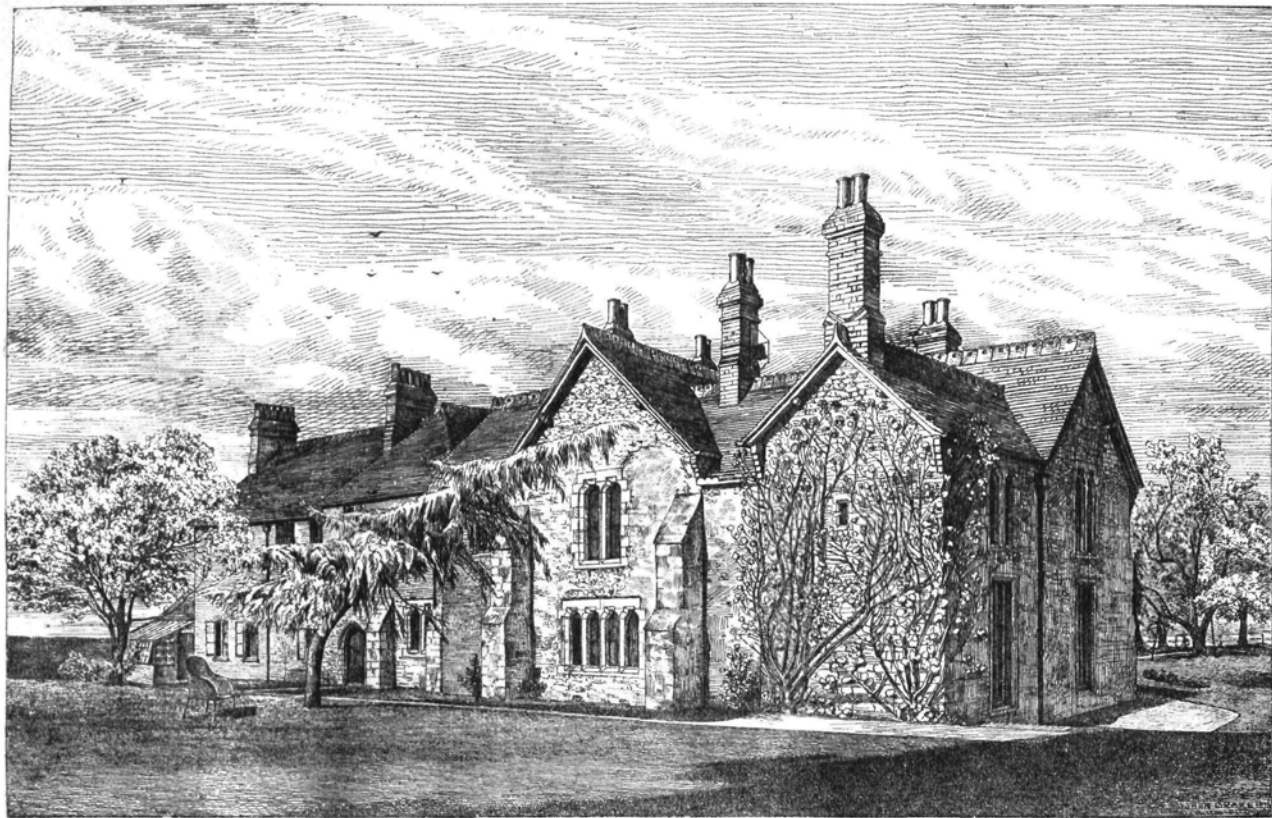




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C. F. Kell. Photo-Litho. London. E. C.

CLYFFE AT HOO RECTORY
1876
(from the South East.)

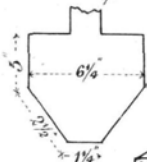
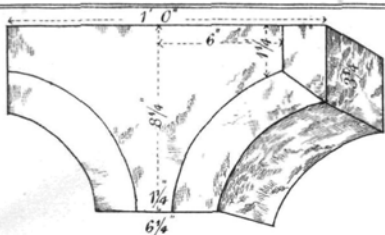
Drawn by John Drake

CLYFFE-AT-HOO RECTORY HOUSE.

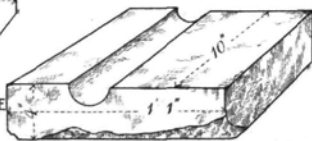
BY THE LATE REV. HENRY ROBERT LLOYD, M.A.

IN 1870 I began to examine the old Rectory House, which was very much dilapidated, having been altered and patched about so as to obliterate nearly all its ancient features. During this examination it was found that the original Rectory House had consisted of, first, from the westward, *kitchens* (destroyed, but the foundations left in the ground, the site being the stableyard in 1870); then a *great hall*, latterly subdivided by a floor and partitions into several rooms above and below, with remains of ancient windows built up in the walls; east of the hall stood the *withdrawing-room*. The first set of windows were two-lighted and transomed, with tracery in the heads (as is apparent from what remains of the south-eastern window of the hall to be seen in the cellar, *i.e.* a brick projection on the south side and eastward of the hall); the tracery, however, was not found *in situ*, but built in loosely here and there to fill up old windows and other holes. This tracery shews rebates for shutters. These windows had stone side-seats in them, and their right-hand jambs had been destroyed to widen the apertures for modern wooden insertions. Rough jambs of chalk and rubble were then substituted for the ancient splayed jambs of hewn Kentish ragstone. These windows seem to have been violently taken down, and windows of the shouldered-arch pattern substituted, one or two heads remaining in their places, though much decayed. There was no fireplace to be found in any part of the walls of the old hall; probably it was warmed by an open hearth, as in Trinity College, Cambridge, and in Penshurst Place, Kent, the smoke passing away through louvre boards in the high pitched roof. The floor of the hall seemed to have been of small coarse glazed tiles. The western

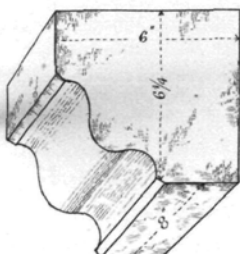
end of the hall had been perverted to a kitchen, and there we crowbarred out the three ancient buttery arches, from behind a mass of brick-chimney and fireplace masonry. From some broken stone newel-steps which were found close by, it is thought that the smallest of these three arches led to a stone turret staircase, giving access to rooms over the ancient offices, which were to the west of the hall. At the east end of the hall, on the south side, is a lofty stone arch with roll moulding, having a peculiar stop. The other arch, in the east wall of the hall, led to the withdrawing-room behind the high table on the dais. The fireplace in this wall is quite modern, having been cut into the old wall in 1870-71. The *withdrawing-room* probably is much as it ever was, except the window, which was so mutilated and altered at various times that its plan and exact design could not be made out, the old jamb-stones being dislocated and built in at random; it was therefore "restored" as a four-lighted, shouldered arch window. The door opposite to this window was the old front door in 1869. The doorway into the eastern room, now the study, contains the remains of one stone jamb of the ancient doorway; the arch stones with roll moulding having been found, displaced and fractured, under the study floor. The fireplace in the withdrawing-room is ancient, but the chimney-piece is modern, the design of it, as of the other chimney-pieces in the ground-floor rooms, having been taken from an ancient fireplace of the thirteenth century in a house at Charney, Berks, figured in *Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages*, by T. Hudson Turner: Oxford, Parker, 1851. The *study* fireplace is modern in place and design. The old fireplace (if there was one in this room) was in the west end. What the windows were cannot now be determined, unless they were like the one in the south side of it, which was a narrow loop, low in height, and with widely splayed jambs; probably this room and those above it were storerooms for the chambers on their respective floors. This room had been terribly abused; it had had a doorway cut into it on the north side, and had been used for a wood and tool house. As to the *upper rooms*, what was above the



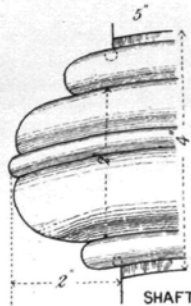
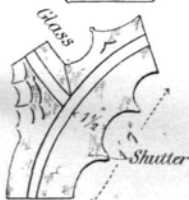
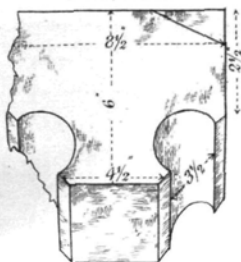
WINDOW KNEE



GUTTER STONE



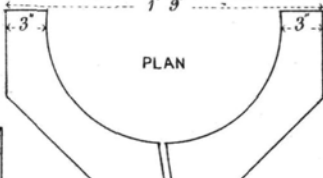
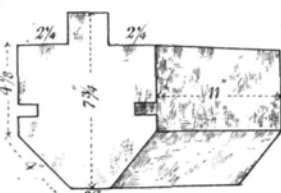
JAMB STONE



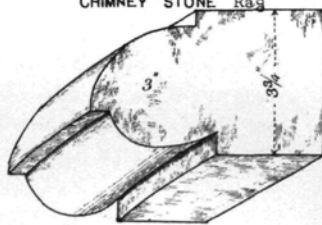
SHAFT



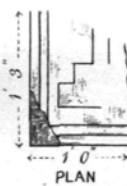
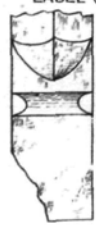
MULLION RAG



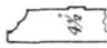
CHIMNEY STONE Rag



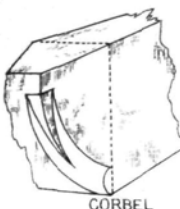
LABEL Caven Stone



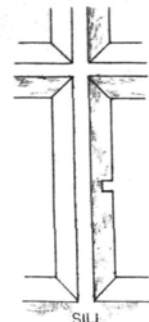
PLAN



SECTION



CORBEL



SILL

offices is not known; the hall doubtless had a high steep open timbered roof. The withdrawing-room has a room over it in which there had been an ancient window with deeply splayed jambs; the upper part of it was broken off so that its ancient state could not be determined; a miserable wooden usurper we expelled from the ancient jambs to make way for the two-lighted stone window now there. The stone arch above was made of old *voussoirs* found in and about the house. There seems to have been a communication between this chamber and one over the study adjoining it. This room and the little one at right angles to it had all their windows destroyed and filled in, and the floor having been removed they formed one lofty L-shaped room, used as the drawing-room in 1869, with the study below. The windows in these two upper rooms had stone jambs, and had been twice altered; they were so disfigured and imperfect that they were completed and restored as they now stand. The little window in the western wall of the smaller room, which was discovered built up in 1871, leads to the supposition that the room had been a storeroom. The fireplace in the larger of these two rooms is ancient; the back, composed of tiles laid flat, was covered with soot when it was found, on the wall being cut into for a new fireplace, the old one not being visible or known. There was a Tudor arched, thin bricked doorway in the north-east part of the back wall of this larger room, evidently leading into a first-floor room at the north of it, long since destroyed. The foundation of the eastern wall of this destroyed building may be seen at the north-east angle of the house, where the old wall is abruptly patched up with a buttress, composed of fragments of the ancient work, quoin-stones, the lowest stone of a chamfered door-jamb with pyramidal stop, and one of the stones which formed the head of a two or more lighted, shoulder-arched window. On the north side of the house, east of the front door, there are traces of building; also on the west side of it, farther off, in the base moulding there is the recess, with return of chamfered set-off, into which a wall, extending northwards, was built; and part of a fireplace was found beyond this wall, westward, with

foundations of other walls. There was probably a small quadrangle here, and a larger one beyond it, for stabling and offices, entered by a large pointed arch, the remains of which were found about the place. The old stables (not older than the eighteenth century, if so old) were composed of hewn stones, arch pieces, jamb-stones, quoins, and other relics of the ancient house. There are the foundation remains of an old brick wall, parallel to the house, extending along the edge of the present carriage approach, towards the yew-tree; these were discovered in planting a shrub. The garden on the north side has evidently been a fish-pond, and here were found some ancient lead weights for a fishing-net. Some old keys, a silver penny of Edward I., a silver penny of Charles I., a silver coin of Elizabeth, a groat, and a copper token of Philip Sweet, a tradesman of "Strood, in Kent," dated 1652, were found about the ground. Quantities of hewn stone, quoins, door and window jambs, arches, four pieces of window tracery, octagonal chimneys, small pillars, jambs, nookshafts, two Purbeck fragments of tombstones with cross shaft upon them and illegible letters on the edges, and two pieces of benaturas, were found under the floors, and outside the house, in the ground, and in walls of out-buildings. It is said that a chapel had been attached to the Rectory House, which is probable from the remains of such work found here, and because the residences of such eminent ecclesiastics, as the rectors of the Peculiar of Clyffe, were generally furnished with a chapel for the daily celebration, as enjoined in pre-Reformation days. It was probably on the north side of the house, adjoining the study, with its window eastward. There were found some few pieces of a church window (having no rebate for shutters) among the fragments in and about the house, which possibly belonged to this chapel. There was no ancient timber found in the house, except two or three pieces of oak bearing marks of fire, as did many stones. The house had apparently been burned down at least once, and the state of some of the ancient stone work, with iron stanchions torn out of their sockets, transoms fractured, and mullions broken, suggested that it had suffered violence and perhaps pillage in 1378 from Wat Tyler's rebels, or in 1450 from Jack Cade.