

1871, are "two Indian cabinets (presented by the Marquis of Hastings, and containing a splendid collection of bijouterie), Sir W. Beechey's portrait of the Duchess of Kent and her infant daughter Princess Victoria, Lawrence's beautiful portrait of the Princess Charlotte, and a superb table, the service of which is of porcelain, covered with highly-finished paintings, among which are four views of the statue-gallery in the Louvre. This was presented by Charles X. of France to Prince Leopold."

During the early years of their married life Claremont was the favourite retirement of the Queen and Prince Albert. If Kensington Palace was the home of the infancy and childhood of the Princess Victoria, yet Claremont was the home of her girlhood; and in its pleasant glades she first learnt to sketch from nature—an art which she subsequently cultivated with much success, as we know from the views in "Our Home in the Highlands." For many years after her marriage, as we learn from



VIEW IN CLAREMONT PARK.

The pleasure-grounds occupy about sixty acres. There are long avenues of beech and elm trees, besides fir, spruce, pine, cedar, cork, and other exotic specimens. The park is about three miles and a half in circumference, and the chief entrance is near the village, on the Leatherhead road. It is surrounded by a ring fence, and includes about 300 acres; but the whole estate (to which gradual additions have been made) comprises not less than 1,500 acres.

Near the mount, on which stands the observatory built by the Duke of Newcastle, is an aged cork tree, beneath which her Majesty and the Prince Consort used frequently to breakfast in fine weather, with their children playing round them.

"The Early Years of the Prince Consort," the Queen and Prince Albert were in the habit of repairing from London and Windsor to Claremont, and of "seeking such short intervals of quiet and refreshment as they could snatch from the fatigue and excitement of London life."

"This place" (the Queen writes to her uncle Leopold, in January, 1843), "has a peculiar charm for us both, and to me it brings back recollections of the happiest days of my otherwise dull childhood, when I experienced from you, dearest uncle, kindness which has ever since continued. . . . Victoria\* plays with my old bricks, &c., and I see

\* The Princess Royal, now Princess Imperial of Germany.