

On the wooded slopes above Cowes stands Osborne, almost entirely rebuilt after it was bought by the Queen. If Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle were the homes associated with her Majesty's maidenhood and early married days, Osborne has been the principal retreat of the long years of her widowhood.

The architecture of the pile of building was planned to express such stately simplicity as best befits a country house and not a palace. The two towers—the clock tower and the bell tower, one belonging to the part of the house known as the Pavilion—and the pillared entrance, are its most ornamental portions. The house is built on the highest of a series of terraces which descend to the sea-beach and pier. All these terraces have charming views of the Solent, the opposite coast of Hampshire, Spithead, where a navy may ride at anchor, the great naval town of Portsmouth, &c., &c. The terrace immediately beneath the windows of the principal rooms is a bright flower-garden, with here a fountain and there a vase or statue. The lower terraces are the wooded slopes, with many a sunny and shady walk. The trees were largely chosen and grouped according to the taste of the Prince Consort. As a sign of the mildness of the climate, many a tree and shrub flourishes in this place which we should not expect to find in England, not only well-grown ilexes, but fair-sized cork-trees, magnolias big enough to rank as trees, great camelia-bushes (a sight when in flower), the Princess Royal's myrtle, &c., &c.

The different entrances lead into far-extending corridors, stretching in long vistas, with gleams of the blue sea or the green park at each end. The corridors are particularly rich in statuary—works full of antique and modern grace and beauty standing out snow-white against the pale sea-green of the walls. Occasionally a cabinet containing superb china and rare trophies from the east or the west marks a recess. There is a bust of the Queen, but, as a rule, it is more the faces and forms of her children and grandchildren which we meet. There is a fine bust of the Prince Consort between the busts of his two elder sons. Love which "knows not death" honours the dead by the flowers and the wreath, which, though they bloom but to perish like all earthly things, bloom always afresh for him.

The dining-room, with its finely-picked out ceiling, has not one but a series of family pictures, groups all sprung from the present group at the head of the room—telling natural, kindly, human tales of children's children and the bounteous autumn of life. The Queen is there in her early matronhood with the companion of her youth and their elder children—the same children grown to goodly manhood and womanhood, figure as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers in their turn. Here is the Prince of Wales with his beautiful Danish princess and their children. There is the Crown Princess of Germany with her