

The Royal Palaces of Denmark

Some Interesting Particulars and Striking Descriptions

Denmark, with her late king, that grand old gentleman, and her new king, of whom much is confidently hoped, has been much the subject of conversation during this past week. A good deal has been published of the simple court life of Denmark, and it will perhaps be of interest to supplement this with some small account of the Royal palaces, or, as they should be more properly styled, residences, for all are real living houses and not mere show places, as are so many foreign palaces.

The Amalienborg Palace in Copenhagen is always the winter residence of the King, the Crown Prince and Princess, and their family, the Palace being big enough to provide suitable rooms for them all. Perhaps it may best be considered as a group of palaces. These are built round a large open place, two of the buildings connected by a colonnade being inhabited by the King, while the Crown Prince and the Ministry occupy the buildings on the other side of the square. There are no grounds attached to the Amalienborg, and it is in the adjacent gardens of the Rosenborg Castle that the King takes his morning walk. The latter is now no longer used as a royal residence, and has been opened to the public as a museum, but it still remains Crown property.

Although the exterior of Amalienborg is not particularly striking, it is beautifully fitted up within, and here the few dinners and balls which his Majesty is obliged to give during the season take place. "As I walk through the suites of reception-rooms," writes Miss M. S. Warren, "the State dining-rooms and drawing-rooms, the ball-room and the throne-room, I am struck with the exceeding beauty of the decorations and the innumerable objects of art on every hand. Rare and costly paintings, oil tapestry and china, marble and parquetry, glittering ormolu and over-ornish, and the rich colours of silken upholstery, all combine for a most effective whole. The throne-room is certainly small, but it is an audience-chamber proper as there are comparatively few Court officials; and as the functions of the Danish Court are not so numerously attended as are those of some of the European Courts, it is large enough for the purpose." The throne is a simple crimson and gold chair, with the crown at the back, and stands on a dais under a canopy of crimson velvet and cream silk, richly relieved by gold. Another room, "The Rose," is famous for its painted ceiling and some precious historical pictures saved from a fire at Christiansborg Palace.

Artistic treasures crowd the drawing-rooms, not the least interesting being a picture of the King and Queen surrounded by their children—a gift presented to their Majesties on the occasion of their golden wedding. The study of the Crown Prince is full of family portraits and mementoes of his silver wedding, which he celebrated in 1884. Prince Frederick, having relieved the King of much State business in later years, spends a good deal of his time here getting through official work. The favourite home of the Crown Prince and his family is Charlottenlund, where the young people can enjoy plenty of outdoor sports. They are all devoted to bicycles, and in summer time may often be met speeding over the roads to visit their grandparents at Bernstorff, or to take a run into Copenhagen. Charlottenlund is only a few miles from the Danish capital, and is a most picturesque residence. The grounds are beautifully wooded, while the house, being close to a large deer forest, forms an ideal residence for hot weather. A pleasant breeze comes up from the Sound close by; and the Crown Prince and Princess and their children can sit under the shade of the big beeches and elms of their garden in perfect seclusion, although the main road is only a short

distance away. Other members of the Royal Family, amongst whom are Prince and Princess Waldemar, occupy the royal villas round Bernstorff Castle in the summer. The King of the Hellenes still keeps his palace at Copenhagen.

Miss M. S. Warren has also described Rosenborg Castle, where the Crown jewels are kept, and the actual throne of Denmark. This palace was designed in 1604 by the famous Inigo Jones in the Dutch Renaissance style, and is one of the handsomest buildings in the country. Each successive monarch has furnished it in accordance with his own taste and fancy, and as nothing has been taken away, it affords an opportunity of studying the history of the progress of Denmark.

The Knight's Hall or Throne Room is the largest apartment, extending over the whole length and breadth of the main building, and is magnificently decorated in the seventeenth-century style. The arched ceiling was stuccoed in 1706 by the leading Danish sculptors of the time, and on the walls are twelve large pieces of tapestry made after drawings by the painter, Peter Anderson, and hung in the reign of Christian V. The tapestries depict the most important events in the Scanian War of 1675-8. "What chiefly interests me in this hall," says Miss Warren, "is the throne at the far end, with its two seats for the King and Queen respectively. There are the ordinary dais, and a velvet canopy richly trimmed in heavy gold lace and gold embroidery, the chairs themselves are of fabulous value. That of the King consists almost entirely of ivory of the narwhal, and shows several carved allegorical figures. On the summit of the back of the chair is a ball under which on Coronation Day is placed an amethyst, said to be the largest known; this, however, for safety is kept in the regalia-room. This chair was used for the first time by Christian V. in 1671. The Queen's chair was not made until 1731. It is mainly composed of silver. On the top are recumbent figures representing the Fear of God and Charity, with the name of Jehovah between them. The seat and the back of the chair are upholstered in silver brocade. Immediately in front of the throne stand three silver lions, representative of the arms of Denmark—namely, the Sound, the Great Belt, and the Little Belt. These were used for the first time in 1670, at the funeral of Frederick III. They are reserved exclusively for coronations and royal funerals.

"At a little distance down the hall stands the royal christening font of silver-gilt beautifully embossed, the inside having a representation of the baptism of Christ. This has been used at every Danish royal christening since 1720. Underneath it is a piece of oriental carpet of such beautiful material and rare workmanship that it is practically priceless. I may also mention that in the hall are a quantity of antique silver candlesticks and several large plate-glass mirrors, all of which are in handsome and massive silver frames. The regalia-room opens from here, and the contents of this I was shown at a special favour by the request of one of the chief Court dignitaries. It is a veritable strong-room, constructed like an immense iron safe, containing a large number of most valuable articles, which have been collected since the commencement of the Oldenburg dynasty. The walls are hung with Oriental tapestry, which is used at all coronations. It would be quite impossible to describe to you the numerous costly objects I saw, and equally impossible to say anything as to their worth; but they certainly vie with any Crown collection I have seen. I noticed particularly for its richness the State sword of Christian III., the crown of Christian IV. (embossed, embossed and

encased, and literally studded with large diamonds); the sword which that monarch used for conferring Knighthood; the original orders of the Dannebrog and the Elephant; various gold vessels and crown diamonds; the orb and sceptre; the amethyst from the King's coronation chair, and the crowns of the present King and Queen. Also there are some gold candlesticks and other articles which are really part of the service, going with the christening font already mentioned. Every room in this palace is full of the most costly and rare objects, all left exactly in the order they were when the various Kings who inhabited the rooms died."

Rosenborg Castle is also noted for its wonderful collections, and also its valuable china, consisting of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Dresden, Flemish, Danish and Swedish ware. The two other principal royal castles are Frederiksborg and Fredensborg. The former, built in the time of Christian IV., stands on an island in the centre of a large lake. It was nearly destroyed by fire in 1859, but has since been restored. Fredensborg was built about a hundred years later than Frederiksborg, and was for a long time the country residence of the King and Queen, where they held those famous autumn gatherings of their illustrious relations from the Courts of England, Russia and Greece, so many years a feature of the Danish Court life. King Edward VII. was there last September with the Czar and Czaritsa. Fredensborg is remarkable for the beauty of its surroundings, its broad avenues of large elms, and terraces with fine statuary. It was in the drawing-room, decorated in white and gold, with painted ceiling and brocade furniture, that the late Queen of Denmark and the Princess of Wales (as our Queen was then), the Empress of Russia, and the Duchess of Cumberland used to assemble in the evening after dinner to play quartettes on two pianos placed side by side. This apartment is known as the garden-room, because its windows give upon brilliant flower-beds filled with peonies, roses, snap-dragons, and other flowers of which the late Queen Louise was so fond. After the death of the late Emperor of Russia these annual meetings of the royal families

ceased for a time to be held at Fredensborg, and the King and Queen entertained their royal visitors at Bernstorff, which was always their favourite home, probably from the very fact of its being handy and unpretentious as compared with the magnificence and pomp of their other castles.

Miss Sarah A. Tooley thus describes this royal residence, eight miles from Copenhagen, and the life that is, or rather was, during the time of Queen Louise, led there. "Bernstorff is an old white chateau two storeys high, and of very moderate size, built a century ago by a Count Bernstorff and purchased by the Crown as a residence for the present King when he was proclaimed successor to the throne. It has always been the favourite home of their Majesties. There the King is to be seen in the lovely woods which surround it, roaming about with his dogs, or taking a canter through the deer-forest which stretches for several miles in the vicinity. In the centre of the forest is the Hermitage, the royal hunting lodge, and from it is a beautiful view across the Sound to Sweden. Vast herds of deer are to be seen standing in picturesque groups, and in autumn many of them fall to the guns of the royal sportsmen. The late Czar was very fond of hunting in the deer-park. It is open to the public, and there in the cool of a summer night hundreds of pleasure-seekers from the city can be seen wandering through its lovely glades with laugh and jest and song."

Away.

Away with the road to Sleepstrand
And the ferry to Slumber-shore,
Away with the path to Yawn-land
And the turnpike to Nod-and-Snore.
Away with the realm of Winkie-eye
And the village of Cuddle-down,
And eke with the ocean of Bly-by-Bye
And the haven of Dreamer-town!
Away with the cruise over Draway-bay,
To the kingdom of Lashes-fall—
Away — away with them all, I say,
Away with them, once for all!
Of bed-time twaddle and cradle stuff,
Of lullabies, worst and best,
Of guides to Slumber, we've had enough—
Now — give us a little rest!

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