party. He rose from the table and went out, the others remaining seated. Without a word, he went back to Hohenschwangau. Arrived there, he ordered two carriages to be got ready and to await further orders. The preparations were to be made so quietly that no one would have any suspicion of what was taking place. A little while later the Queen-mother, his brother, and the courtiers returned; and soon the building was quite quiet. The gentlemen of the court lived in a house beside the castle. The King's apartments were on the first floor, his mother and her ladies inhabiting the ground floor. Only by stealing softly down the stairs could he reach the courtyard of the castle without being heard. Ludwig and his

servant accomplished this undetected, and hied them to the royal stables, which are situated at some distance away. With all the speed possible, and in the middle of the night, the King drove to a little village which he was occasionally in the habit of visiting. Here the announcement of his arrival was like a bolt from the blue. The master of the posting station where he alighted had let all his rooms to a military commission; these gentlemen had to be got out of the way as quickly as possible. All had gone to bed, and had to be aroused. The general had only time to half-dress himself and rush out before he met his King on the staircase. At three in the morning Ludwig at last went to bed; despite sedatives it was not possible for him to procure any rest.

The next morning the King received a telegram informing him that the Archduke Rainer had left, "after half-an-hour's visit." Ludwig gave orders for his horses to be put to at once. A breakfast which he had ordered, and paid for with eighty guldens, was left untouched. He returned to Hohenschwangau with the same speed with which he had left it. His mother greeted him from her window. Laughing, he called up to her; "I avoided that visit nicely, didn't I?" The Queen-mother, although she was not satisfied with his flight, was obliged to laugh too.

It will easily be understood that his increasing shyness was a subject of conversation in all circles. We have heard that rumours had already been current that he thought of abdicating the throne; these were fed by his strange caprices and his retired life. Count Holnstein wrote to Bismarck as early as 1871: "Before every audience and every court ceremony the King drinks large quantities of strong wine, and he then says the most extraordinary things. He wishes to abdicate in favour of Prince Otto, who does not entertain the slightest wish for it.... The Ultramontanes know this. They have chosen their candidate for the National Assembly: Prince Luitpold; he is also their candidate for the throne. Perhaps they will succeed in getting him elected in spite of Prince Otto's claims!"

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1 Louise von Kobell, "*Unter den vier ersten Königen Bayerns*" (vol. ii. pp. 158, 159). ↑

CHAPTER XX

Prince Otto's Insanity—The King's Morbid Sensations

The House of Wittelsbach has been terribly ravaged by insanity. In the course of one hundred years more than twenty members of the family have been visited by this misfortune.

The sons of Maximilian II. were burdened with exceedingly neurotic tendencies. Their grandfather had been eccentric in a high degree; and a sister of King Maximilian was for long retained in a madhouse. The parents of Ludwig II. and Prince Otto were, moreover, near relations. They were both connected by ties of blood with the Royal House of Hesse-Darmstadt, where there had been insanity for many years. The grandmothers of the Bavarian Queen-mother, on both her father's and her mother's side, were Hessian princesses. The mother of Ludwig I., who died in her youth, likewise belonged to this house; and his wife was the granddaughter of a princess of Darmstadt.

At the beginning of 1872 the newspapers began to insert notices in their columns to the effect that Prince Otto of Bavaria was suffering. In the fifties and sixties he had been the picture of health. Where Ludwig had withdrawn, he had gone forward towards people with outstretched hands. He had always been gay, amiable, and lively. The unnaturally strict upbringing, and the rapidity with which, from almost unendurable restraint, he had been thrown into unfettered freedom, had, however, been a concurrent cause of his losing his mental balance. Hardly two and twenty years of age, he had followed the army (1870). We know that, despite his wish to remain with it, the King had recalled him to Hohenschwangau. The summons was probably the dictate of the elder brother's personal feelings; but the Prince's nervous system had also shown itself to be unfitted for the bloody scenes of a battlefield. Crown Prince Friedrich wrote in his diary: "Prince Otto came to take leave before his return to Munich. He was looking pale and wretched.

He sat in front of me, apparently suffering from cold shivering fits, while I developed to him the necessity of our making common cause in military and diplomatic affairs. I could not make out whether he understood me, or only heard what I said."

Shortly after his return he began to show the first signs of insanity. The report of this aroused general sorrow. He had been given the affectionate nickname of "Otto der Fröhliche." In spite of predisposition, and in spite of the circumstances attending his birth, which might furnish some ground for the supposition that the germ of the malady was to be sought there, the public would not at first credit the news. He was seen daily in the streets, the theatre, and at the circus. Suddenly his sickness took a violent turn. He had to be placed under restraint, and some occurrences which took place caused the physicians to advise his being sent away from Munich. The Prince, however, would not agree to this. For the time being, therefore, he remained where he was, though it was found impossible to allow him to be alone. At length he was declared to be incurably mad, and was completely separated from his relations. The King was very decided in his wish that he should not live in the vicinity of the castles he himself was in the habit of occupying. He was, therefore, taken to Nymphenburg, and two years later to the lonely Fürstenreid. His mother was inconsolable at the misfortune which had struck her favourite child; and Ludwig also greatly felt the blow. When, on his accession, the ceremonies for his father's funeral had been decided upon, and he had been asked what place the Prince should take, he had answered without hesitation: "At my side!" The younger brother's light-hearted temperament had formed a favourable contrast to his serious, heavy view of life. He had regarded him as his successor, and hoped that Otto by making a brilliant match would repair the injury done to the country by his own celibacy. Instead of this, he had from mental dulness sunk into the darkest night of insanity. He showed no feeling at the moment of departure, and cared only for some toys; but all the tenderness which had lain dormant in Ludwig's nature burst forth at this moment. Those who were witness to his parting with his mad brother were moved at the heart-broken sorrow he displayed.

From this day the King became deeply solicitous about his own health; he suffered from fear lest Otto's fate should become his. A doctor had been careless enough to inform him that his father had led a light life in his earliest youth. After he had learned this fact, he attributed the greater number of his physical sufferings to inherited tendency. The remembrance of his father became painful to him, and he could not suppress bitter expressions with reference to him. At the time of his ascent of the throne several persons had thought to remark that his nerves were wanting in the power of resistance. The celebrated French physician, Dr Morel, who had been called to Munich in 1867, had had an opportunity of seeing the young King. He had uttered the sadly prophetic words: "His eyes are sinisterly beautiful; future madness shines from them!"

The political events of 1870–71, and their results, had increased his already painful feeling of the contrast between his imagination and reality. Signs were not wanting that his dream-life might have fatal results for him. His nervous excitement became even more apparent when his brother's malady broke out. In 1874 his condition was considered so dangerous that it was talked of openly in his capital. The editor of a Conservative newspaper publicly mentioned the report that the King was insane. He was condemned to six months' imprisonment for *lèse Majesté*, although he called as witnesses several deputies of the Landtag, who declared on oath that this topic had been discussed in the ale-halls of Munich.

Megalomania, the traces of which at times were apparent, had not yet penetrated so deeply into Ludwig's consciousness that they affected more than certain of his actions; the fire was still smouldering, though it threatened to burst out into flames. As yet his power of will was strong enough to curb his imagination. As yet a healthy mental current ran, and was to run for long, side by side with the diseased one; as yet he could at times by restless activity bring his unquiet mind to rest. He fought like a lion to avert the misfortune, which he so greatly dreaded; but he fought alone. His lofty conceptions had year by year deepened the cleft which a want of understanding had dug between him and his mother. Circumstances had parted him from Richard Wagner, the friend whom he had most loved. He had no confidant, hardly, indeed, anyone in whom he placed confidence.

There was no one who with a firm hand might have led him away from his erroneous conceptions, no one who could obliterate the impressions which made him superstitious and bitter.

This King, who a few years before had awakened the enthusiasm of all, became transformed into a heavy, corpulent, pallid man, weary with the burden of his life. In the midst of the romantic splendour with which he surrounded himself, he was tormented by the thought of suicide. On stormy nights he would drive about the mountain roads at a furious pace in his gilded coach, alone with his morbid sensations and fancies.

Only the deep blue eyes, with their expression of *Schwärmerei* and their melancholy glance, remained to remind the world of the handsome youth who had been the pride and hope of Bavaria.

CHAPTER XXI

The Review of the Troops in 1875—Crown Prince Friedrich of Prussia

The Bavarian people had accustomed themselves to Ludwig's peculiarities. Foreign states and peoples still regarded his ways and actions as signs of genius. The King himself seemed to be indifferent as to the impression his conduct made upon others.

Military pageants had never interested him; he had had from his childhood a morbid dread of firearms and of war. On the return of the troops in 1871 he had not even glanced at the wounded—not because his heart was wanting in sympathy for them, but because his nerves could not endure the sight. Great, therefore, was the general astonishment when it was announced in the summer of 1875 that it was the King's intention to hold a review. People found it difficult to think that he would make this exception from his hermit habits.

The report, however, was not contradicted. The troops stationed at the different garrisons were already out at the autumn manœuvres when 14,000 men were recalled to the capital. Ludwig wished to show the World that he had the chief command of his army. His intention had hardly been made known before thousands of strangers flocked to Munich to see him. On Sunday, the 15th of August, 1875, all the streets were filled to overflowing. The Monarch's brilliant suite took up its position between the entrance to the royal gardens and the Feldherren Halle. When he rode up on his white horse that beautiful Sunday morning, at the head of his staff, the crowds were thrilled with love and admiration for him.

The King no longer possessed his fascinating beauty; but his features were still refined and noble, and his eyes full of soul, and brilliant as before. Despite his youth, he had become very stout, but being tall, his figure was as imposing as ever. He had only to show himself to arouse enthusiasm.

With the dignity which was his by birth, and with the fascinating amiability which he displayed in his best moments, he bowed in all directions. The troops were forbidden to greet him with cheers, but no such regulation restricted the citizens. The enthusiasm increased like an avalanche; it spread from street to street, giving unmistakable indication of how dearly he was still beloved. At the conclusion of the review he rode up to Princess Gisela,[1] who had been present at it, sitting in the King's state carriage. At this moment he was surrounded from all sides. His servants endeavoured to hold the crowd back, but he hastened to prevent them. It was with the utmost trouble that a way was made for him when at a foot's pace he returned to the city. So overwhelming was the enthusiasm that he felt himself constrained to write the same day, in his own hand, a letter of thanks for all the proofs of loyalty and love which he had met with. This was the last time he gave the citizens of Munich an opportunity of doing homage to him; the last time that his heart proudly beat time with those of his subjects.

Nevertheless, this bright day, so full of feeling, was by no means the outcome of noble thought: the German Crown Prince was in the habit of holding a review every autumn of the Bavarian troops. Jealousy of him had caused the lonely King to appear once more before the world.

At the return of the troops in 1871 his displeasure with Friedrich had been very apparent. It had not grown less with the course of years. Ludwig II. suffered more deeply under the supremacy of Prussia than any of the other princes because his kingdom was larger than that of any other prince, and because he was morbid and his pride wounded. While his Ministers in 1870–71 were spinning out the negotiations respecting the federation of the German States, Friedrich had uttered words of anger against Bavaria of which its King had not remained in ignorance. He looked upon the Crown Prince's annual visit to his kingdom as an insult; and he was possessed by the morbid conviction that the latter, when Emperor, would drive him out of his dominions. "It is not pleasant to be swallowed up," he often repeated. Wilhelm I. had, in 1872, sent him the Order of the Black Eagle; but the envoy conveying it had been unable to gain an audience of the King, despite the earnest representations of the Prussian Minister at Munich. At

last, however, Ludwig was persuaded to send a letter of thanks. He wrote that “it would give him pleasure to receive the Emperor’s Order at a later date, when he was feeling less fatigued; for the time being he was over-tired and could not fix any day”!

Still, he by no means cherished unfriendly feelings towards the old Emperor. During the last years of his life he mentioned the attempts to assassinate the latter as one of the reasons for his own distaste for mixing with the world. And when Wilhelm, accompanied by the Grand Duchess of Baden, visited Bayreuth, in order to be present at a Wagner festival, he sent his confidential secretary to arrange everything in as pleasant a manner as possible for him and his daughter. Wilhelm, on his side, had only friendly feelings towards Ludwig. He repeatedly expressed his regret that the King of Bavaria withdrew so much from the world; and he never forgot the services he had done him and his country. But the King of Prussia was three times the age of the King of Bavaria; he was, moreover, a soldier from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and of any real understanding between them there could be little possibility, since Ludwig by no means shared the enthusiasm which was generally felt at the reconstitution of the German Empire, and was weary of the continued praise at his attitude in the years 1870–71. He was a Bavarian before all else. Often he expressed himself: “I am honoured only by the colours of my country.”

Crown Prince Friedrich was friendly and straightforward in manner, and he made a favourable impression on the Bavarians. It is, however, known beyond a doubt that he repaid the King’s jealousy with contempt. To those with whom he was on terms of confidence he called Ludwig “*Le roi fainéant*.” He was of a lively nature, and he did not always weigh his words. After a journey of inspection he said to some Bavarian officers who had assembled in order to bid him farewell: “In ten years’ time you will belong entirely to us.” This utterance was repeated to the King, who was exceedingly annoyed at it. His Minister at the Prussian court received instructions to request an explanation from the Crown Prince. Friedrich made answer that he had only referred to the military alliance; but Ludwig was not satisfied with this reply.

At the beginning of the seventies the German Crown Prince and his wife desired, for reasons of health, to spend the summer at Berchtesgaden. The King hastened to put hindrances in the way of the contemplated visit, giving as an excuse for not receiving them, that his villa there was to be used as a residence for his insane brother Otto. A lady of the German aristocracy who owned a house at Berchtesgaden offered the Crown Prince hers. Ludwig now suddenly changed his mind. The following characteristic letter shows that for the moment he regretted his want of friendliness:—

"My dear Friend,

"I see from your kind letter that you have already decided to make use of the house offered you by Fräulein von Waldenburg. I am really very sorry for this; the more so that Otto, according to the doctors' orders, is to continue his cure at Nymphenburg, and my villa at Berchtesgaden would therefore, dear cousin, have been entirely at the disposal of yourself and your family.

"I cherish the hope that the stay in the strong mountain air will give the Crown Princess and your children pleasure and strength.

"I conclude with the wish that you may all like beautiful Berchtesgaden. Praying that you will kiss the hand of the Crown Princess for me, I remain in old friendship,

"Your faithful affectionate cousin,

"Ludwig."

When Friedrich came to Munich in later years he always stayed there incognito. He visited the art and industrial museums, and received some of his old companions-in-arms; but he never visited the King, nor did the King ever seek him. The antipathy grew on both sides. Unfortunately, Ludwig was at no pains to conceal his feelings; he spoke often and unreservedly of his bitterness towards this member of the Prussian Imperial House. His *entourage* did not look upon it as a duty to preserve silence with regard to what they had heard. The King's words sometimes journeyed *viâ* Vienna to Berlin, and the effect made itself felt in due course. It was in 1874, at the railway station at Munich, that he greeted the Emperor Wilhelm for the last time. After this date the "victorious old man" also travelled incognito through Bavaria when he visited Gastein in the summers.

1 The eldest daughter of Franz Josef and the Empress Elizabeth. She is married to King Ludwig's cousin. ↑

CHAPTER XXII

King Ludwig and the Empress Elisabeth

Ludwig's spite against a single member of the House of Hohenzollern destroyed the good relations with his relatives in Berlin. By way of off-set, the sympathy he felt for the Empress Elizabeth had the effect of causing his relations with the House of Hapsburg to be very friendly.

His betrothal to his cousin, Sophie Charlotte, had left behind it bitter memories. Although it was he who had dissolved the connection, and although she would hardly have been capable of making him happy, it is a fact that he became the slave of melancholy after the engagement was broken off. The Duchess had much to forgive him; and yet it appeared to the sick King, who condemned himself to loneliness, that it was he who was the injured party. In one of the rooms which he usually occupied hung the portrait of a woman, over which he had caused a thick silken veil to be hung. He would stand sunk in thought before this picture, walking slowly when he turned away, as if it cost him an effort to leave it. No outside personage was ever permitted to see it, and no one knew whom it represented. It was supposed that it might be a portrait of Marie Antoinette of France, for whom he cherished a great admiration; but many also thought that the painting represented the Duchesse d'Alençon, whom he had never forgotten.

Nearly the whole of the royal house had taken the side of his former *fiancée*, and were with reason annoyed at his fickleness. In spite of the wrong which had been done the ducal house, one of Sophie's brothers and one of her sisters had been indulgent towards him. Duke Karl Teodor, the oculist, had scrutinised his cousin with the eye of a doctor; he had found excuses for his action in his diseased mental condition. Elizabeth of Austria had understanding even of aspects of his character which could not possibly have been sympathetic to her, and she was attracted by qualities in him which had displeased and alarmed her sister.

It is difficult to say whether it was Sophie's likeness to Elizabeth which had awakened his feelings for the Duchess, or whether a half-unconscious longing for his former betrothed knit the tie firmer between the Empress and himself. It is remarkable, in any case, that the King, who was otherwise so reserved towards women, should have formed a lasting friendship with her. The outward likeness between the two sisters was very great; the inward harmony, however, was not in the same proportion. Despite her beauty and her carefully developed talents, Sophie was an ordinary woman, whereas Elizabeth's mind was rich, though her soul was crushed. Hardly judged by many, understood by few, and yet admired by most, she was the woman, if anybody could have done so, to have fitted into the King of Bavaria's life. Both had the same restlessness in their blood, at the same time as they had both a need for solitude. The "horror of the crowd" which dominated him in so great a degree was also a characteristic of her. They were burdened with the same morbid tendencies. Even in their exterior there was similarity between the two cousins, who were gifted with such unusual and spiritual beauty. Neither of them had known the joys of youth; the sceptre had been placed in their hands while they were yet undeveloped children. The power which too early both had become possessed of had in both developed an unwillingness to sacrifice a tittle of their convenience. Ludwig never opened the door to the deep and unusual qualities of his personality; Elizabeth, too, kept her inmost thoughts in conscious shade. However eagerly the crowd might seek, among the hum of reports which were ever afloat, it never knew for certain what it was that inwardly moved them. But they found mutual healing in opening their hearts to one another on the unfulfilled wishes and hidden disappointments which the world did not see.

Their inherited nervous sufferings were the sorrow-laden undercurrent of their lives. Insanity which was inherent in their race was to both of them a threatening spectre, which, sooner or later, would attack them too. But in the case of Ludwig this fear had in a greater degree than in the case of Elizabeth weakened the power of will. Proud almost to the verge of megalomania, they were, nevertheless, friendly towards the country people they met with. By nature they were exceedingly generous; but the sufferings of their neighbour did not, either in him or her, drive away their thoughts

from themselves. Both Ludwig and Elizabeth were eccentric in their sympathies and antipathies. Elizabeth was unhappy in her marriage; she sought a panacea for love in friendships with women. Ludwig could suddenly, and apparently without reason, take up with men who were far inferior to him in character. Both, as a rule, were disappointed in, and quickly tired of, these favourites for a day. Both the King and the Empress fled to the world of books, and when they met their literary interests bound them still faster together. A result of their mutual affection was that they exercised influence one upon the other. Elizabeth was older and had more knowledge of the world; she did not exceed her cousin in intelligence, though she may have done so in energy. Her power over him was, therefore, greater than his over her. The Empress's influence was not altogether for good. She impressed upon Ludwig that "one can do everything one likes," and the young Wittelsbach was very receptive to this kind of teaching. Where it might have been good and useful, he was, on the contrary, less willing to follow her advice: the Empress went early to bed, rose every morning at five, and went out of doors. The King spent his nights in music and reading, and not till day began to break did he retire to rest. Both had been passionately fond of riding, but had been obliged to give up this sport. She went instead walks of many miles, whereas he took his daily constitutional in a closed carriage.

Elizabeth spent part of her summers in Feldafing, in the vicinity of Ludwig's castles. They met one another by appointment on the Roseninsel, in the lake of Starnberg; or, as not seldom happened, she would suddenly appear in his study at Schloss Berg or Neuschwanstein, and remain sitting many hours with him. She brought with her a stream of beauty and harmony into his quiet apartments. Even in his last darkened hours, when otherwise he received nobody, he liked to have her visits.

Prince Leopold of Bavaria had married in 1873 her eldest daughter. Ludwig had on this occasion emerged from his customary retirement. Princess Gisela was one of his few women relations who could boast of his amiability. Flattering as this might be, it was at times exceedingly inconvenient; for the King, who turned night into day, sent her presents and

bouquets of flowers in the night. He would not alter his habits either for her or her mother's sake.

The Empress's youngest daughter, Marie Valerie, expressed the wish to make her "uncle's" acquaintance, and Elizabeth was at some pains to induce him to receive her favourite child. But he would not be disturbed in his quiet. "I don't know why the Empress is always telling me about her Valerie," he said to one of those near him. "Valerie wants to see me, she says; but I don't at all want to see her Valerie."

CHAPTER XXIII

King Ludwig and Queen Marie

A picture very often to be seen in Bavaria is one representing Maximilian II. and his family in the garden at Hohenschwangau. The Queen is sitting with Prince Otto on her lap, and the King, standing beside her, has laid his hand on the Crown Prince's head. He is in the full prime of his manhood; his wife is radiant with happiness and beauty.

The lapse of a few years had transformed this family life in the Bavarian royal castle. The bright and happy Queen had become a widow, the proud mother a *Mater Dolorosa*. Prince Otto, the child of her heart, was hopelessly insane. The admiration which Ludwig had excited, the great hopes of which at the beginning of his reign he had been the centre, could not outweigh her fearful anxiety for his future.

Until the middle of the seventies, she and her eldest son had been in the habit of residing at Hohenschwangau at the same time, the Queen-mother using the ground floor of the castle, and the young King the first floor. Though they both loved the place equally well, and though Hohenschwangau was Queen Marie's dower house, her son's secluded life caused an alteration in this arrangement also: in later years he went to Linderhof when she came to Hohenschwangau, and upon his return she retired to Elbingen-Alp. When they met he showed his mother great respect; and when, as sometimes happened, disharmonies occurred between them he restrained his annoyance. But the Queen-mother's bourgeois view of life never found the key to his composite nature. Repulsed time after time, she relinquished the hope of ever winning his confidence, though love still lived in the hearts of both.

Exactly opposite Hohenschwangau stood an enormous pine-tree on a projecting rock; lighted up by the declining sun it reminded the Queen-mother of a Christmas-tree. One winter, when they were both living at their favourite castle, son and mother kept Christmas Eve together. The gifts

distributed, Ludwig led his mother to a balcony window. He drew aside the heavy velvet curtains. In the snow-covered landscape without, glittered a magnificent Christmas-tree; it was the spruce fir on the rock, which he had caused to be decorated with lights in order to give her pleasure.

Marie of Bavaria loved the country population; she often and willingly entered into personal relations with them. The customs of the peasantry, but above all their deep, childlike sense of religion, exercised an attraction on her pious mind. By birth a Hohenzollern, she had been brought up in the Lutheran teaching; her own mother had been a strict Protestant. As long as Bavaria had been a kingdom its Queen had belonged to this Church, which the Protestant portion of the population regarded as a support and help. Disappointment was great when it was made known that the Queen-mother intended to enter the Roman Catholic Church. Her relatives in Prussia were also painfully surprised; her sister, the Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt, even journeyed to Hohenschwangau at the last minute for the purpose of endeavouring to dissuade her from her resolution. The German Emperor, whose heart she had ever been very near, made representations of a like nature. But life had brought too many trials for her to be led away by the pressure of others from what she felt to be a matter of conscience. Sad, but not bitter, she retired from the world and from her people, whose respect and sympathy followed her in her loneliness.

In the little chapel at Wallenhofen, in all quietness, she changed her religion.

There is no doubt that many hard struggles had gone before this step. It was thought that King Ludwig did not approve of her action because the Protestants of his country so greatly lamented it. But with his love of free-will, he would not place obstacles in the way of her desire. At a religious festival in Munich, he himself informed the public of his mother’s decision.

CHAPTER XXIV

State and Church—Ignaz von Döllinger—Ludwig's Letters to his old Tutor

One Christmas night in the seventies, Ludwig II. was present with the Queen-mother and the royal Princes at the midnight Mass in the court church at Munich. In the midst of the service he laid his prayer-book aside. He threw himself on his knees, hid his face, and sobbed aloud. His mother regarded him anxiously, and called her brother-in-law, Prince Luitpold, who was sitting in the box next to them. The King rose to his feet and hid his head on her breast; and she and his uncle conducted him to his rooms.

A few days previously an execution had taken place, which had made a deep impression on him. A Neapolitan youth, twenty years of age, who had committed a murder in his country, had been condemned to death. The unhappy parents had sent a heartrending appeal to the young King, who had wished to reprieve him; but his Ministers had opposed his intention.

In his later years, Ludwig seldom attended divine service in Munich; but during his residences at Berg, he went regularly to a little church which had been built in the park there. At the castle of Neuschwanstein there was an altar and a *prie-dieu* in his sleeping apartment. He was in the habit of hearing Mass in the neighbouring chapel; and no person was refused admittance because the King was praying in it. When he visited the small village churches in the highlands, he would often kneel unknown amid those at prayer. At Ober-Ammergau he was so affected by the passion plays, that he caused a magnificent marble group of the Crucifixion to be erected in that town. Once when driving he met a priest carrying the sacrament; he alighted, knelt upon the highroad and prayed. He was God-fearing, but very tolerant; and he hated confessional dissensions.

In affairs of state he preserved a quiet and certain view, not the less so where ecclesiastical matters were concerned; but the relations between the

Papal power and his Government were anything but peaceful. Ludwig had a modern conception of the Church's relation to the State; he desired that the schools should be freed from the yoke of the Church. The reforms of the Government in this domain became the source of violent skirmishes.

The Catholic Church party, which adorned itself with the often misused name of "National," worked up a strong feeling against him and his Ministers. In reality, this party was less national than the other; for the Catholic Church is international in its principle and in its entire organisation, the threads being collected in Rome from the Catholic communities in all parts of the world! Nor was there unity among the Catholic clergy themselves. One of the heads of the Church in Bavaria at that time was Ignaz von Döllinger. He had been Ludwig's teacher, and one of the few whom Ludwig in his youth had really cared about. The Dean was among the most learned theologians of the last century. He had in 1863 published a book, "*Pabstfabeln des Mittelalters*," which had brought him into bad odour with the Romish *curia*. In spite of threats from Rome he quietly continued the way which his truth-loving spirit and his scientific researches pointed out to him. In 1864 Pius IX. had issued the so-called "Syllabus," in which he vindicated and defined the mediæval conception of the Church's supremacy over the State. The Pope meant by his action to prepare for the dogma of his Infallibility. Döllinger made this the object of scathing criticism. His writings did not indeed influence the unenlightened masses, who received the Holy Father's message with blind obedience, but within scientific circles in the Catholic world the Dean's utterances made a deep impression. Munich became the centre of the opposition, and Döllinger, as a matter of course, became its leader.

The suppressed embitterment of which he had long been the object at Rome was now transformed into open and violent persecution. During these struggles King Ludwig held his protecting hand over his old teacher,[1] and sent him the following letter:—

"My dear Dean von Döllinger,

"I intended to have called upon you to-day, but, unfortunately I am hindered by indisposition from carrying out my purpose, and expressing my very heartiest wishes for

your happiness and blessing on the occasion of your birthday.

"I therefore send you my congratulations in this manner.

"I hope that God may grant you still many years of unimpaired intellect and health, so that you may lead to a victorious end the struggle which you began for the honour of religion and science, for the welfare of the Church and the State.

"Do not weary in this so serious and important combat! May you ever be upheld by the consciousness that millions look up to you with confidence as the champion and pillar of truth, and who abandon themselves to the certain hope that you and your undaunted fellow-fighters will put the Jesuitical intrigues to shame and shed the light of victory over human malice and darkness.

"May God grant it, and I pray it of Him with my whole soul!

"Renewing my most sincere and affectionate wishes for your happiness and welfare, I send you, my dear Dean von Döllinger, my kindest regards, and remain, with good-will and unshakable confidence, always

"Your greatly attached King,

"Ludwig.

"February 28th, 1870."

On the 18th of July the same year Pius IX. announced his dogma of Infallibility. A few weeks afterwards the thunderbolt of excommunication struck Ignaz von Döllinger. It is greatly to King Ludwig's honour that he still continued to support him. On the 28th of February, 1871, he sent him a letter in which, among other things, he says:

"My dear Dean and Councillor of State,
Dr von Döllinger,

"I cannot let your birthday to-day go by without sending you my best and most affectionate congratulations—giving you a sign of my particular vigilance. My country and myself are proud of being able to call you ours. And I am glad to dare believe that you, as the ornament of science, and in your tried attachment to the Throne, may yet for long, as hitherto, continue your activity for the good of the State and Church.

"I need hardly emphasise how heartily glad I am at your firm attitude in the Infallibility question. Very painful is it to me, on the other hand, that Abbé Haneberg has submitted in spite of his convictions. I daresay he has done it out of 'humility,' In my opinion, it is a very perverted humility when a person officially gives way and bears outwardly a different opinion from that he has in his heart.

"I rejoice that I have not been disappointed in you. I have always said that you are my Bossuet; he, on the other hand, is my Fénélon.... I am proud of you, true rock of the Church! With assurances, my dear Mr Dean, of my continued good-will, I remain, with my kindest regards,

"Your greatly attached King,

"LUDWIG."

The King later was in the habit of asking Döllinger for information regarding religious works, and several times sent messengers to him to require his explanation of certain passages.

Johannes von Lutz, the son of a village schoolmaster, but early well known as a prominent lawyer, had become Prince Hohenlohe's successor as Premier. He also was persecuted by the Catholic Church party. Ludwig ennobled him, creating him a baron, and always protected him. When the majority of the Parliament opposed the Government in 1883, he sent him the following characteristic autograph letter:—

"MY DEAR MINISTER VON LUTZ,

"I have with regret followed the obstructions which have been placed, during the last few months, in the way of my Ministers, whose labours, as I know, are only dictated by their solicitude for the welfare of their country. I feel myself called upon to express to you that it is my firm expectation that you and your colleagues, who have been summoned by me to be the counsellors of the Crown, will hold out firmly in the future, and with all your strength champion my rights.

"With particular regard to the Church's relation to the State, I have ever, and with the most affectionate conviction, yielded the Church my protection, and I shall never cease to protect the religious necessities of my people, which I consider as the foundation of order.

"But I am equally decided that my Government now and in the future must resist all attempts to undermine the undoubted rights of the State, which will bring State and Church into a fatal position.

"While giving repeated expression herewith of this my will, I assure you and your colleagues of my warm recognition of your faithful resistance under difficult circumstances."

---

1 Ludwig's trusted Minister, Prince Hohenlohe, also regarded it as a duty to step in against the dogma of Papal Infallibility, inviting in a circular all the German Governments to protest against it.

They did not, however, agree to his proposal. ↑

CHAPTER XXV

Ludwig II. in Daily Life

When Bavaria in 1880 celebrated the seven hundredth anniversary of the House of Wittelsbach, the King declined to have any festivities. He issued a proclamation from his highlands in which he declared that he felt himself one with his people, and at the same time expressed the wish that a charitable institution might be founded in honour of the day. His decision not to show himself aroused, and justly, very great disapproval.

Some years prior to this occurrence the Palatinate kept the anniversary of its fifty years' union with Bavaria. Ludwig had promised to be present. At the last moment he sent an excuse, although this circle had proved its loyalty to him in the most brilliant manner during the war of 1866. He absented himself under the pretext of illness, which, however, did not prevent him from starting for Switzerland the same day to visit his friend Richard Wagner.

The last period of his life excepted, he performed punctually his duties of governing; and he was particular that they should never be postponed. Apart from representation, which he declined, even his opponents were obliged to confess that for a great number of years he faithfully fulfilled his kingly duties. At the beginning of his reign he had been in the habit of rising early; but it was not long before the division of his time became exceedingly strange. He now seldom showed himself before midday. When at his country residences the documents which it was necessary for him to sign were sent to him by express messenger, who left Munich every morning and returned every evening. As a rule, his secretary accompanied him to these seats, and no inconvenience was remarked in the different departments on account of his absence. During the warm summer months the affairs of state were at times conducted in the open air. Tables and chairs were arranged on a lawn covered with Turkey carpets. Large bouquets of flowers were placed before the King's chair. The secretary read the documents out loud. The King made his decisions, said good-morning, and

disappeared as quickly as he had come. The secretary's position was not an easy one. When Ludwig was under the influence of his ill-humours he would be annoyed at the most harmless looks and expressions, and often sent him letters late at night in which he demanded explanation for a single unguarded word. At the same time, he was eager to give him pleasure when he was satisfied with him, frequently surprising him and his family with photographs, books, and other articles of value.

When residing at Hohenschwangau during the autumn months, the King was in the habit of driving out every night in his handsome carriage, or his sledge which was decorated with allegorical figures. His equipage rushed like a hurricane through the villages and the dark woods, past snow-covered mountains and deep precipices. On these excursions his life was sometimes in danger. One stormy night the out-rider, who could not distinguish the road from the chasm beside it, was seized with panic, and throwing his torch away, rode blindly forward. Ludwig's life was saved as by a miracle. When in Munich he would drive every day to the "English Garden," where he was in the habit of walking quite alone under the old trees, with his hat pulled down over his eyes. He was possessed by a morbid fear of assassination, and this explains the fact that he was always accompanied by mounted *gendarmes* when he drove through his capital. On the few occasions when he showed himself in public he walked exceedingly stiffly, with his head thrown back. Those whose sentiments towards him were unfriendly looked upon this as a sign of megalomania; the greater number of others considered his carriage proud and kingly. The truth of the matter was that he had a bad carriage, and an uncertain and tottering gait, which he thus endeavoured to hide. When he talked with strangers he always allowed them to stand at some distance from him, because it displeased him that they should remark his bad teeth; he was jealous of his reputation as the handsomest monarch of Europe.

His meals he nearly always partook of alone at an inconvenient table in his study. When he gave audience in the afternoons, he would sometimes eat while the secretary held his lectures. As he was never punctual, his meals had to be kept hot for hours together. As many as twelve courses were served, but, as a rule, he ate only of one. It has been said of him that during

his latter years he indulged to excess in strong drinks. This is not in accord with the truth. As a rule, he drank only Rhine wine with water, or champagne, in which fresh scented violets had been placed. Heady wines he never drank, as they induced in him a rush of blood to the head. His valet had orders to place a glass of cognac on a table by his bedside before the King retired for the night; but, as a rule, it stood untouched the following day.

To give presents was a positive mania with Ludwig. It was his delight at Christmas to surprise everybody, from princes and princesses to every single servant of his household, with gifts. Nor did he forget old teachers whom he had been fond of, or those whom he had met on his way and liked. Long before Christmas he would cause inquiries to be made for articles of the most varied description, and these were sent to Hohenschwangau or Neuschwanstein, where his rooms were transformed into a bazaar. Masterpieces in industrial art ordered by King Ludwig were executed at Munich, in Paris, and in Switzerland. As the *motifs* of the gifts he distributed were often taken from the poetical tournament of the thirteenth century, and at other times were in the fashion of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, those who worked for Ludwig became conversant with the most varied styles. He was so impatient to see the works of art that he demanded their immediate completion. Many heads and hands were fully occupied in executing his orders, and he contributed much to the development of art industries.

The sums with which he rewarded insignificant services were, like his other expenses, little in proportion to the Bavarian King’s income. In the case of accidents and charitable purposes he was seldom appealed to in vain; but far greater was his generosity performed in secret. Out of his own purse he moreover paid as long as he lived all the pensions and assistance which his father had granted.

CHAPTER XXVI

Ludwig and Richard Wagner—The King's Visit to Bayreuth

As long as Richard Wagner had lived in Munich it had only been necessary for him to express a wish with regard to the performance of his works, for the King at once to fulfil it. After his departure he had at first in Hans von Bülow a substitute whom he could safely trust. But when he too left Bavaria the matter grew more difficult. Baron von Perfall became the manager of the Hof Theater. Although he made a positive *culte* of Wagner's works, and during his tenure of the office, which lasted for twenty-five years, performed his operas 742 times, the old order of things was changed during his leadership.

On the 25th of June 1868, the day after the dress rehearsal of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Perfall received a letter from Wagner in which he announced his intention of "retiring from all connection with the Hof Theater." Almost simultaneously Ludwig and Wagner were seen side by side for the last time in Munich. It was at the first performance of the *Meistersinger*. The representation was brilliant, Hans von Bülow conducting with energy, and entirely in the master's spirit. The King sat in his great box. He caused Wagner to be summoned to it.

The composer was enthusiastically recalled after the first act, but did not appear on the stage because he had been unable to find his way thither from the royal box. The performance was proceeded with, and at its conclusion the applause broke forth with redoubled vigour. Wagner, who was sitting by the King's side, rose and bowed to the public from the *Kaiserloge*, an act which occasioned much annoyance. The unfavourable criticism which his friendship for the poet-musician was always calling forth had an unfortunate influence on Ludwig's mental condition, as well as greatly wounding his pride.

Wagner, who had visited Bayreuth in his youth, had preserved a pleasant impression of this town, situated so far from the noise of industry and the distracting influences of the outer world. Returning thither in 1871, a warm friendship sprang up between him and its inhabitants, who wished to keep him in their midst. The Margrave's large theatre had for many years been unused. He agreed with the leading men of the town to take this house, although it was hardly suitable for his purpose. The inhabitants now offered him a building site which must in every way have been attractive to him. His scheme of raising a temple of art in the little town amid the Bavarian mountains was received with delight by his adherents and friends, who did all in their power to support the undertaking. Ludwig also stood by his side, a loyal helper, during the struggle which ensued before his theatre was finally complete. The foundation-stone was laid in 1872. The King telegraphed: "From my inmost soul I express to you, my dearest friend, my warmest and sincerest congratulations on the occasion of this day, which is of import to the whole of Germany. Success and blessing accompany the great work! I am to-day more than ever with you in thought."

Richard Wagner's letters to Emil Heckel give an insight into the immense difficulties which he and his admirers had to overcome. There was in 1873 a money crisis extending over the whole of Germany and Austria. Banks which had promised credit were unable to meet their promises, and this delayed the realisation of his scheme. He had always calculated upon the King's assistance. On the 16th of January he wrote to Heckel that he had requested "his ever-generous protector" to guarantee a loan, but that the latter, for some reason unknown to him, had refused his assistance.—A German poet had written an eulogistic ode in Ludwig's honour and had requested Wagner to set it to music, but the latter, unaware that the King knew the poem, had coldly refused to do this. Ludwig had been offended. He could not, however, long be angry with his friend; already in February in the same year he gave the desired security. The first "Niebelungen-cycle" was given in Bayreuth from the 13th to the 30th of August 1876. It was repeated three times before an enthusiastic audience, among whom were the Emperor of Germany, the Grand Dukes of Weimar and Baden, the Emperor of Brazil, the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia, and many other royal personages, as well as literary and artistic celebrities from all countries.

The King of Bavaria, who was seldom present at anything but separate performances, determined to visit Bayreuth, despite the fact that this would necessitate his appearing in public. He drove direct from Chiemsee to his hunting-box outside the town. Only Wagner was there to receive him. He met his old friend with warmth, and bade him seat himself beside him in the carriage. Although he made a detour each evening in order to avoid the crowd, he was, both inside and outside the theatre, the object of enthusiastic ovations. He endeavoured to avoid them, but again and again had to come to the front of his box and bow his acknowledgments. He looked ill and depressed. Wagner was the only person with whom he conversed, but he paid no visit to his private residence, and he left Bayreuth unattended and as quietly as he had come.

The German, French, and English press took up a cool attitude with regard to the festival. It could not be denied that it had been great and successful, but it was said that the "Ring" was long. The performances showed a deficit of 16,000 marks.

The poet-musician was in the greatest straits for money. His friends advised him again to address himself to the King. It was his opinion, however, that he had already taken greater advantage of his protector's generosity than he ought to have done. As he saw no other way of paying his debts, he sold the "Ring," on which he had worked for nearly thirty years, and which the theatre at Bayreuth had been built for, to a theatre agent. Hard as the sale must have been to him, it helped him over his difficulties. The "Ring" made a triumphal progress across the chief stages of Germany. Divergent art tendencies were agreed in admiration of his work, and his name shone with greater lustre than before. Since that time enthusiastic hosts of listeners have made pilgrimages from all parts of Europe and America to the little town, to do homage to the great poet-composer and his works.

With the lapse of years Ludwig's admiration for his person had somewhat cooled, and during the visits to Bayreuth no trace had been visible of his earlier enthusiastic attachment. But if the friendship no longer had the warmth of youth it was by no means dead. In the year 1879 Wagner wrote to Emil Heckel of a "kind letter which the King had sent him." The master's

works had taken deep root in the King's mind. In 1881 he became the patron of the Bayreuth festival. He ordered that the orchestra and chorus of the Hof Theater should be for two months in the year at the disposal of Richard Wagner. In 1882, when *Parsifal* was given for the first time, he expressed a wish for a private performance at which he could be present unnoticed. He changed his mind, however, at the last moment, perhaps because the German Crown Prince was to be among the audience. Some time afterwards *Parsifal* was played in Munich, with the assistance of the same artists who had sung at Bayreuth. After the first rehearsals of this opera had taken place Wagner wrote a treatise in letter form on his person and works, which he sent to Ludwig. It began with the following words:—

"I will not write another note. My work is complete! I have successfully and victoriously accomplished my mission, despite the hostile onrush of a world of opponents." This was one of the last letters from the composer-poet to this King, who had been to him more than a friend.

The poet-musician used every year to visit Munich, where his protector received him with unchanged kindness. In 1882 he came thither for the last time. He requested as usual an audience of the King, but Ludwig begged to be excused from receiving him, as he was indisposed. On the 13th of February, 1883, Richard Wagner died at Venice. Five thousand telegrams were sent to all parts of the world to announce the ill tidings. One of the first came to Ludwig. He violently reproached himself for not having received him. One of his aides-de-camp went on his behalf to Venice to lay a wreath of Alpine roses on the composer's coffin. A special train brought the deceased, his widow, and a number of friends to Bayreuth. At the frontier the King's secretary was waiting to accompany the coffin and show the last honour to the poet-musician.

Music, which before had been Ludwig's greatest joy, was from this time forth not permitted at any of his castles, because it so painfully reminded him of the friend of his youth. All the pianos on which he had played were draped with crape. The dead man's works still had such an effect on him that after every performance of *Parsifal* he caused a Mass to be said in his

castle. And after the King's death, busts, portraits, and other mementos of Richard Wagner were found everywhere in his favourite rooms.

CHAPTER XXVII

King Ludwig and the Artists of the Stage and Canvas

A French journalist who saw Ludwig II. in his youth, has said: "His beauty belongs to the romantic type. His dark eyes are dreamy and full of enthusiasm. His handsome face, elegant personality, and dignified bearing at once win admiration and sympathy. He is in possession of all the graces of youth, its illusions and enthusiasm; but at the same time he offers an example of that need for change which belongs to youth. His subjects look upon him as a fool. They are mistaken: he is only foolish on one point—namely, where music is in question."

The King passionately loved Wagner's operas. Concerts, on the other hand, he seldom attended, but he often invited opera singers of both sexes to sing at his castles. Shortly after his accession an actor by the name of Emil Rohde was engaged by the Munich Hof Theater, and won in a high degree his Majesty's approval as Don Carlos, Ferdinand in Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*, Max Piccolomini, and Mortimer. Rohde was one of the first artists in whom Ludwig showed particular interest. At the beginning of his sojourn in the Bavarian capital he was often summoned to the Palace. After the first unabridged performance of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* the King sent him the following autograph letter:—

> "Dear Rohde,
>
> "You have surpassed all my expectations. I shall always remember with the greatest delight the beautiful hours which we passed together this winter. Yes, you must come again!
>
> "I remain always your very gracious King,
>
> "Ludwig."

The invitations, however, were not repeated. Ludwig came to have other interests and other favourites.

The tenor, Franz Ignaz Nachbaur, was showered with proofs of favour. He had begun his career as a chorus singer, but a Swiss art mæcena had caused him to be educated under Lamperti at Milan. In 1868 he received an invitation to appear as Walther von Stolzing in the *Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He was not, as a matter of fact, a very intelligent singer; but he surpassed all his colleagues by his exceedingly handsome exterior, and by the pure tenor tones of his voice. Ludwig appointed him chamber singer. After every new *rôle* he sent him handsome presents, among other things a Lohengrin equipment of wrought silver, and a number of diamond pins and rings. Nachbaur, who was in the habit of exhibiting them with childlike delight, was in consequence given the soubriquet of "Brilliant Nazzi."

In addition to Wagner's musical works, the King took pleasure in hearing Lortzing's, Kreutzer's, Verdi's, and Halévy's operas. The day after he had been present for the first time at Halévy's opera, *Guido et Guivera*, he sent for Nachbaur, and, to the astonishment of the artist, though he had never set eyes on the music, sang through the whole of the great *aria*. When he had finished, he said: "Will you now be good enough to sing the air for me? I should like to know if I have sung it right." On one occasion, when Nachbaur was ill, Ludwig wrote to him: "Take care of yourself. Do it for your family's sake and to preserve your divine voice. Do it, too, for my sake. I ask it of you, I, the King, who otherwise am not wont to ask." On another occasion he wrote to him: "We are both opposed to all that is meretricious and bad, and we glow with holy enthusiasm for everything that is lofty and pure. We will, therefore, all our lives be faithful and sincere friends." The singer Vogel, likewise, often received commands to wait upon his Majesty at a certain hour of the night. He had to sing an air to him, and was thereafter driven back to his home. The King had been a fine rider, and as a young man he had ridden straight and undaunted on his favourite horse. This horse he now presented to the opera singer Frau Vogel. Every time she appeared as Brunhilde in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* she rode it when she made her daring leaps into the flames. During a performance when Possart and Frau Ramlo exchanged rings, the King sent them two diamond rings, which they were instructed to wear on the stage and keep in remembrance of him.

He spared indeed neither gifts nor distinctions in the case of actors and singers who won his favour. Gold watches and chains, brilliants, bracelets, brooches were sent to them from the *Kaiserloge* as signs of approval. During the latter years of his life, however, he showed more reserve in his intercourse with artists, and also, on the whole, spoke less often with persons with whom he was not already acquainted.

Towards the painters to whom he gave orders he was likewise, as a rule, very friendly. With regard to these also, as where scenic art was concerned, he inexorably demanded that everything must be reproduced with historical faithfulness. An error of etiquette in a picture he blamed as severely as if it had been committed in his presence. Heinrich von Pechmann had been commissioned to paint a picture representing the *Lever de Marie de Antoinette*. Although the general effect of the composition was very pleasing, the King returned it with the message that "ladies-in-waiting did not fan themselves, nor did they converse with the gentlemen of the court in the Queen's presence." Moreover, he wished to see among those depicted the composer Gluck, who was at that time attached to the French court. The artist Ille had been commanded by Ludwig to paint five large pictures with subjects from the legend of "Lohengrin," which it was intended should be hung at Hohenschwangau. "The King would be glad to see the Emperor's carriage altered," wrote Ludwig's secretary to him on the subject; "but he will not, however, make it a command against your artistic convictions. Unless rendered impossible by technical difficulties or the text of the poem, the King would also like to see the morning or evening sun shining upon the Archangel Michael. Furthermore, I am to ask you to consider whether the swan's head is not too large, and if its breast, which is resting on the water, is not too weak? The King has, I may explain, from his earliest youth been familiar with the appearance of these birds." Ille made the required alterations, and received a fine diamond ring as an expression of the King's satisfaction.

Ludwig spent many hours daily in the study of literature, and invariably took books with him on his mountain excursions. When he travelled, a trunk was filled with a careful selection of works from his favourite authors. As Crown Prince he had had no opportunity of receiving instruction at a

college or of acquiring information and experience by sojourns in foreign lands; but by self-study he became at an early age a well-informed man. He thoroughly studied countless scientific works; and when he felt himself drawn towards an author he read everything that writer had produced. Nor was the author's personality and private life indifferent to him. If the latter was still alive the King would give orders that information should be procured for him as to his pecuniary and other conditions; and were he poor, Ludwig would very often afford him generous assistance in the most unostentatious manner.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Private Performances at the Hof Theater at Munich

The Bavarians were in general inclined to forgive their King's peculiarities. A single weakness, however, they found it difficult to condone: they did not like his habit of commanding private performances at the theatre, of which he was the only witness.

Although Ludwig covered all the expenses, his private performances at the Hof Theater became so unpopular that his Ministers felt themselves constrained to make a protest against them. The blame for this taste was laid upon Wagner, the charge being based on the fact that the poet-musician had arranged (1865) a concert in the Hof Theater at which the King had been the sole audience. More probable is it, however, that his pleasure in them was awakened little by little, as he was in the habit of driving in from his castles in the mountain districts to be present at the various dress rehearsals.

From time to time he would cause translations or adaptations of French plays from Louis XIV.'s time to be made and played for him alone. Later he transferred his attention to Louis XV.'s time. In his latter years he caused several historical pieces to be produced, of which the subjects were taken from the legends relating to Hohenschwangau. The first private performance took place in 1871, the last towards the end of 1885. In the course of these fourteen seasons he was present at two hundred and ten performances, of which forty-five were operas.[1] Until and including 1878 there were never given more than twelve private performances in each season. In 1879 the number rose to twenty, and in 1883 to twenty-five performances. Everything that was played for the King alone was artistically perfect.

The actress Charlotte Wolther, who played in the last *Narcisz* performance of 1885, has written her impressions of that evening:

“His Majesty had ordered that the representation should begin at twelve o’clock at night, she tells us. All that was to be seen through the peephole was the brightly lighted proscenium. Absolute silence reigned; even the workmen wore felt slippers. At the stroke of twelve a bell was rung; the King was leaving the Palace. He passed along the corridor to his great box. A new ringing of the bell announced that he had entered it, and immediately the curtain rose! The singer became the victim of a nervous trembling, and required all her presence of mind to perform her part before a single witness, at such a strange time, and in such romantic stillness....”

Many stories of doubtful veracity were circulated with regard to these theatre evenings. French, Russian, and American journalists depicted them in fantastic colours. The American humorist Mark Twain wrote amusingly of them; and his accounts won general credence on both sides of the Atlantic! “The opera concluded, and the artists having washed the paint off their faces, they are frequently ordered to re-dress, and singers and orchestra have to go through the opera a second time for the King,” he writes in one of his books. “There is in the great Hof Theater an apparatus which, in case of fire, can put the whole stage under water. A violent storm was represented at one of these private performances. The theatre tempest howled, the thunder rolled. In a loud voice Ludwig shouted from his box: ‘Good, very good! But I want real rain. Let the water flow!’ The scene-shifter ventured to demur, representing that the decorations, no less than the silk and velvet curtains, would be destroyed. ‘Never mind,’ said the King; ‘do as I bid you!’ The water poured out over the stage, over the artificial flowers and houses. The singers were drenched; they put a bold face on it, and sang away bravely. The King applauded, and shouted ‘Bravo! More thunder, more lighting!’ he ordered. ‘Bad luck to him who dares to leave the stage!’”

Needless to say, Mark Twain’s story was entirely the creation of his own brain; Ludwig laughed heartily when the description was read aloud to him. And yet the citizens of Munich were no less credulous on this point than the American public. They thought, among other things, that the King wrote his own plays; and they declared that his private performances raised the taxation of the country.

[1] Among other pieces which were performed privately in 1872 were: *Comtesse du Barry*, *Le Comte de Saint Germain*, *Un Ministre sous Louis XV*.

From 1872–77 not a single opera was performed privately; but in 1878 he heard Verdi's *Aïda*, with Wagner's *Siegfrid-idyl* as the introduction. In 1879 he caused *Der Ring des Niebelungen* to be performed four times in succession. In 1880 he heard Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and Verdi's *Aïda*. In 1881 Gluck's *Iphegenie auf Tauris*, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and Weber's *Oberon*. In 1882 Gluck's *Armida*, Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Lohengrin*, and Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*. In 1883 *Der Ring des Niebelungen*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*. In 1884 *Tristan und Isolde*, and six times *Parsifal*. Besides this were given at his command *Die Stumme von Portici*, by Auber, and again Gluck's *Armida*. In 1885, in the month of April, he heard *Parsifal* three times. Of plays he saw this year Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, Sardou's *Theodora*, Brachvogel's *Narcisz*, and several pieces by Carl von Heigel, a gifted Bavarian writer who for a number of years wrote and adapted dramatic works for the King's private performances. ↑

CHAPTER XXIX

King Ludwig and his Palaces

Ludwig I. sacrificed millions of guldens in order to beautify his capital with structures in the antique and Renaissance styles.

Ludwig II. inherited his grandfather's love of building. Writing to his son, King Otto of Greece, at Christmas 1852, Ludwig I. says: "When the Christmas presents were distributed, Ludwig was given some wooden bricks with which to construct a triumphal arch. I saw buildings by him which were excellent. I find a striking likeness between the future Ludwig II. and the politically defunct Ludwig I.!" He was at that time only seven years of age. At eleven he drew the plan of a hunting-box, which was to be built at Hintersee, in the vicinity of Berchtesgaden. The lodge was not built; but both his grandfather and Queen Maria were astonished at his early-developed gift. This drawing was given a place in his mother's album.

Until he had completed his eighteenth year Ludwig had never any money in his hands: a few months after his eighteenth birthday he became the possessor of a yearly income of many millions of guldens. His riches appeared inexhaustible to him, and he thought it an easy matter to realise all his dreams.

The summer mansions of Berg and Herzogenstand which he had inherited from his father, even his favourite place of residence, Hohenschwangau, no longer satisfied him. It was his intention to build a new castle in the neighbourhood of the latter, high up on a rocky site. The foundation-stone of Neuschwanstein was laid in 1869. Of the various castles built by Ludwig this is the one which is the most satisfactory in the impression it affords. From whatever side the spectator sees it, the effect is beautiful and imposing. There is no trace in it of the insane lavishness, and, on the whole, of the inartistic conception which is strikingly evident in the palaces of Linderhof and Chiemsee.

Neuschwanstein is in pure Romanesque style. The interior is decorated with pictures from German hero legends and songs. They represent the *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* legends, the *Niebelungenlied* and *Parsifal*, and are conceived and executed in an artistic spirit. After the conclusion of the Franco-German war, building became the thought in Ludwig's mind round which all others revolved. He occupied himself with the smallest details in the construction of his castles, and gave exact descriptions as to how the different apartments were to be decorated. He procured, with much trouble from foreign countries, copies of objects of art which were inaccessible to others. King Maximilian had a hunting-box in the vicinity of Ober-Ammergau; here his son built the fantastic fairy château of Linderhof, himself drawing the plans and carefully studying works on the various styles of architecture. During the building he continually had new ideas, and was seized with a desire to change parts of the building. Despite his sure eye for general effects, he had no idea as to the manner in which the building should be executed. In order to ascertain how the mansion would look when complete, he caused walls to be built and resorted to other radical expedients, which necessitated a considerable increase of expenditure and eventually led to his financial ruin. The foundation-stone of Linderhof was laid in 1869. It was not till ten years later that it approached completion. The mansion is not large, nor does it give the impression of being in any particular style. It contains ten reception-rooms of different sizes and shapes, in which there are collected a multitude of objects, oil paintings and pastel drawings. The furniture is partly of rosewood. The richly-carved doors and walls are gilded. On gilded consoles stand Japanese and Chinese porcelain, majolica, and works in bronze, as well as some magnificent old Dresden china. The silver-gilt domestic utensils are studded with precious stones. The material with which the furniture is upholstered, the curtains and *portières*, are all of heavy velvet and silk with gold embroideries. In the big drawing-rooms the chandeliers and candelabra are of massive gold. This magnificence is reflected by several hundred large mirrors.

The building is surrounded by gardens and terraces. Busts and statues of Greek gods stand on high pillars among the trees in the shrubberies. In Ludwig's lifetime a fountain threw its jets of water a hundred and fifty feet

into the air. Close by Linderhof lies “The Blue Grotto,” a copy of the grotto at Capri, and the “Hunding-Hütte,” which was built at Richard Wagner’s desire. King Maximilian’s hunting-lodge was moved, but an old lime-tree which had stood close by was allowed to retain its place. A stair led up into the branches of the tree where a summer-house had been constructed from which there was a fine view of the surrounding country. When Ludwig was at Linderhof, he spent many hours of his day in this tree.

As time went on he became absorbed in the art period of Louis XIV. He built the enormous Schloss Herrenchiemsee, which is a copy of Versailles and which swallowed many millions of guldens, although it was never brought to completion. At the time when he drew the plan of this palace his passion for building was no longer a fancy which he could tame, but the outcome of a diseased brain, where the power of will and judgment was impaired. He went, impelled by his building operations, several journeys to France. His stay was on each occasion of very short duration; the feverish disquiet which drove him thither drove him back again almost as quickly. Hardly a year after the days when Versailles had echoed to the cheers of the German Princes for the newly elected Emperor, he went, without giving his Ministers the slightest hint of his intention, in strictest incognito to Paris. He spent several days at Versailles. The following year he returned there once more, this time visiting in addition the town of Rheims, the seat of the coronation of the Kings of France.

Chiemsee, called also “the Bavarian sea,” surrounds three islands: Herrenchiemsee, Frauenchiemsee, and the uninhabited Krautinsel. Herrenchiemsee, or “Herrenwörth,” was originally a monastery, which at the time of their suppression went over into private hands. In 1868 it was in the possession of some business men, who sold it to King Ludwig. He chose the island as the site of his Versailles. The King’s advisers raised objections, but these only aroused his defiance. He sent off experts to study the subject, and threw himself heart and soul into the undertaking. Eight years, however, passed before the plans were completed. Herrenchiemsee consists of an intermediate building three hundred feet in length, and of two wings surrounding a quadrangle, the latter being entirely paved with black and white marble. Everywhere in the palace there are pictures of the Kings

and Queens of France, and the *fleurs-de-lys* of the Bourbons. The sixteen living apartments are named after the rooms to which they answer at Versailles. The finest of these is the mirror gallery, which is about 250 feet long, 35 feet broad, and 40 feet high. Piercing one of the walls are 27 lofty arched windows, and on the other a similar number of large mirrors. Two-and-fifty candelabra of gold and 35 chandeliers provide space for 2500 wax candles.

It was but for few nights that this sea of light burned in honour of Ludwig II. and his imaginary guests from the time of the French Kings. From the year 1881 he arrived regularly at Herrenchiemsee on the 29th of September and remained there till the 8th of October, inhabiting the first years of this period the so-called royal apartments in a neighbouring monastery, which could easily have been changed into an agreeable place of residence had the King had thoughts for anything but the new palace. He was in the habit of arriving at midnight. The railway station was near the banks of the lake. A beautiful gondola, which was used for no other purpose, was waiting to take him across to the island; it was rowed by two men in Neapolitan costume. When the King came he examined everything; on one occasion, by way of example, he discovered that some groups of statuary in the park were of plaster instead of marble, as he had ordered, and he became so angry that he broke them in pieces.

Linderhof, Neuschwanstein, and Herrenchiemsee, on which he sacrificed so much time and thought, and which caused his financial ruin, have been later the means of paying his debts. The veil of mystery which surrounded his person rested likewise as long as he lived over his residences. But after his death these objects of his pride, so jealously guarded by him from profane eyes, became accessible to the public. They are considered, and rightly so, as sights of the first order. Thousands of visitors yearly, from all countries, admire the edifices of the splendour-loving King.

CHAPTER XXX

King Ludwig's Friendships

At the time of Ludwig's first visit to Paris, Cora Pearl, noted alike for her beauty and her frivolity, sent the young King her portrait. None of his suite dared to present it to him, it being known that he was not attracted by women. At Hohenschwangau, a year later, he received his secretary with the following words:—"I have seen your wife to-day!" The secretary bowed in silence, being uncertain what this utterance might mean. "I have seen your wife to-day!" repeated the King in his severest tone. The secretary now realised the significance of the words addressed to him, and respectfully assured his Majesty that he would see that such a thing should not occur again.

The King's dislike of the fair sex could not otherwise than cause it to be hinted that his emotional life was not normal, a rumour strengthened by the warm interest which he exhibited in several men. The Hungarian writer, Maurus Jókai, has related in private circles how in his youth he received a letter from an unknown person offering him riches and marks of honour, everything which a powerful master is in a position to offer, if he would leave his country and his family and live entirely for an unhappy and lonely man. The novelist would not break the ties which bound him to his home and his native land; but he ever retained a deep feeling of sympathy for the writer of the letter.

Ludwig's need for solitude was, without doubt, the result of enigmatical depths in his nature. As a youth he had suspected, and as a man of riper years he felt, that it was impossible for him to be otherwise than a recluse and a stranger in life. Despite his high position, despite his beauty and gifts of mind, he was in his inward self helpless and tired of existence. His friendship for Richard Wagner was the bright spot in his life. He had believed in the incense with which the master in the first hours of sincere gratitude had surrounded his protector. But Wagner's proud affection was something very different from the flattery which met him from courtiers

and his later favourites, who crawled in the dust to promote their own welfare. His favour and affection came as unexpectedly on the recipient as his distaste and contempt for them—his feelings, which found an outlet in autograph letters, exaggerated expressions, and gifts, not continuing for any length of time.

At the outbreak of the Franco-German war he was hardly five and twenty years of age. It was at this time that his abnormal mental condition began to be remarked; but prior to this there had been signs which pointed in the same direction. He had from childhood been particularly attracted by good-looking faces. On his accession he pensioned off his father's old servants, and surrounded himself exclusively with young and handsome men. One of his grooms, Joseph Völkl, was during the years 1864 and 1865 the holder of a much-envied position at court, accompanying the King on his journeys to Switzerland and being allowed to sit in the same carriage with his Majesty. By degrees, however, Völkl grew arrogant, and spoke of his master without respect. Ludwig came to know of this fact, and degraded him instantly. The former continued, however, to spread unseemly gossip about, and the matter coming to the ears of the Ministry, he was dismissed, and died in great poverty.

The Master of the Horse, Hornig, was later the King's favourite. He was a handsome and well-informed man, with agreeable manners. During the long period of eighteen years he acted as Ludwig's private secretary, and accompanied him on his travels. While Hornig was preparing the details of the journey to Bayreuth, the King was seized with a sudden unwillingness to undertake it, despite the fact that he was the official patron of the festival. He discussed the matter constantly with the Master of the Horse, without, however, being able to make up his mind. The latter was of opinion that it would create unpleasant remark if the King sent a sudden refusal to be present. In the heat of conversation he exclaimed: "Your Majesty! it would make us laughable if we did such a thing!" Ludwig was so much annoyed at this "us" and "we," that Hornig lost his favour from that day. After his dismissal the royal quartermaster-sergeant, Hesselschwerdt, took his place. In spite of a poor education he performed his duties to the King's satisfaction, amusing him, and often disarming his violence by gross

untruths, which Ludwig forgave, although he was not deceived by them. He remained in the King's service until the end of his reign.

With the exception of Richard Wagner all the King's so-called friends suffered from his caprices. The secluded life he led gave him the time in which to brood over every little utterance which had displeased him. His rancour was, as a rule, deep, and his grudges lasting. The two last cabinet secretaries, Dr von Ziegler and Dr von Müller, were both for a time his pronounced favourites. Even in his last years he understood how to fascinate others, and was able to master and hide his mental sufferings. Ziegler, who was possessed of a jovial and happy disposition, had a good influence on him; and he spoke with admiration and respect of Ludwig's nobility of mind. The secretary's retirement in 1883 was greatly regretted.

From this day forward Ludwig associated almost exclusively with his domestics. Even his equerries and the secretary were but occasionally received by their master. Several years before his death one of his warmest admirers, the Chamberlain von Unger, said of him: "The man who ceases to associate with educated women becomes coarse; but when, in addition, he avoids association with educated men, he is wholly and entirely lost!"

CHAPTER XXXI

The Actor Kainz

Joseph Kainz, the actor, who was later so celebrated, had, at the beginning of the eighties, an engagement at Munich; he was then twenty-three years of age. The King saw him for the first time in Victor Hugo's *Marion de Lorme*, in which he played the part of the homeless Didier. His unusually sonorous voice, his lofty glance, and the passionate warmth of his acting captivated Ludwig, who the same evening caused to be delivered to him a valuable sapphire ring. Kainz thanked him in a letter full of fire. In an autograph letter, dated the 1st of May, 1881, his Majesty assured him of his friendly feelings, and of his sincere and hearty wishes for his welfare. He added: "Continue as you have begun, in your arduous and difficult but beautiful and honourable calling.[1]"

Marion de Lorme was repeated as a separate performance on the 4th and the 10th of May, and on each occasion Kainz received a new present from the King. Wishing to know him personally Ludwig summoned him to Schloss Linderhof, where he received him with charming affability. He kept him with him for two whole weeks, making excursions with him and treating him as a friend. During the first meeting the actor had been somewhat reserved and formal; but after they had been a few days together all shyness departed from his side, and Ludwig even permitted him to address him as *du*. The actor declaimed alternately to and with his Majesty, and their artistic entertainments lasted till late into the night. Kainz was allowed to be present at the private performances. The King undertook to provide for his further education, and corresponded frequently with him. The friendship between the prince and the actor was much talked about and much criticised. "It depresses me greatly when I see that my innocent fancies are trumpeted out before the whole world, and are hatefully criticised," said Ludwig to his new friend. "It has caused me many sad hours. I cannot imagine why I should be grudged my small pleasures, for they do not harm anybody." When on another occasion they were discussing the art of acting, he said: "I guard my ideals anxiously. I do not care to notice small

weaknesses, for I do not like the general harmony to be disturbed." He continued reflectively: "It is the same with regard to actors; I see only the person in the interpreter! The actor who plays a noble part I imagine to be a noble person." Kainz demurred to this, saying that although he did not consider himself a villain, it was his wish to play the part of Franz Moor. "No, no," exclaimed the King eagerly; "you must never represent such a hateful character." He went on to speak of the part of Didier. "When *Marion de Lorme* was repeated," said he, reproachfully, you wore my sapphire ring in the first act. How could the poor, homeless Didier possess such a costly ornament? It offends against the laws of truth." Kainz excused himself on the plea that he had been informed that his Majesty liked his gifts to be honoured, and that it was for this reason he had worn the ring.

The presents which Kainz received from the King were particularly valuable, and none of the parts he played went unrewarded. One evening as he was about to take his departure, having already one foot in the carriage, Ludwig took his studs from his cuffs and handed them to him as a parting gift. He had his own room allotted to him at Linderhof, and he was permitted to drive alone with his royal friend. The marks of favour which were so abundantly showered upon the young hero of the theatre proved to be too much for him, and he became very injudicious. At first Ludwig looked upon his brutality as the outcome of his love for truth. "How good it is to hear the unvarnished truth!" he said to Councillor Bürckel. The latter, who knew the new favourite better, answered shortly: "Your Majesty! truth and impertinence are two different things!"

The King desired to make a journey to Spain in company with the actor,[2] but was obliged to abandon the plan because Bürckel, who had the arrangement of the trip, represented to him that the time of year was unfavourable. "It is a pity," said he; "I have a far greater desire to see Spain than Italy, which has no attractions for me. But now when I am about to satisfy my longing, Bürckel comes with his objections; the propriety of which I cannot but acknowledge." "Bürckel, however, is only an adviser," observed Kainz; "your Majesty is lord and master!" "Yes," sighed Ludwig, "but it is not always so easy to be King as it appears to be." "If it is difficult to your Majesty you can give up the sceptre into other hands," remarked the

actor. The answer displeased the King, who rose to his feet, thus giving the actor a hint that he must be more careful in the use of his expressions.

The recollection of earlier visits to Switzerland entered his mind; he was taken with the desire to see again that idyllic land, and the places associated according to tradition with William Tell. On the 25th of June he wrote to Kainz:

> "Your dear letter, by which I see how much you are looking forward to our journey to Switzerland, has given me great pleasure. It increases very considerably my own delight at the days I hope to enjoy with you in that beautiful country. The nearer the time approaches the more exercised does the good Bürckel seem to become. He bombards me with the most extraordinary announcements and suggestions, proposing now that I should take a noble gentleman-in-waiting with me. If it is not possible for us to do without such a person, which, however, cannot possibly be the case, I would rather give up the whole journey. It is necessary to avoid the stream of tourists there, and their tactless obtrusiveness.
>
> "It is to be hoped that we can get a habitable private house on the shores of the classic lake.
>
> "... I have still much to arrange, and therefore hasten to conclude.
>
> "A thousand hearty greetings, beloved brother, precious Didier, from your friendly,
>
> "LUDWIG
> "(Saverny)."

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1 Kainz was born in Hungary. He had appeared in Leipzig and Meiningen before he came to Munich. ↑

2 Ludwig made few journeys; he was three times in Switzerland, three times in Paris, also at Versailles and Rheims. On one occasion he visited Wartburg. At a later date it was his intention to go by way of Reichenhall and Saltzburg to Vienna, in order to visit the Emperor and Empress of Austria; but he turned back at Salzburg. The greater number of his journeys within the limits of Bavaria were to Berg, Linderhof Chiemsee, and Neuschwanstein. ↑

CHAPTER XXXII

A Journey to Switzerland

In order to avoid remark, Ludwig had decided that his special train should pick him up at ten o'clock in the evening, on the 27th of June, at the station of Mühlthal, near Starnberg. He intended to travel as the Marquis de Saverny; Kainz was to go with him as his friend Didier.

According to the orders which he had received, and at the appointed hour, the actor duly made his appearance at the little railway station. The country lay in deep stillness as the royal train, without a signal or the ringing of a bell, glided up to the platform. Immediately afterwards the King's spirited team dashed up. Ludwig jumped out of his equipage and stepped into the railway carriage, which, besides a sleeping compartment, contained a saloon in which were easy-chairs, sofas, and a table laid for supper. The train moved off into the darkness of the night as silently as it had come.

One of the King's stewards, a native of Switzerland, had gone on in advance to engage a suite of rooms at the Grand Hotel at Axenstein, near Brunnen. Unfortunately, the King's arrival in Switzerland became known. People hurried from all directions to catch a glimpse of the "romanticist on the throne." When he approached Brunnen on board the steamer *Italia*, the banks were covered with spectators. Ludwig was incapable of repressing his displeasure, which increased the more when he discovered that all the houses along the banks of the lake were decorated with flags in his honour. "It is swarming with people here. I wish to live unknown and alone for myself!" he exclaimed. At the landing-stage the hotel carriage was standing with four horses harnessed to it; and some members of the Swiss police were also discovered to be drawn up for his reception. This was too much for the shy Monarch. "I will certainly not go ashore here," he cried. "I will not make myself a sacrifice to ovations." He let the steamer go on to Flüelen. On the return trip he made inquiries as to whether there were not some other locality than Brunnen where he might be put ashore. The captain mentioned a little place in the neighbourhood, and shaped a course

for it. Hardly was this discovered at Brunnen than the whole mass of people set off towards it. The landing-stage was thickly covered with a crowd which received him with marks of delight. Handkerchiefs were waved, and shouts of hurrah filled the air as his majestic form strode through the ranks. He answered the greetings of the people with affability. “I must confess,” he said, after he was seated in the carriage, “that after all, this warm welcome has given me pleasure, for it shows well the mind of these good people.” He was deeply touched by the magnificent scenery, and his face beamed; but hardly had he noticed the numbers of strangers who continued to press round his carriage than he began to lose heart again.

He walked up and down in his rooms at the hotel, saying again and again: “This is a hotel and not a castle; I will not remain here!” A few days later he took the villa “Guttenberg,” whence he made many excursions in the neighbourhood. The cantonal government placed a steamer at his disposal, and this he very often used. Kainz recited to him in the beautiful moonlight nights, and from the banks of the lake of Lucerne he heard the joyous Swiss peasant songs. His friendly manner won much sympathy in the neighbourhood. One Sunday seven pretty young Swiss girls announced themselves at his villa; they had come to ask him for money in order to go to America. As he was not at home one of them requested some writing materials, after which, in a bright and original manner, she penned the wishes of herself and her friends. The letter was laid before the King, who was greatly amused at it. He answered, however, that he loved and honoured the Swiss people far too well for him to be a party to the leaving of it of seven of its most charming daughters.

It is said that the Swiss people gave utterance to the following sentiment: “If we had to elect a king for ourselves, our choice could not fall on any other than Ludwig II. of Bavaria.”

He had a great affection for and visited often the beautiful Rütli, the spot where the ancient Swiss took their oath of allegiance. Kainz accompanied him thither, and they spent hours together at the view, where the young actor would recite the Rütli song:

"Sei, Rütli, mir freundlich gegrüsset,
Du stilles Gelände am See,
Wo spielend die Welle zerfliesset,
Genährt vom ewigen Schnee!

Gepriessen sei, friedliche Stätte,
Gepriessen sei, heiliges Land,
Wo sprengten des Sklaventums Kette
Die Väter mit kräftiger Hand.

Da standen die Väter zusammen
Für Freiheit und heimisches Gut
Und schwuren beim heiligsten Namen,
Zu stürzen die Zwingherrenbrut!"

They went almost every evening to a neighbouring inn where they partook of a meal, the King being exceedingly modest in his demands, and not even requiring dinner-napkins or a tablecloth. He was in the habit of talking much to the landlord, whom he liked to give him information as to the mode of life of the Swiss peasantry.

The King's relations with Kainz became somewhat cooler on the former's side towards the end of their stay in Switzerland. One evening at Rütli Ludwig asked him to recite something from Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*. The actor was willing to do this, but put it off till later. At two in the morning Ludwig repeated his request, when Kainz replied that he was too tired to recite anything. Ludwig looked at him a moment in astonishment and was silent. At last he said: "Oh, you are tired, are you? Rest, then!" and turning on his heel walked away.

Hesselschwerdt and the landlord went with him to the steamer. When they were on board the landlord said: "Herr Marquis, Herr Didier has not yet come!" "Let him rest," answered Ludwig; "we will go on."

Kainz had himself rowed across to Brunnen, but the King had left when he arrived there. The actor followed him to Lucerne, and prayed

Hesselschwerdt to announce him to the King. The former returned and said that his Majesty would receive him in the garden, if he did not wish to make up for his lost night's rest. Ludwig appeared shortly afterwards. Kainz made several excuses, which the King interrupted, assuring him that he was glad to see him again, and that he regretted his own want of spirits. Although Ludwig treated him with familiarity, his extreme sense of self-esteem could not endure that a seemly line of demarcation should be passed by his young friend.

After the return from Switzerland he did not invite him again; nor did he ever again witness any performance of his on the stage, but for a short space of time he continued to carry on a correspondence with the actor. His last letter, in which he thanks Kainz for good wishes which the latter had sent him, concludes with the following words:—

> "Probably Didier sometimes thinks kindly of his Saverny. My hearty greetings to you. All good spirits bless you. This is wished you with all his heart by your friendly,
>
> "LUDWIG.
>
> "The Swiss châlet at Hohenschwangau, the 31st July, 1881, at night."

Shortly afterwards Kainz was dismissed from the Hof Theater at Munich. As long as the King lived he hoped to be recalled; but the hope was not destined to be fulfilled. When, later, Ludwig heard him spoken of he would abruptly change the topic of conversation; and when he read his name in the newspaper would lay the latter aside, or throw it into the waste-paper basket.

Kainz's conduct proved that he had been unworthy of his friendship; nobody perhaps abused his confidence more than he did. The King had hardly drawn his last breath before the young actor sold all his letters to a Berlin newspaper. Ludwig had in these letters allowed him to glance into his inward life, and their publication immediately after the benefactor's death was not only unseemly but heartless. The general opinion of his conduct is expressed in the following verse:—

“Hat Ludwig dir in königlicher Grösse
Gezeigt des Herzens Tiefen ohne Scheu.
Du warst gewiss, da du sie bloss jetzt legest,
Dem todten, hohen Freunde wenig treu.”

CHAPTER XXXIII

King Ludwig and his Servants

The friend of Ludwig's childhood, Count Holnstein, had made himself well-nigh indispensable at the Bavarian court; and in order further to increase his power he had filled the situations of personal attendance on the King with soldiers of light horse belonging to his own regiment. This system was abetted by the Master of the Horse, Hornig. The greater number of the grooms engaged by him knew nothing of the formalities demanded by a court, even though that court was a recluse's and the King an eccentric. Before they entered on their duties they were accordingly instructed in deportment by the royal ballet-master, and taught propriety of speech and elocution by the court actors.

These inexperienced soldiers were now set to wait upon a selfish and exacting Monarch, to serve him at meals in proper fashion, and to assist him at his toilet, although they hardly knew the names of the articles in his daily use. Their helplessness, which is easily to be understood, called forth violent outbreaks of temper on the King's side, and several times he allowed himself to be so carried away that he lay hands on them. Upon occasion he struck them with his riding-whip, and it is said that he once emptied his teapot over the back of one of his lacqueys. He had an unreasoning dislike of plain faces. One of his father's confidential servants displeased him so much in his childhood by his unattractive appearance that he always turned away when the man entered the room, although he knew that his action caused Maximilian great annoyance. Nevertheless his personal footman, Mayr, who managed to stay with him longer than any other servant, had an exterior which was extremely displeasing to him. His face alarmed him; and he ordered for long periods at a time that he should appear before him in a mask when waiting upon him at meals. Ludwig could not endure this man, and often said that he had a premonition that Mayr would bring him bad luck. Nevertheless he could not do without him, the lacquey understanding well how to please his master. On the forehead of another footman, who was often guilty of one or other piece of clumsiness,

the King placed a seal of wax, and he was forbidden to enter the presence without this sign of his stupidity.

Although Ludwig's servants suffered from his irritable temper, he was at other times a far too lenient master, heaping his subordinates with presents and marks of favour when he felt he had done them an injustice; and when he found it necessary to send one away always providing for his future. One of his personal attendants became seriously ill. Ludwig visited him and found his home without any of the conveniences of life. He asked him why he did not move to a better and more healthy place. The sick man answered that his means would not allow of it. The same day he sent him a present of a considerable sum of money, and later raised his wages.

Every year, on Twelfth Night, he was in the habit of giving a servant's ball at his hunting-box, Pleckenau. It has been said that each of these festivities cost him 40,000 marks, although the gifts he had distributed did not consist of anything of greater value than eatables and beverages. All classes of his servants were his guests; the whole day was spent in festivity. The King amused himself by looking on at their enjoyment; and it is said sometimes took part in their amusements. This, as well as several other assertions regarding his private life, are an exaggeration and not in conformity with the truth. An incredible spirit of indifference reigned in the household; his subordinates abused his kindness and enriched themselves in a simply astounding manner. One of his servants, when in a state of intoxication, shot a workman; the care of the latter in the castle was paid for out of Ludwig's purse, although the occurrence was hid from his Majesty, it being known that otherwise he would certainly have dismissed and punished his servant. While the "Most Gracious" was living in his world of dreams, taking heed for nothing, his servants amused themselves the livelong night.

The King refused all permission to see over his castles. This proscription, however, was not respected, and without his knowledge relations and friends were continually shown round. Even those who had no connection with the household had only to express a wish, and the servants at once acted against their master's orders. If he heard the noise made by these strangers, those about him understood how to convince him that he was

mistaken; and did he remark strange faces, received for answer that his nearsightedness had deceived him.

He became at last so weary of his surroundings that he gave his orders through closed doors; a scratching at the wall denoted that these orders had been understood. The few of his subordinates who were permitted to enter his presence had to stand bowing low, and refrain from looking at the King. Or again, he would give his orders in writing. He commanded that these papers should be immediately torn up; but his servants nevertheless preserved every line from his hand, and made use of them in due course as weapons against him.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The Mad King

In the most beautiful of the castles built by Ludwig II. there stands near the entrance to the fine concert-room a curious piece of statuary, for the execution of which he himself provided the idea: a palm in the prime of its abundance and strength, laden with golden fruit. At the foot of it is represented a loathsome dragon, with wide-open mouth—a symbol of the inherited malady which was lying in wait for the heavily oppressed Monarch.

In the case of Prince Otto of Bavaria madness had broken out suddenly: in the case of Ludwig it came unnoticed and insidiously, not even the specialists being quite alive to the danger. There can be no doubt that he himself knew that he was periodically insane; but he was determined at any cost to prevent the outside world from seeing him in this condition.

In February 1884 he caused a dentist to be summoned to him. The latter has written down his reminiscences from his visit. The King was exceedingly gracious. He spoke first of the suffering caused him by his teeth. Although he could not bear his servants to look at him he endured this strange dentist for hours, without a look or a word betraying the dislike he must undoubtedly have felt of his presence. When the dentist contradicted him a couple of times he took it with calmness and good-humour. He adduced new reasons for his opinions, and showed admirable self-possession.

With his whole strength he fought to free himself from the fatal web which was being spun closer and closer around him. He sought to keep himself in balance by restless activity, building castles in three different localities. Many of the objects which filled his residences were constructed after his own designs, and he tested them carefully and selected the places where they were to stand.

Ludwig was particularly interested in French literature, and was seized with a violent admiration for the court of Versailles. Louis XIV. became his ideal. At first he contented himself with copying his buildings. Later he endeavoured to imitate his gait, his carriage, and his daily habits. He surrounded himself with pictures of him and his court; he wore cuff-studs on which were *fleurs-de-lys*, and the same emblem was embroidered in gold on chairs, sofas, and cushions in his apartments. He longed to be an absolute autocrat; and the countless books and writings which he perused treating of Louis XIV. provided his distorted imagination with continual food. During the latter years of his life he was completely under the sway of megalomania, thinking that he was receiving visits from and conversing with *le Roi Soleil*. At times he was even under the hallucination that he was that powerful autocrat.

For Marie Antoinette also he cherished a morbid admiration, losing himself in dreams about that unhappy Queen, and causing Masses to be said on the day of her and Louis XVI.'s execution. Round the table in the great dining-hall chairs were placed for the ladies and gentlemen of the French court. At times he believed that they really sat there, and conversed animatedly with them in French. Apt as he often could be in his remarks, he was heard to observe that this society was so agreeable to him because "they came when they were wanted and disappeared at the first hint."

Always solitary, he gave himself up almost entirely to his fantastic whims. When he did not drive out he would spend the night on the lake, or in the brightly-illuminated concert-room of his castle. For some years he cherished a mad scheme of employing a number of detectives to make the round of his kingdom and listen to all they could hear about his person.

His was a curious double nature: to his great sympathy for the republic of Switzerland and the hero of freedom, William Tell, he united the wish for a Bastille, where every person who dared to express a different opinion from his own might be incarcerated for life.

The lattices and walls with which he surrounded his castles show better than all rumour how he avoided his fellow-men. To a learned scientist was

allotted the task of finding a desert island or distant land which might be exchanged for Bavaria, and where the absolutist state which he dreamt of might be established. Although he had such a high opinion of his royal dignity, he forgot it on a thousand occasions; and so much was this the case that at his last court reception in Munich his mother found herself constrained to bring the gathering to an end.

His outbreaks of violence became more frequent; his struggles against the disease weaker. At times everything seemed indifferent to him. At others he heard steps behind him and turned round in fear; but no one was to be seen. He saw reptiles crawling on the floor, but discovered the next moment that the lacquey who obediently stooped to pick the animal up had nothing in his hand. He would endeavour to trick the servant by demanding that he should see things which he himself did not see, and would fall upon him in anger and contempt when he had allowed himself to be betrayed into these subterfuges. When Ludwig drove out he was in the habit of bowing deeply to a particular tree in the wood; and clad in his coronation robes, with his sceptre in his hand, he would also bow respectfully to the statues of the French kings. Several times he caused the snow to be covered with stones, so that in winter he might imagine it to be summer.

But despite all he retained his power of acute observation. He never ceased to a certain degree to think logically and to pursue steadily any act or design. Even during the last years of his life there were days and weeks when he was in full possession of his mental powers.

CHAPTER XXXV

The Last Meeting between Mother and Son

During one of the last winters of his life Ludwig unexpectedly invited his mother to visit him at Neuschwanstein.

For the first two days he fell in with her habits, driving out with her and keeping her company in the evenings. But he soon returned to his usual mode of life. When he said good-night to her he would go for his long solitary drive; and he slept till late in the forenoon as his habit was.

Unluckily this also happened on the day when the Queen-mother was to take her departure. Ludwig had not returned from his drive until the morning hours, and he had not given orders that he should be awakened. His mother's carriage, with the horses harnessed to it, stood waiting for over an hour in the courtyard of the castle, while she herself paced up and down the great hall. Her nervous impatience went over to a fit of anger when he eventually showed himself, and broke like a thunderstorm over the head of her son. An eye-witness has related that she scolded him as if he were still the little Ludwig who used to hold fast to her skirts. What was still worse was that she scolded him in the hearing of all his footmen.

The King kissed his excited mother repeatedly on the hand, begging her to excuse his tardiness. He conducted her respectfully to her carriage, took his seat beside her, and drove with her to the railway station. The mood he was in upon his return indicated the deep resentment he felt at her corrections. This was the last time she visited him; but upon one later occasion he paid her a visit.

The Queen-mother resided for the greater part of the year at Elbingen-Alp, a house more resembling that of a peasant than a royal residence. Reports of her son's unaccountable conduct penetrated frequently to her; and what she suffered during these bitter years may well be imagined. On the 5th of October, 1885, she was residing at Hohenschwangau, the King being then at

Linderhof. It was her sixtieth birthday, and Ludwig was seized with the idea of congratulating her on it in person. At about ten in the evening he arrived at Hohenschwangau. The gates of the castle were locked; on the demand of the porter as to who was without, answer was made that the King desired to speak with his mother. The Queen-mother was in course of preparing to retire; her son's unexpected appearance brought the whole *personnel* of the establishment into commotion. He remained the night at the castle, and dined with Queen Marie and her ladies at Pleckenau the following day.

He was now completely incapable, from want of habit, of carrying on a society conversation. During the whole course of the dinner he did not speak a word to anyone but his mother, and was far more silent than heretofore. His intercourse with the Queen-mother was this time stamped by the greatest affection. After dinner he drove back to Linderhof, his mother accompanying him half way; it was the last bright spot in her life. At the defile, where seven months later the peasantry assembled to liberate their captured King, the mother and son took leave of one another, never to meet again. Half-a-year later the Emperor of Austria earnestly begged Queen Marie to visit Ludwig, and endeavour to induce him to show himself before the world, as alarming rumours were in circulation as to his mental condition. The harassed mother addressed herself in writing to her son, who replied that he would receive her Majesty in three days' time. The period for her departure was fixed, and her equipages and servants despatched to Hohenschwangau; but the latter were informed on their arrival by Ludwig's stablemen that they might go back again. "The Queen will not be admitted to the King," they said; "he is unapproachable to everybody."

Shortly afterwards a telegram was despatched in which it was said that the King greatly regretted that he was prevented by toothache from receiving anybody, and therefore his dear mother likewise.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Pecuniary Distress

Bavaria was distressed and saddened in the spring of 1886. No personal lecture took place any longer before the King. All affairs of state were conducted in writing, and all Ludwig's commands were transmitted through his functionary, Hesselschwerdt.

Those who were in a position to know had long been aware that his financial situation must be improved if the prestige of the crown were not to suffer thereby. The newspapers announced that his health was in a less satisfactory state. He himself endeavoured to disarm these assertions by taking walks in the middle of the day, and speaking graciously with those whom he might meet on his way. He had never known the value of money, but regarded it as the Ministers' duty to procure it, and as his own right to dissipate it. In 1884 his Minister of Finance, Dr von Riedel, had negotiated a loan of 7,500,000 marks. Hardly a year afterwards the same Minister received an autograph letter in which he was desired to raise a new loan of 6,500,000 marks. He now explained without circumlocution to the King in what a critical situation the privy purse found itself. The information aroused disquiet in Ludwig; despite which, however, he showed himself deaf to the representations which were made to him. Through a court functionary, in a subordinate position, he corrected the Minister because he had ventured to address himself directly to his Majesty. Riedel made answer by tendering his resignation. The rest of the Ministry declared that if it was accepted they would all resign. The other members of the Council of State also received a reprimand at this time. Simultaneously, however, Ludwig despatched to his Minister of Finance a gracious letter, in which he requested him to remain in office.

It is quite clear that his debts were not the consequence of unwise financial operations; nor were they the immediate consequence of his passing caprices. The deficit in the exchequer was owing in the main to his insatiable passion for building. The completion of his palaces was delayed

on account of financial difficulties. Nevertheless, he occupied himself continually with plans for the future; a new castle, to be called "Falkenstein," was to be erected on an all but inaccessible mountain-top close to the borders of the Tyrol. Another, smaller, castle was to be built in Chinese style in the neighbourhood of Linderhof.

The debts augmented from day to day. Business people who required their money waited with impatience for their bills to be paid. Several creditors sent in legal complaint to a collective amount of a million and a half. A catastrophe seemed inevitable; it was said out loud that it was time to put a stop to the King's building enterprises.

Although Ludwig no longer received his secretary, the machinery of legislation still went its accustomed way. He signed the documents which were sent to him; but even important papers of state only reached him through the intervention of domestics, and if he happened to be in an ill-humour they lay scattered about on his table for days.

His want of money was known far outside the limits of his kingdom. Ludwig was angered at the contemptuous manner in which the financial newspapers of Vienna and Berlin made mention of it; and it was a painful surprise to him to find that the Jews were those who attacked him the most mercilessly. "Do they not know," he exclaimed, "that I am the only prince who from the beginning of the anti-Semitic movement has taken strong measures to counteract it?" His pressing need for money rendered him apt to regard every unknown person as a dun. "Yesterday when I was driving," he said to his barber, "I met a man who looked at me in such a curious manner that I positively thought he had come to seize my horses." On one of his last walks in the woods of Neuschwanstein he met a poor boy who was gathering faggots. When he asked him who his parents were the lad answered that his father had been a stone-cutter, but was now out of work. "Why does he not ask the King for help?" inquired Ludwig. "He has no money himself, and nobody will lend him any," was the reply. The King laughed, and handed him a five-mark piece; but his laughter was no doubt bitter.

His debts had reached a sum of 14,000,000 marks. On the 5th of May, 1886, his Ministers represented to him that it was absolutely necessary that his pecuniary affairs should be brought into order, and his expenses reduced. Months before this date he had been informed that every prospect of opening new resources was cut off. He now set to work himself, in every conceivable manner, to raise money. Hesselschwerdt was sent to Ratisbon in order if possible, to raise a loan of 20,000,000 marks from the enormously wealthy Prince of Thurn and Taxis. Bismarck was consulted; and the King endeavoured to obtain money from America. An aide-de-camp was despatched to the Emperor of Brazil, another was sent to the King of Sweden, and a third to the King of the Belgians. The financial magnates Rothschild, Bleichröder, and Erlanger were requested to give him their support; and he planned an application to the Sultan of Turkey and to the Shah of Persia. The means of assistance to which he resorted in his need are clear proofs that his mental and moral powers were rapidly declining; and in his alarm and confusion he even gave secret orders that persons should be procured who would be willing to break into the banks of some of the capitals of Europe.

Two of his cousins were still unconvinced of his insanity; they were therefore willing to give him their support. They put him in relations with the House of Orleans, who, during their short period of rule, had thought more of filling their own pockets than of the welfare of France. This family addressed themselves to Rothschild in Paris, who sent his secretary to Munich with the power to conclude a large loan if the conditions which he required were acknowledged by the King. The House of Orleans were to be the guarantors of the loan, which, as a matter of fact, they had already undertaken to be.

Preliminary consultations took place. The final issue came to nothing, according to report, because on the French side it was demanded that Ludwig should bind himself to neutrality in the event of a war between Prussia and France. Rothschild’s secretary went back to Paris, and informed his master that he had suffered defeat. The King apparently was willing to give a promissory note; in political respects, on the other hand, he refused to bind himself.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Plots

The influence of Count von Holnstein at the court of Bavaria had lasted up to 1883, when he fell into disfavour. The reason for this is not generally known. It has been said that he refused his assistance in the matter of a loan; others again have declared that Ludwig gained cognisance of certain deprecatory expressions which the Count had made use of with reference to his master.

It will be clear to everybody who knows how difficult a matter it is to appoint legal guardians of an individual's person and fortune, that the step which it was now intended to take must have been doubly difficult where a reigning monarch was concerned. Though his personal relations with Ludwig had been strained, Count Holnstein had remained in his post of Grand Master of the Horse. For a great number of years he had had exact knowledge of the King's mode of life, and he was in a position to procure a very large amount of weighty material by which, if used as proof against Ludwig, it might be possible to attain the desired end. As the King no longer associated with others than his servants, there existed only three or four persons from whom any information could be procured regarding his immediate past. Holnstein undertook to treat with these persons, and they proved to be willing to express themselves in the same spirit as himself.

The attendants on Ludwig's person were Mayr, whose name has been previously mentioned in these pages, and a former soldier of light horse, Alfons Weber by name. The latter, however, was kept in absolute ignorance of the whole matter. Mayr, on the other hand, was in unbroken intercourse with the leading circles in Munich; and it was he and Hesselschwerdt, in addition to Count Holnstein, who adduced the proofs that the time had come to place the King under restraint.

From the first half of the month of May the greater number of those about him were prepared for an impending catastrophe. His creditors became

more and more importunate, his need for money more and more pressing. As no prospects of assistance from any direction could be seen, Ludwig determined to reassume negotiations with Rothschild. He was now promised a loan of thirty or forty million francs, at four per cent. interest, to be paid within a certain period of time. In the event of Bavaria remaining neutral during a possible war between France and Prussia, repayment of the sum would be remitted, together with all further interest. In this manner the agreement was deprived of the sting which might wound the allies in Germany; and no more was demanded of the King of Bavaria than what, if necessary, he could subscribe to.

Hesselschwerdt, who had been the former intermediary between Rothschild's secretary and his master, received orders from Ludwig to proceed to Paris with a royal note of hand, and to receive the money-prince's millions. At this juncture Count Holnstein suddenly stepped forth. As chief of the royal stables he was Hesselschwerdt's superior. He was aware that Rothschild's secretary had been in Munich, and knew of the interviews the latter had had with members of the House of Orleans. In expectation of what might arise, he had impressed upon Hesselschwerdt that he must not undertake any task without his, the Count's, knowledge, since King Ludwig, in the painful position in which he found himself, might possibly allow himself to be led into taking a step which might have serious consequences to the state.

When the negotiations were resumed in the month of May, Holnstein had begun a course of baths at Karlsbad. Before his departure he had strictly charged Hesselschwerdt immediately to inform him if his journey to Paris could not be averted. The Count had added threateningly: "Obey me, Hesselschwerdt, or you may pay dearly for it!" Holnstein had hardly been a week at Karlsbad before he received the expected telegram. He hastened to Munich, and summoned Hesselschwerdt to him. The court functionary brought with him the sealed writing which contained Ludwig's note of hand.

Without a moment's hesitation the Count carried him off to the Premier, Dr von Lutz, and delivered into the latter's hands the letter to Rothschild,

which was sealed with the King's signet. This done he sought an audience of Prince Luitpold, who, on the outbreak of Prince Otto's malady, had become the person who stood nearest to the throne. While he was conversing with the King's uncle, it was announced that the Ministry desired an audience. A council was held. Ludwig's letter was opened, and Hesselschwerdt was forbidden to undertake the journey to Paris. Four eminent physicians were summoned. They declared the King to be insane, and assumed his malady to be incurable.

There was now a plausible excuse for placing him under restraint.

A secret conference of the princes of the blood-royal met in Munich. Against two votes it was determined that the King's person should be placed under restraint and a Regency proclaimed, with Prince Luitpold as Regent. The Ministry should remain in office. It was desired to constitute the Grand Master of the Court, Count von Castell, Ludwig's guardian; but he refused the melancholy task. Count Holnstein was then appointed to fill this post. It was Prince Luitpold's desire that the King should be informed of what had been decided upon before the proclamation took place, to the effect that he might give his consent to the new order of affairs.

Dr von Lutz simultaneously informed Prince Bismarck of the contemplated loan in Paris, and of the fact that members of the House of Orleans had played a part in the matter. The Prince gave the then French Premier a hint of their attitude. A debate relating to the expulsion of the Orleans princes was just at that time on the order of the day in the French Senate. The terms of Bismarck's telegram let it be supposed that the princes had desired to make use of Ludwig's pecuniary difficulties in order to play a political part.

This information is said to have been the chief reason for the expulsion of the Orleans family from France.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Preparations to Imprison the King—The Peasantry Assemble to his Rescue

Hesselschwerdt, it need hardly be said, could no more show himself before the King. He informed his master that he had been taken ill, and therefore had been unable to proceed to Paris. Ludwig, however, came to know, through his barber, that his functionary was walking about the streets of the capital in robust health. Though prior to this his suspicions had been now and again slightly aroused, he could never have supposed that the sealed letter which he had confided to him would have been given into other hands.

A so-called Court Commission was meanwhile on its way to Hohenschwangau to imprison the King, and place him under medical treatment. It consisted of the Minister of the Royal House, Count Crailsheim; Counts Holnstein and Törring; Herr von Washington, who was to be the King's gentleman-in-waiting; and of the director of the public Asylum for the Insane at Munich, Dr von Gudden. These gentlemen were furthermore accompanied by an assistant doctor and eight keepers. Of Ludwig's nearest *entourage*, only his valet, Weber, and the stablemen had any idea of what was about to happen.

On the night of the 9th of June a string of royal carriages drew up before the old castle of Hohenschwangau. Count Holnstein, who sat in the foremost of them, proceeded at once to the royal stables to inform the *personnel* that it was to be dispersed. The coachman, Osterholzer, was in the act of harnessing the horses to Ludwig's carriage, for the King, according to his custom, wished to drive out in the course of the night. The Count ordered that the horses should be taken out at once, as another carriage was in readiness, with another coachman to drive it. Osterholzer pleaded his master's orders. "The King has nothing more to order," answered Holnstein. "It is his Royal Highness, Prince Luitpold, who now reigns."[1]

The coachman understood that there was a plot against the King. He took the horses back to the stable. As quickly as his legs could carry him he thereupon ran by a steep woodland path up to Neuschwanstein, where he informed the valet on duty, Weber, what had occurred.

Ludwig was walking up and down in the brightly lighted concert hall, declaiming in a loud voice parts of an opera which had lately been dedicated to him. Osterholzer rushed breathlessly in, throwing himself on his knees before him, and in his excitement able only to stammer forth some incoherent words. The King did not understand him; he beckoned Weber to him, and asked what was the meaning of this scene. The valet explained that Count Holnstein and some other gentlemen had arrived at Hohenschwangau, and that traitorous designs on his Majesty were entertained. Osterholzer implored him to flee at once; Weber, too, offered his assistance. Ludwig refused the offer. “Why should I flee?” he asked. “If any real danger threatened me, Karl would have written to me”! “Karl” was the court functionary Hesselschwerdt, in whom, even at this moment, he placed his trust.

After some consideration he, nevertheless, gave orders that his servants should assemble. “Run as quickly as possible,” said he. “Call all loyal peasants here to protect their King!” The stablemen and men-servants hurried away, and raised the alarm in the neighbouring villages. Hardly an hour had passed before Hohenschwangau was swarming with peasants armed with knives, and carrying axes and scythes across their shoulders. Füssen, the town nearest to Hohenschwangau, sent her fire-brigade, and the chief of the police stationed there appeared with all his men. As nobody had any knowledge of what had occurred in Munich, there was every ground to suppose that an attack on the King’s person was intended. All were ready to risk their life in order to rescue him.

Meanwhile in the light of dawn the Court Commission had reached the gates of Neuschwanstein. It had been agreed that one of its members should read aloud Prince Luitpold’s address to the King, after which the doctors were to convey him to Linderhof. To their surprise, they found the doors of the castle guarded by gendarmes, who forbade them in the King’s name to

enter. They produced their written authorisation to do this. The gendarme on guard did not deign to glance at it, but answered all representations and commands with: “I require nothing in writing! I know only one command, and that comes from his Majesty!” The gentlemen now attempted entrance by force; but the gendarme remained firm to his orders, and threatened to shoot down every person who should dare to penetrate into the castle. He raised his gun to his shoulder, as he referred for the last time to the reigning King’s command. Other gendarmes now pressed forward. A blow from a cudgel struck one of the keepers who was standing near. “Unpleasant as this conduct was,” says the assistant physician, Dr Müller, “it could not be denied that these men were behaving loyally when, regardless of the brilliant uniforms of the state officials, they unwaveringly held firm to: ‘Our King has commanded it, and we obey him!’”

The Court Commission were compelled to retire to Hohenschwangau with their mission unaccomplished. The rumour that the King was to be dragged away a prisoner had meanwhile spread over the whole countryside. As the Commission drove down to the old castle they saw peasants, woodcutters, and firemen, women and children, in frantic haste speeding up towards Neuschwanstein. The sheriff and chief official of Füssen, Herr Sonntag, was charged by Ludwig to arrest the members of the Commission. He appeared at Hohenschwangau to execute the command. Minister Crailsheim rated him, and told him that he had no right whatever to act in the manner he was doing. “Your Excellency,” answered the venerable old man, “I am in a painful dilemma. Not by a word have I been prepared for that which was to happen, nor have I been advised as to what my conduct should be with regard to my master. I have served him so many years, and even at this hour am his official; I cannot in a few minutes forget the love and loyalty of past years and determine to act as my King’s enemy.” He performed the arrests, and sent the prisoners under a strong escort to Neuschwanstein.

Count Holnstein expressed a desire to drive, but no heed was paid to his wish; the gentlemen had to walk on foot through the raving crowd which had assembled. The courtyard also was filled to overflowing. Hundreds of men and women threatened them in loud voices. “Look at these men,” called a young woman to her seven-year-old daughter; “when you are big

you can say you have seen traitors." Considerable effort was necessary to prevent the crowd from turning their threats into reality. The least courage was shown by Dr Gudden. The crowd having heard that it was he who had declared the King to be mad rushed upon him, and threatened to throw him in the neighbouring falls of the Pöllat.

A terrible hatred had shone in Ludwig's eyes when he was told that the friend of his childhood, Count Holnstein, was among the traitors. He had commanded that all the members of the Commission should be thrown into a dungeon. This, however, was not done; they were imprisoned in a room above the arch of the gateway. The King's anger soon evaporated; after the lapse of three hours he decided that they should be set free. The sheriff succeeded in quieting the crowd without, and in inducing the people to return home. None of the gentlemen, however, dared to show themselves in the neighbouring village. They started on their retreat by different roads, and hurried without delay to Munich.

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1 Osterholzer was later forced to declare publicly that Holnstein had not said this; but nobody believed in the compulsory retraction. ↑

CHAPTER XXXIX

A Friend in Need—Ludwig's Proclamation

It was the earnest desire of all who wished the King well that he should proceed to his capital, a course which undoubtedly would have been the only means of saving him. He had during the forenoon telegraphed for his aide-de-camp, Count Alfred von Dürckheim. "This man is attached to me," said he, as he sent off the telegram. Just as the Court Commission was leaving Neuschwanstein, after its short imprisonment, the Count arrived at Hohenschwangau, with horses which had been driven half to death in order to arrive in time. He hastened up to the castle. The gendarmes and the firemen were still standing at arms outside it. Dürckheim expressed his recognition of their conduct, but sent them home at the King's desire.

The shy Ludwig, who had never been the friend of the fair sex, had at this time a lady staying at his castle. Baroness Truchsesz—Spanish by birth, but married into the Bavarian aristocracy—had in the early morning hours when she heard that his Majesty was to be incarcerated, hastened to Neuschwanstein. She had precipitated herself into his sleeping apartment, without allowing herself to be announced, and had again and again assured him of her devotion. He quietly permitted the stream of her eloquence to pass over him, and gave her his hand. "Dear Baroness," he said in his most amiable tone, "will not you allow me to send for your husband, so that you may return to your villa under his protection?" The Baroness would not agree to this, but implored Ludwig instantly to go to Munich. "I will do so," he said, "though not at once." "I will go with your Majesty!" she cried. He made a deprecatory gesture. "It would not do," he answered kindly. The Baroness took up her position in the ante-room, firmly determined not to leave his threshold. "If matters were not so serious I should feel tempted to laugh at the good Baroness," said Ludwig to Count Dürckheim, who found her there.

This last friend also declared his repairing to Munich to be imperative. Had the King at this time shown himself in his capital, it is more than probable

that his people would have flocked round him to protect him.

He declared meanwhile that he was quite tired out; still, he added, he would go there the following day.

Between Bismarck and Ludwig there had always existed very kindly relations. “I was particularly honoured with his esteem,” the Prince once said.[1] “We corresponded on important political questions until the last years of his life. When he expressed his views he was as amiable towards my person as he was intellectual in his judgment of the different questions that were being discussed.” At this desperate moment both the King and Count Dürckheim bethought themselves of the great Chancellor of the German Empire.

The unsuccessful Court Commission, which had omitted to give the officials of the district any intimation as to what was about to take place, had been careful enough to inform the telegraph officials of Hohenschwangau of the impending overthrow. Ludwig’s telegrams could therefore not be sent from Bavaria, but had to be conveyed across the frontier to the neighbouring Tyrol. Dürckheim craved Bismarck’s help. The Chancellor answered: “His Majesty ought to drive at once to Munich and take care of his interests before the assembled Parliament.” Later, Bismarck tells us: “I thought thus: either the King is well, when he will follow my advice, or he is really mad!” He added: “His Majesty did not go to Munich; he took no determination; he was no longer in possession of his mental powers, but let fate invade him.”

Ludwig and Dürckheim in conjunction drew up a lengthy telegram to the Emperor of Austria, imploring him to intervene. “Put to!” shouted the Count into the stables. “Drive to the Austrian frontier-town of Reutte as quickly as you can, even if you break all your horses’ wind!” At the same time the Empress of Austria also exerted herself to the utmost from Possenhofen to induce her husband to step in. Count Dürckheim, in the King’s name, commanded Baron Frankenstein to form a new Ministry; and the battalion of jægers in Kempten was ordered to come and protect his Majesty. This last despatch went through the hands of Mayr; the valet added

to it some words which caused the commandant to ask the Minister of War if he was to obey the order. An answer in the negative was received.

It cannot with certainty be shown what other precautions Count Dürckheim took in order to save his master. He was mentioned as the author of a proclamation which was issued the following day in the King's name:[2]

> "*I, Ludwig II., King of Bavaria*, feel myself constrained to make the following *manifesto* to my beloved Bavarians, and the collective German people.
>
> "Prince Luitpold desires against my will to make himself ruler of my land. My former Ministry has duped my beloved people by erroneous representations as to the state of my health, and has been guilty of high treason.
>
> "I feel myself physically and mentally in as good health as any other monarch. The projected treason has come in a manner so surprising that I have not been given time to defeat the base intentions of the Ministry.
>
> "Should the projected deeds of violence be put into execution, and Prince Luitpold seize the reins of government against my will, I give my faithful friends the task of protecting with all their means and under all circumstances my rights.
>
> "I expect of all the officials of Bavaria, above all from the gallant Bavarian officers and the soldiers of Bavaria, that they will, in remembrance of the solemn oath with which they swore loyalty to me, remain faithful to me and stand by me in this heavy hour.
>
> "Every loyal citizen is called upon to brand Prince Luitpold and the former Ministry as traitors.
>
> "I am one with my beloved people, and cherish the firm belief that they will protect me.
>
> "I turn at the same time to the rest of the German people and to the Allied Princes.
>
> "As much as it was in my power I contributed to build up the German Empire. Therefore I dare expect of Germany that she will not allow a German Prince to be wrongfully displaced.
>
> "If I am not granted time to address myself directly to the German Emperor, I am confident that no objection will be raised to my delivering up the traitors to the law of my country.
>
> "My good Bavarians will certainly not fail me!
>
> "In the event that I may be prevented by force from protecting my rights, I call upon every faithful Bavarian to gather round my adherents, and to help them to defeat the projected treason against King and country.
>
> "Given at Hohenschwangau, the 9th of June 1886,

"LUDWIG THE SECOND.
"(King of Bavaria, Count Palatine, etc.)."

Meanwhile the events in the capital went their way. On the 10th of June the Government published the proclamation which signified that the King's uncle had become Regent, and that the Chamber was to be summoned to declare Ludwig II. insane. In the course of the night Count Dürckheim was twice summoned by the Minister of War to Munich. The first telegram he laid quietly aside. The second he placed before the King, adding that unhappily he was obliged to obey it, as in the contrary case he would be charged with insubordination. Ludwig was in great distress at losing him. "You know how greatly I wish you to remain with me," he said. "Telegraph to my uncle and ask him if he will not consent to my keeping you." The Count did this, but the answer to his request was short and decided: "The Ministry of War adheres to its orders." Deeply moved, the Count took leave, never to see his King again. In the ante-room Mayr was awaiting him. The valet, who wished the new Government success and prosperity, was alarmed at the precautions Dürckheim had taken. "Do you think his Majesty will decide to go to the capital?" he asked. It was with a heavy heart that the Count answered: "No, Mayr; I do not think so."[3]

---

1 To the Editor Memminger. ↑

2 It was almost immediately suppressed, but was printed in the *Bamberger Journal*. ↑

3 On his arrival at Munich, Count Dürckheim was arrested, and charged with high treason. As no proofs were forthcoming against him he was later set free. He was long in disfavour with the new powers, who among other things refused his earnest prayer to be allowed to see King Ludwig after death. Count Alfred Dürckheim is now a general. ↑

CHAPTER XL

The King's Last Hours at Neuschwanstein

The gendarmes of the district were relieved during the course of the night by others from Munich, who occupied the castle. Ludwig, who the preceding day had overcome his enemies, thought at first that they had arrived to protect him. It was not until he was refused his usual midnight drive that he realised that he was a prisoner.

Early in the morning on the 11th of July the post brought the proclamation from the new Regent: those who attempted to save the King risked punishment from this time forth as traitors to their country. Exceedingly few at Hohenschwangau seemed to think of this; and even on the other side of the frontier there were those who were ready to risk all for him.

The newly-arrived gendarmes were unacquainted with the neighbouring country, whereas the local population knew every path and stone. By way of the Kitzberg path, in less than an hour's time, the Tyrol could be reached: a carriage waiting there could have driven Ludwig farther. In Austria it was fully expected that he would hasten thither; even the Emperor himself is said to have awaited and feared it. A number of bold and faithful dwellers in the mountain districts were eager to hazard their lives in order to defend the fleeing Monarch on this dangerous journey. The chief difficulty lay in getting him unnoticed out of the castle. Those without could hardly put themselves into communication with him, as Neuschwanstein was strictly guarded. A lady who was passing the summer at Hohenschwangau offered to try and penetrate in to him, to inform him of the plan. She disguised herself as a peasant woman, and took with her the wife of a groom. All was deadly still. The fog was so thick that it was hardly possible to see ten steps ahead. The gendarmes had withdrawn to the interior of the castle. An officer was standing under the arch of the gateway; he asked the women who they were. One of them answered that she was married to the coachman, and wished to see the wife of the valet Mayr. The officer looked at them suspiciously. Some servants now appeared. "Do you know these women?"

he asked. “Are they speaking the truth?” They replied in the affirmative, and the women were allowed to pass.

This venturesome deed led to nothing. Mayr, to whom they addressed themselves, refused under any circumstances to support a plan of flight. He did not even announce their arrival to the King. The latter, nevertheless, came to know of the matter. His first question was whether his flight could be carried into effect without the shedding of blood. When he received the answer that he must expect a struggle to ensue, he refused to follow those who desired to rescue him, “I do not wish any human life to be sacrificed for my sake,” he said.

He was cognisant as to the means which had been used to bring about his deposition from the throne. He was also quite aware what information had been collected for this purpose, and likewise who had betrayed him. “To think,” he said to his valet Mayr, “that these persons, to whom I have shown so much kindness, should have failed me so shamelessly; they have given up all my letters and papers to my adversaries.”

He had heard that new emissaries would come to Neuschwanstein the next morning to take him away, with the help of doctors and keepers; and he knew that he would be a will-less prisoner in their hands. The excited condition in which he had passed the previous day had been succeeded by indifference to everything, to everyone. After Count Dürckheim’s departure he seemed to be completely broken. He thought no more of resistance. Another thought ceaselessly occupied his mind. When during the course of the Friday he showed apparent calm, it was because the idea of suicide was paramount. Unceasingly he walked up and down the throne-room, and talked aloud of shortening his life. Every now and then he addressed a few words to Weber. “Do you believe in the immortality of the soul?” he asked. “Yes,” answered the servant. “I too believe in it,” said Ludwig. “I believe in the immortality of the soul, and in the justice of God.” “From the heights of life to be dashed down into a nothing!” he continued. “A spoiled life! I *cannot* endure it. I could agree to their taking my crown from me, but I cannot survive their declaring me to be mad. I cannot possibly endure being

treated like my brother Otto, whom every keeper dares to order about, whom they threaten with a clenched fist when he will not obey!"

The thought of death had taken possession of his mind. He asked his servants for cyanide of potassium; they replied that they could not give it to him. Despite the rain which was falling that night, he went out several times on to the balcony of the castle, which overhangs the dizzy chasm of the Pöllat. He ordered Mayr to give him the key of the high tower of the castle, but the servant pretended that he could not find it. A spring from the tower and the King would be saved! "When my barber comes to-morrow," he said, "he may look for my head in the Pöllat." And he added: "I hope that God will vouchsafe to pardon me this step!... I cannot spare my mother the pain I shall cause her," he continued. "They are driving me to death! But my blood will be on all those who have betrayed me!" He was particularly bitter against his uncle. "A well-beloved relation who usurps supreme authority, and imprisons me," he said. "He is no Prince Regent; he is a Prince Rebel!"

Baroness Truchsesz still continued to remain in the ante-room; her presence began to be painful to him. He desired her removal, but gave express orders that it should be done gently and with consideration.

The valet, Weber, had twice been in his service. Ludwig gave him a diamond clasp which he was in the habit of wearing in his hat. "I have no money with which to reward you," he said. "Receive instead my clasp and this note of hand. If they compel you to give up the diamonds, my document will insure you a compensation of 25,000 marks." He gave him, in addition, his prayer-book, which was much used. "Pray for me," he said.[1]

It was a terrible night. The fog had turned into rain, which was falling in torrents, and the wind was howling round Neuschwanstein. Ludwig was almost alone in his castle, which was completely cut off from communication with the outer world. Again he went on to the balcony, and gazed out over the landscape, with his head resting on his hand.

A terrible fear came over him. He ordered Weber to summon Osterholzer: perchance the plan of flight which had been proposed to him before could still be put into execution. But the coachman had been summoned to Munich; it had been intimated to him that he would be arrested if he did not leave Hohenschwangau at once. “Will the people do nothing then to liberate their King?” His servant answered: “Your Majesty! the people have no weapons!”

The Court Commission, having suffered such ignoble defeat the first time, had been replenished with new emissaries. But again this time came Dr Gudden, the assistant doctor, Dr Müller, and eight keepers. For personal safety’s sake these gentlemen had, moreover, brought with them from Munich the chief of the police; and they had demanded that the Regent’s proclamation should be published at Hohenschwangau before they proceeded thither. The former Commission had been treated as traitors and criminals; to the present one nobody dared show hostility.

The King had returned to the dining-room. He had never been a drinker; but on this night he drank brandy and wine to dull his senses.

The envoys had meanwhile arrived at Neuschwanstein, where they effected unhindered entrance. They were awaiting the moment when Mayr should give them the sign that they could take his Majesty and drive him to another castle. Ludwig had again demanded the key of the tower. The servant, fearing that he would throw himself over, had maintained that it was missing. For the last time he now repeated his order. In his terror Mayr hastened to Dr Gudden and asked what he should do. A minute afterwards he went into the presence, and announced that the key had been found. The King rose and followed him at once.

Those without heard firm steps. A man of imposing height suddenly showed himself in the doorway; he spoke in short abrupt sentences to the servant, who stood bowing deeply.

It had been arranged that the King should be at once surrounded and taken away by force. But when the Monarch came out all shrank back; nobody

dared to seize him.

Dr Gudden was the first to regain self-possession. He stepped forward, and said:

“Your Majesty! this is the saddest task I have ever undertaken in my life. Four alienists have given a declaration as to the state of your Majesty’s health. In consequence of this Prince Luitpold has assumed the Regency. I have received orders to accompany your Majesty to Schloss Berg this very night.”

The King hesitated a moment. “What do you want with me?” he repeated several times. “What does this mean?”

The keepers approached to seize him. He warned them off with a proud gesture, and drew himself up.

“It is not necessary,” he said; “I will go of my free will.”

---

1 When, after the King’s death, Weber proved to be in possession of his diamond clasp, it was thought at first that he had come by it dishonestly. The writing, however, by which he had engaged himself not to give it up except on payment of 25,000 marks convinced the authorities that they had been mistaken. As the diamonds constituted a part of the Crown jewels, Weber had, nevertheless, to return them. As far as is known he received a small sum of money in return for them, as it was desired that the King’s last gift should be respected. ↑

CHAPTER XLI

Schloss Berg—The King's Death

At four in the morning Ludwig left Neuschwanstein.

In the first carriage sat Dr Müller and two keepers. In the second was the King, quite alone. By the side of the coachman sat the head keeper from the madhouse at Munich, and close at the rear of the carriage rode a man who had orders sharply to watch his Majesty, and give a sign at the slightest suspicious movement. Dr Gudden, a police officer, and several keepers followed afterwards. When Ludwig had taken his seat in his equipage he said to the doctor; "You do not object, of course, to my taking leave of my servant?" Mayr stepped up to him; but the conversation seemed too long to Dr Gudden. "Make haste, so that we can get off," he repeated several times. Mayr sobbed aloud as his master drove off.

Some persons were standing outside to see the sorrowful train; the King returned their greeting with amiability. At the first turn of the road he rubbed a clear space with his hand on the damp window, and looked back at Neuschwanstein, which he had loved so dearly, and which has never since been inhabited. He looked ill; his complexion was ashy white, his glance irresolute. The horses were changed three times. At the last stage, Seeshaupt, the landlady approached, and respectfully saluted his Majesty. He asked her for a glass of water. As he handed her back the empty glass he thanked her cordially. Weeping, she called after the carriage: "*Behüt Gott, Majestätt.*"

The new Commission had relinquished the plan of taking him to Linderhof, as it was known that one of his jægers was collecting people in the Tyrol to help him over the border. While the carriage, unhindered, was nearing Berg, one hundred and twenty peasants were standing ready to rescue him in the vicinity of Reutte. After waiting for two days they learned that the King had driven another way.

It was Dr Gudden who had decided on Schloss Berg as his prison; this was the more wanting in consideration, since it was there that he had spent his happy youth. Ludwig had learned to know this physician while he was treating his brother, Prince Otto, and cherished a peculiar antipathy to him. "Gudden looks at me in such a curious way," he said several times to his mother's Grand Mistress of the Court. "I only hope he won't discover something to say about me too."

It was the forenoon of Whitsun Eve when he arrived at his destination. He spoke genially to the gendarme stationed there. "I am glad, Sauer, that you are on duty again," he said as he went in. In one of the first apartments he entered his eyes fell on his own portrait: a large painting which represented his first landing at Schloss Berg after his accession. How different was that day from this! He was given only two rooms for his use. The windows had been hastily provided with iron bars, and holes had been bored in the doors that he might be under continual observation. He regarded these alterations without saying a word. The doctor ordered him to go early to bed and he obeyed. At two in the morning he awoke, and wished to get up. The keepers would not allow it. They had taken his clothes away from him; despite his earnest prayers they would not give them to him. At last one of them let himself be persuaded into letting him have his socks. Clad only in his night-shirt and in his stockinged feet he walked restlessly hour after hour up and down the room. At six in the morning he asked the keeper to help him with a bath. He allowed the former to assist him to dress, but bade him afterwards fetch his valet and his barber. The keeper answered, what was strictly true, that they had not come with him to his new place of residence.

Whitsunday dawned. Ludwig wished to attend divine service in the neighbouring church. Gudden refused to allow this, fearing that the people would not believe the King to be mad if he showed himself. In the course of the morning he asked for an orange. It was brought to him, but without a fruit-knife. He sent it out again without having touched it. At eleven o'clock Dr Gudden accompanied him on a walk. Two keepers who followed them received a sign to increase the distance from the King. Ludwig and the doctor seated themselves on a bench ten or fifteen paces from the banks of the lake of Starnberg. Ludwig's quiet, collected demeanour lulled the

physician into a feeling of security, which was destined to be fatal to himself.

The King ate his dinner alone at four o'clock. Before seating himself at table he inquired of the keeper who waited upon him whether Gudden had touched his food; he feared that the latter intended to render him unconscious, and that he would show him to the people in this condition to prove that he was mad.

He asked to be allowed to speak with his old acquaintance, Staff-Comptroller Zanders, who was in the castle. Gudden at first would not hear of this; at length he gave way to the King's supplication, and Zanders was allowed to be with him for half-an-hour, but was required to promise on his word of honour not to arouse any hope in the King's mind that he might regain his freedom. Ludwig advanced to meet him with the vigour and energy he displayed at his prime—quite a different man from what he had been two days previously. He showed him the bars before the windows, the peepholes in the door, and told him how he had been treated. "How many gendarmes are there in the park to guard me?" he asked. "Six or eight, your Majesty." "Would they in case of emergency shoot at me?" "How can your Majesty think such a thing!" was the answer.

While this conversation was taking place the chief physician was telegraphing to Munich: "Everything is going wonderfully well here." A quarter of an hour afterwards the King started on his last walk with Gudden. The sky was overclouded, and a drizzling rain was falling. Two keepers accompanied them. The doctor observed that their presence was unnecessary, and soon afterwards they returned to the castle. The King and his physician struck into the path they had followed in the morning. Ludwig had known the banks of the lake of Starnberg from childhood, and it is more than probable that he had that forenoon chosen the spot where he would free himself from his life. The physician had said he would return with the King at eight o'clock. Half-past eight and nine passed, but they did not appear; and anxiety was felt at the castle in case some accident might have happened to them in the darkness of the park. The assistant doctor had the immediate vicinity carefully searched. This led at first to no result, for

no one thought of the lake of Starnberg. Not far from the seat on which Ludwig and Gudden had rested in the forenoon were found later the umbrellas of both men. A fisherman was summoned; and upon rowing a short distance from the shore in his boat the body of Dr Gudden, in a half-sitting posture, with the back bent below the surface of the water, was discovered. A few feet farther out was found the King's lifeless body, the head downwards, and the arms bent forward. The lake was not so deep at this spot but he could have saved himself had he been so minded.

What had happened at this spot will for ever remain unknown. The sorrowful incident took place without witnesses; but the tracks along the shore, and in the bottom of the lake, which was examined, justify the following assumption. The King was walking on the right side, Gudden on the left, until they reached the seat they had rested on before. The King must then have thrown down his umbrella and run towards the lake, for his footsteps could be seen on the damp moss-grown shore. Gudden had immediately rushed after him, and seized him by the coat-collar. His grasp must have been very firm, for the nail of one of his fingers was splintered. Ludwig, on the other hand, must have continued to press forward, for Gudden had retained both the coats of the King in his hand. Above the doctor's left eye there was a bruise, which undoubtedly resulted from a blow. A terrible struggle must have taken place.

Dr Müller made the most strenuous efforts to call Ludwig back to life, but all his exertions were in vain; death had freed the mad King from the torments of his existence.

CHAPTER XLII

Conclusion

On the evening of Whitmonday the body of Ludwig II. was conveyed to Munich.

The hearse, which was drawn by four horses and was accompanied by his servants and by priests, arrived at the capital at half-past three in the morning. Great numbers of country people followed his coffin weeping. Nobody believed he had been mad, but that an innocent man had been persecuted. In the hearts of all there lived the memory of the beloved King, who had promised so much, whose peculiarities they had condoned, and who, despite all, had continued to be the pride of the Bavarians.

The news of his tragic end shocked the whole of Germany. His capital, where he had so seldom resided, mourned him deeply and sincerely; and in the country districts there was hardly a hut where his picture was not wreathed with crape. The dead King lay in state on a high catafalque, dressed in the knightly robes of the order of St Hubert, with its golden band round his neck, and the sword of iron resting on his left arm. On his breast lay flowers, brought by the Empress Elizabeth. Thousands of all grades of society pressed into the little chapel to bid him a last farewell. Sorrow was written on all faces; sympathy found expression on all lips. The lonely eccentric had found peace at last.

Queen Marie's strength had been broken by sorrow; she outlived her eldest son by only two years. "Bavaria's unhappiest mother" expired on the 17th of May, 1889, at Hohenschwangau, where she had lived the full and happy years of her youth. With the words: "God save Bavaria, God save Prussia!" she drew her last sigh.

The Duchesse d'Alençon was visiting her parents at Possenhofen, when her former betrothed found his death in the neighbouring lake of Starnberg. The news of it so greatly shocked her that she temporarily lost her reason.

Ludwig's deposition and violent death called forth stormy debates in the Bavarian Chamber. In order to convince the world that his treatment had been justified, the Ministry revealed without mercy the development of his disease; and eminent alienists were unanimous in their declaration that for several years his mind had been clouded.

But to this day there are many among his people who do not believe it.

Bavaria has not forgotten King Ludwig, and the traits of geniality and kindness, by which he won all, are still spoken of with love. In those parts where he mostly resided the remembrance of the "romanticist on the throne" dwells fresh and warm in the hearts of the people.

The sources made use of in the writing of this book are as follows:—

Professor Dr C. Beyer: "Ludwig II., König von Bayern (Ein characterbild)."

Brachvogel: "Ludwig II., König von Bayern."

I. L. Craemer: "König Ludwig und Richard Wagner."

Craemer: "Die bayerrischen Königsschlösser im Wort und Bild."

Das Ministerium Lutz und seine Gegner.

Dr Franz Karl: "Der Character Ludwig II."

Dr Karl von Heigel: "König Ludwig II. von Bayern. Ein Beitrag zu seiner Lebensgeschichte."

Louise von Kobell: "König Ludwig II. von Bayern und die Kunst."

Louise von Kobell: "Unter den vier ersten Königen Bayerns."

Friedrich Lampart: "Ludwig II., König von Bayern."

Graser: "Die letzen Tage Ludwig II."

Dr F. C. Müller: "Die letzen Tage König Ludwig II."

Otto Gerold: "Die letzen Tage König Ludwig II."

Sailer: "Die Bau und Kunstdenkmäler Ludwig II."

Dr Hans Reidelbach: “Characterzüge und Anekdoten aus dem Leben der bayrischn Könige.”

I. von Türk: “Die Königen-Mutter Marie von Bayern.”

Zeiller: “Enthüllungen über die Sektion und die Todesart König Ludwig II.”

Dr W. W. Ireland: “The Blot upon the Brain,” “Studies in History and Psychology,” etc. etc.

The book rests furthermore upon personal reminiscences from a visit of length to Munich, and on verbal information from German friends who spent their summers in Hohenschwangau in the ’Seventies and ’Eighties.

THE RIVERSIDE PRESS LIMITED, EDINBURGH.

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20	fulment	fulfilment
34	Lisst	Liszt
41	Staffachers	Stauffachers
42	Bülow’s	Bülow
55	gratituous	gratuitous
56	pleace	peace
78	Reichkanzler	Reichskanzler
88	nee	née
89	Seehaupt	Seeshaupt
90, 91	Würtemburg	Würtemberg
103, 124, 247	[*Not in source*]	.
116	Deutchlands	Deutschlands
121	[*Not in source*]	,
136	tos how	to show
164	begining	beginning
170	reresearches	researches
181, 190	Keiserloge	Kaiserloge
194, 194	Äida	Aïda
248	Flüssen	Füssen
262	moveover	moreover

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