

## II.—OSBORNE, THE QUEEN'S SOUTHERN HOME.

BY OWEN CONWAY.

How vivid in my memory is the recollection of my last visit to Osborne! It was on a summer afternoon, just after the Queen—the most distinguished resident of the Isle of Wight—had driven through crowded Cowes, that I turned my feet towards Osborne. One of the charms of her

cottager would hardly turn from hanging out the washing or scrubbing the doorstep at so familiar a sight; yet millions of the Queen's loyal subjects would gladly suffer any expense or inconvenience to have a similar privilege. Such inattention on the part of the cottager is not due to anything save the knowledge



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### WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH.

*(Where the Queen used to worship when residing at Osborne.)*

Majesty's home in the isle is that it is so secluded. You walk through country lanes with trim hedges, past neat rustic cottages, and see nowhere the evidence of the Queen's proximity. Perhaps even as you rest by the wayside a high carriage with a postillion drives slowly past, and in it you recognise her Majesty and one of her daughters. The

that there is an unwritten law to respect the Queen's privacy when she is living at Osborne. Just as the Scot at Balmoral will, at the approach of a royal carriage, disappear from the roadside, so the cottager will take care not to observe too closely the Queen as she drives through the village.

Comment has often been made by hasty



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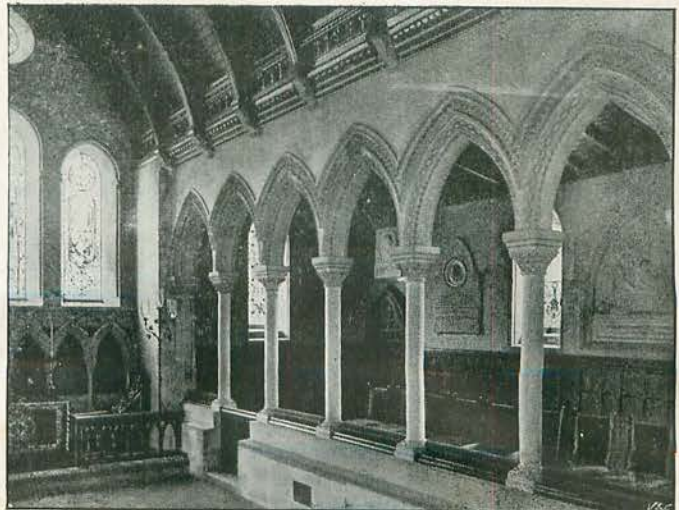
## INTERIOR OF WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH.

writers on the Queen's affection for any residence save Buckingham Palace. But when one considers the immense responsibilities resting upon her Majesty, one will acquiesce in the necessity to preserve her health at all costs. And when the Queen lives at Osborne or Balmoral she is in her best health. The charming quiet, the rich foliage, the sunshine of Osborne, have perhaps done as much as the breezes of Balmoral to aid the Queen in her daily tasks, the magnitude of which it would be difficult to over-estimate. Osborne is her Majesty's own property; every part of the estate has been developed under her instructions and plans. There she has borne many joys and sorrows, remote from the busier

haunts of men, and there she has spent holidays of well-earned rest amid family gatherings of relatives connected with every European throne. Can it be surprising that for Osborne the Queen has an especial affection?

Osborne is to most people inaccessible. The loyal tourist may, after glancing up and down a lane, climb up to the high palings and survey the white mansion embowered in trees, where his sovereign lives. But he will not be able, unless accompanied by some special permit, to pass through any of the gates which lead thereto. However he may console himself by visiting Whippingham Church, which for several years was more closely linked to the Queen and the royal family than it is now. Nowadays the Queen usually attends service in the private chapel in the grounds of Osborne, but formerly, when in residence in the Isle of Wight, her Majesty was a diligent worshipper in this village church of Whippingham.

The picturesque church of St. Mildred's, more commonly known as Whippingham Church, is the only place of worship in the village. To everyone of her Majesty's loyal subjects the building has a strong personal interest however. It stands on a slight eminence overlooking the Medina. The present edifice bears an inscription over the door which states that the



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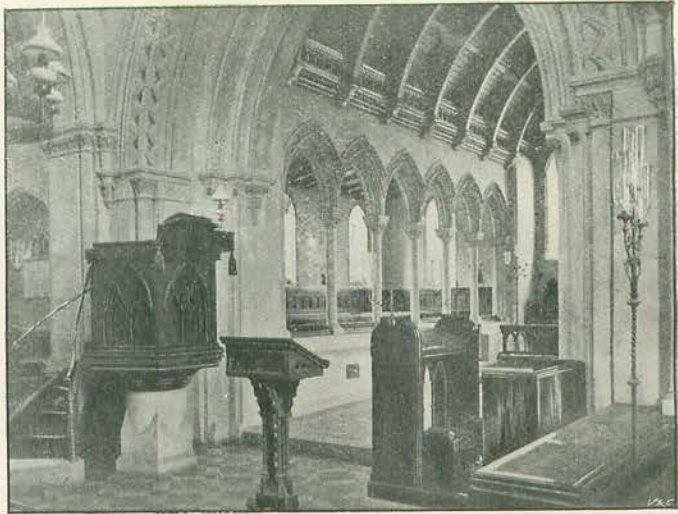
[W. H. Kirk &amp; Sons, Cowes.

## ROYAL PEW, WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH.

church "was designed by Albert, Prince Consort, and rebuilt by Queen Victoria, in conjunction with him, in the year of our Lord MDCCLXI." For our Queen the church must be crowded with memories—some joyous ones, and some of the greatest sadness.

It was here that H.R.H. Princess Beatrice was married to Prince Henry of Battenberg on July 23, 1885, and now the remains of the prince rest within a marble cenotaph, in a beautiful memorial chapel, in the north chancel, which faces the royal pew.

But the most striking feature in the church is the monument erected to the memory of the late Prince Consort. It stands within her Majesty's pew, on the eastern side of the chancel arch, and is of white marble relieved with gold. The design is a charming one, and represents two angels holding a crown of gold over the medallion of the prince. Below this there are three panels



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ROYAL HOUSEHOLD PEW, WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH.

let into archways; the two side ones contain the arms of the prince and of the Queen. The central panel bears the following inscription, the lettering being in gold—

To the beloved memory of Francis Albert Charles Augustus Emmanuel, Prince Consort, who departed this life, December 14, 1861, in his 43rd year. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. ii. 10. This monument is placed in the church, erected under his direction, by his broken-hearted and devoted widow, Queen Victoria, 1864.

Another monument which calls forth the sympathies of a nation is that erected to the memory of Princess Alice, whose death occurred so sadly on the anniversary of the death of her father, to whom she had been so devotedly attached. This beautiful piece of sculpture likewise represents two angels, one on either side of the medallion of the princess. A wreath of flowers encircles the head, while a most artistic and symbolical touch is given to the whole by the rose in the foreground that is lying just where it has fallen to the ground. This monument is inscribed—

To the dear memory of Alice Maud Mary, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland, Grand Duchess of Hesse, who departed this life in her 36th year, on the anniversary of her beloved father's death, December 14, 1878. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—St. Matthew, v. 8. This monument is placed by her sorrowing mother, Queen Victoria, 1879.



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MONUMENT ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE PRINCE CONSORT IN WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH.

The architecture of Whippingham Church, as will be seen from our



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## WHIPPINGHAM SCHOOL.

illustrations, has a distinct individuality of its own, which is particularly emphasised by its square tower. The ground plan follows the usual ecclesiastical lines, and is in the form of a Latin cross, the chancel being of an unusual length however, which gives it the appearance of being somewhat out of proportion to the rest of the building. It was built in this way in order that there might be sufficient space for the Osborne pews which are placed there. The seats occupied by the Queen and members of the royal family are on the south side of the chancel. They are approached by a private entrance near the altar.

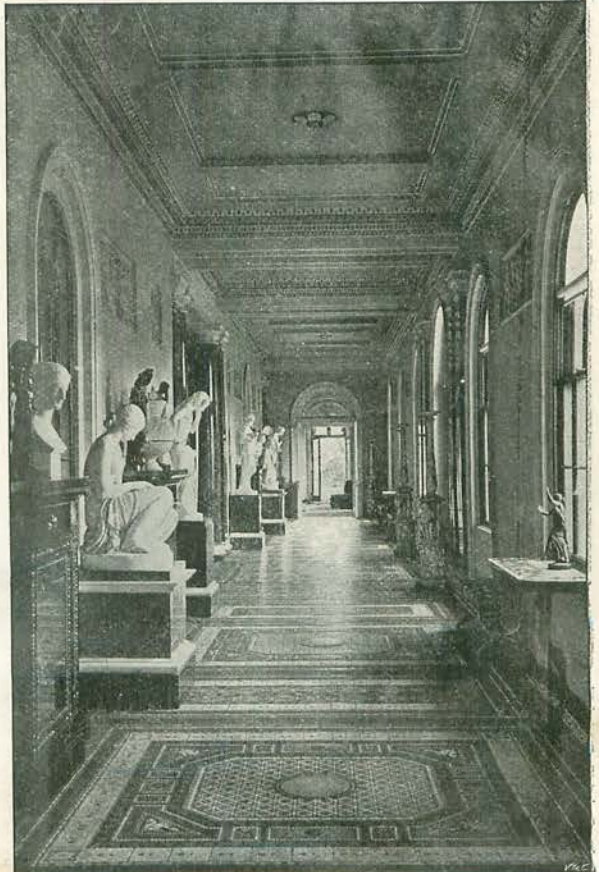
Among the many striking features in the church the font should have individual mention. It is a unique affair, being formed of a massive square piece of white marble supported by a well proportioned pier, likewise of white marble, with four smaller pillars of beautifully veined coloured stone. Around the basin runs the inscription—

Whosoever believeth and is baptised shall be saved.

The interest of my first visit to Osborne commenced at Portsmouth, inasmuch as the officials at the railway

station were greatly puzzled by the *Victoria and Albert* being at the pier to convey some person to the island.

I was going on business, with information from one of the great departments of State, and as the *Victoria and Albert* was to be at Portsmouth at that time she was ordered to wait for me. It was great fun to see a group of officials standing on the platform waiting for the stranger to alight, and to see their bewildered expressions as an ordinary personage, quite unknown to them all, alighted and quietly strolled to the royal yacht. I landed at Cowes, and jumped into a cab and drove to Osborne, again puzzling the spectators and police, who all knew the boat, but to whom I was a complete stranger. I was stopped three times *en route*, once at the lodge and twice within the



CORRIDOR AT OSBORNE.

grounds, but a magic name passed me on and my cab drew up at Osborne House.

My business was personal, and when I arrived the Queen was at lunch, and so in the next room, separated from the dining-room by folding doors, I was served with refreshment. I am not in the habit of lunching from silver plate nor with two men to

ful men, now alas! no more. I was then taken through the corridor, a long narrow room decorated in French gray and filled with beautiful statuary, delightful cabinets, charming lacquer work and glorious flowers. I waited awhile in the gray drawing-room, and immediately betook myself to examine the Queen's water-colours with which it is



MAROCCHETTI'S BUST OF THE QUEEN.



THEED'S BUST OF THE LATE PRINCE CONSORT.

STATUARY AT OSBORNE:

wait upon me, but I enjoyed the exquisite little meal spread before me and was especially struck by the beauty of the glass on the table, so thin and so finely engraved, and by the thoughtfulness that had been shown in providing three kinds of mineral waters as well as wine for me to drink at my choice.

Luncheon over, I saw Sir John Cowell and then Sir Henry Ponsonby, both delight-

hung, and understood then how very talented is her Majesty in this delightful art and of what really high merit are her works. Presently Prince Henry came in and I had a chat with him, and then I heard a whispered discussion between three of the ladies-in-waiting as to who should accompany the Queen on her drive. Tea was then served, and I had a good look at the lovely Sèvres

china and gold-mounted service from which her Majesty was to take her cup of tea ere she went for her drive.

A moment or two later the Queen was announced, and Sir Henry Ponsonby presented me, and I was in the presence of my much-loved sovereign, who was good enough to say she was glad to see me. It was many months after that when I was in "the presence" again, but so wonderful is the Queen's memory that though it was at Windsor, in much greater state, that next I spoke to her Majesty, she instantly remembered me and recollected my name. It is far easier being with the Queen at Osborne than at Windsor. She is much more approachable, and there is but little state; but she herself is always gracious, always kindly and most generous in her tender thought for others.

Princess Beatrice was with the Queen when

I was at Osborne, and behind was her Indian servant; the Princess suggested that I might like to see some of the rooms, and I was shown the great Indian room, richly decorated in Sikh work, at which the native workmen were busily engaged. The house is homely and charming, neither grand nor stately. The pictures it contains are many of them the work of the Queen, the royal family and Lord Ronald Gower. The statuary is a feature of the house; the cabinets, lacquer work and bronzes are very good; yet the house is not a palace but a home, not a show place but comfortable, and nothing impressed me more than the sight of needlework, knitting, toys, balls, rocking-horses and magazines left lying about in this most homely and comfortable of the residences of the beloved sovereign whose praise is in all the earth but whose heart is in the keeping of her affectionate people.



STATUARY AT OSBORNE:

"THE REST OF INNOCENCE"—PAUL AND VIRGINIA.