

the ground-floor are the old king's dining-room and drawing-room, and another small dining-room, which was used by the young princes. In some of the rooms the panelling and some ornamental fire-places remain; and here and there a few pieces of antiquated and lumbering furniture serve to recal the fact that less than a century ago these rooms had tenants. In one of the upper bed-rooms are still a few specimens of the ingenuity and industry of the princesses. The bed-room in which old Queen Charlotte died is at the top of the staircase on the second floor.

The whole place has an air of desolate grandeur. Till lately there was on the walls a small collection of pictures, but these were lately carried off by order of the queen to Buckingham Palace and Holywood. The rooms in which the poor old king was confined by his physician, Dr. Willis, adjoined the central portion of the house, and were pulled down, by order of the queen, about the same time.

The adjacent grounds are quite flat and level, but are flanked on either side by fine trees. In hot and dry summers the outlines of the foundations of the old palace may be traced on the lawn in front.

The owner of the "Dairie House," Queen Caroline, when making her improvements in Richmond Gardens, in George II.'s reign, took a long lease of this house, which had not expired in 1781, in which year the freehold was purchased from the then proprietors, in trust for her Majesty Queen Charlotte, who had previously used it as a nursery for the royal offspring. Later on the house was called the Queen's Lodge; and although the apartments are small and inconvenient, the retirement which it afforded made it a favourite place of residence with the younger branches of the family. It is not a little singular that all notice of Kew is omitted by Mr. Pyne in his magnificent and otherwise complete history of our royal residences. Over the doorway appears the date 1631, with the initials "F. S. C."

The present palace belonged to Richard Bennett, Esq., from whom it descended to the Capels, through the marriage of Dorothy, his daughter and heiress, with Sir Henry Capel, K.B., afterwards Lord Capel. Under date of March 24th, 1688, Evelyn writes, in his "Diary":—"From thence we went to Kew, to visit Sir Henry Capel's, whose orangery and myrtetum are most beautiful, and perfectly well kept. He was contriving very high palisados of reeds to shade his oranges during the summer, and painting those reeds in oil."

Lady Capel survived him, and resided at Kew

until her death, in 1721. The property next devolved on Samuel Molyneux, Esq., who had married Lord Capel's grand-niece. This gentleman was secretary to George II. before his accession to the throne, and resided here. He devoted himself to scientific studies, especially astronomy, and he erected a telescope with which, in 1725, Dr. Bradley, afterwards Astronomer-Royal, made the first observations which led to his great discoveries, and of which we shall have more to say presently. Mr. Molyneux died in the year 1728, and his widow married the notorious empiric, Nathaniel St. André (the patron of the infamous Mrs. Toft, the rabbit producer, of Godalming), who was accused of having hastened the death of Lady Elizabeth's first husband in order to marry her.

Mackay, in his "Tour through England," speaks of Mr. Molyneux's fine seat at Kew and excellent gardens, said to have been furnished with the best fruit trees in England, "collected by that great statesman and gardener, Lord Capel."

About 1730, Frederick, Prince of Wales, obtained a long lease of Kew House from the Capel family. After his death, in 1751, the Princess Dowager of Wales continued to reside here, and took great interest in the improvement of the gardens. George III. eventually bought the fee-simple of the estate from the Countess Dowager of Essex.

At this palace, in 1818, died Queen Charlotte, leaving whatever it was in her power to bequeath to her four unmarried daughters. "This," says the Hon. Miss Murray, in her "Recollections," "consisted principally of her jewels, for there was so little money that some of her personalty was sold to pay a few outstanding debts."

Throughout the metropolis and the country in general the indications of sorrow at the queen's death were unusually general and sincere. In consequence of the queen's declining health, two amendments had been made in the Regency Bill during the last session of Parliament: the first empowering her Majesty to add six new members, resident at Windsor, to her council, in the event of her absence from the palace; and the second repealing the clause which rendered necessary the immediate assembling of a new Parliament in the event of the queen's death. These amendments were very opportunely made, as, after a lingering illness of six months, which was sustained with great fortitude and resignation, her Majesty expired at Kew Palace on the 17th of November, in the seventy-fifth year of her age. She had been blessed by nature with a sound and vigorous frame, having