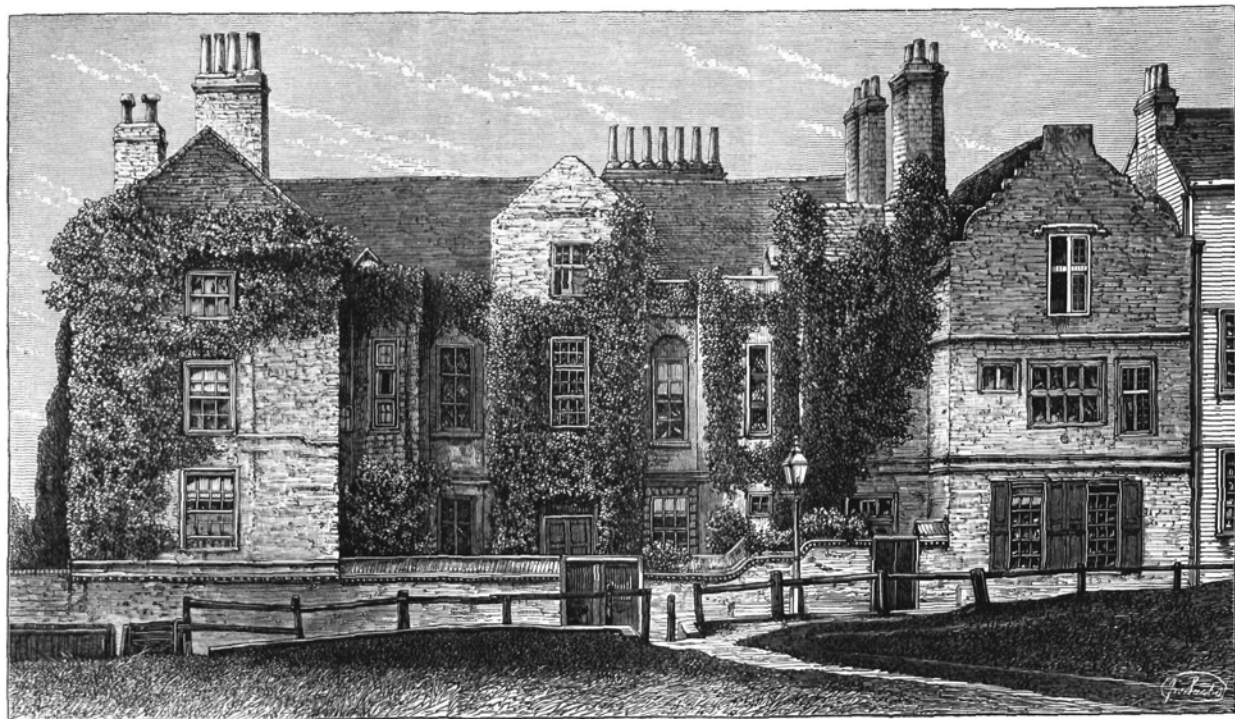




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To face p. 111.

RESTORATION HOUSE, ROCHESTER, A.D. 1880.

“RESTORATION HOUSE,” ROCHESTER.

BY WILLIAM BRENCHLEY RYE.

IN my paper on “Visits to Rochester and Chatham,” which was read at the Congress of the Archæological Institute at Rochester in July 1863, and printed in Vol. VI. of the *Archæologia Cantiana*, when speaking of Charles II.’s visit to Rochester at the time of his restoration, I hazarded an opinion that Colonel Gibbons’ house, at which the King was received and entertained, was probably “Eastgate House” in the High Street, and that that known as “Restoration House” in Crow Lane, St. Margaret’s, was then the residence of Sir Francis Clerke, M.P. for Rochester, whom Charles knighted on that occasion.* Mr. Stephen Thomas Aveling, the present owner of “Restoration House,” has kindly furnished me with valuable information, partly derived from documents in his possession, which appears to me to satisfactorily establish the fact that his house, and not “Eastgate House,” was the actual resting-place of King Charles on the 28th and 29th of May 1660.

In one of the title-deeds the mansion is described, shortly after the death of Sir Francis Clerke, as “lately in the possession of Sir Francis Clerke, and *in the occupation of Richard Gibbons.*” Francis

* On the same day the King knighted at Rochester William Swan of Denton, co. Kent; also Baynham Throckmorton, a Gloucestershire gentleman, and George Reve of Twayte, Suffolk. (Le Neve’s *Knights made by Charles II.*, 1873, p. 56.)

Clerke was the son and heir of Henry Clerke, Esq., Serjeant-at-Law, M.P., and Recorder for Rochester. He married, as his third wife, the widow of Dr. Hardy, Dean of Rochester. He therefore must have inherited the property from his father, who came into possession of "Restoration House" by his marriage with Grace, the daughter of George Morgan, gent., of Rochester, in or about the year 1607.* Francis Clerke also inherited the manor of Ulcombe, where he died in 1683, aged 62. He was twice M.P. for Rochester.†

Colonel Gibbons was not a Royalist. During the usurpation he received grants of royal and episcopal lands, which he was on the point of losing on the return of the Sovereign. Probably the friendship of Clerke for Gibbons, and his well-known loyalty, induced the King to accept Gibbons' hospitality. I am therefore inclined to think that Colonel Gibbons, who was quartered with his regiment in Rochester when he received his royal guest, was residing temporarily at "Restoration House" by favour of the owner, Francis Clerke.‡ It is noteworthy, however,

* One John Wright, to whom this and other property passed, covenanted to produce a deed, dated Dec. 5, 5 James I., whereby *Nicholas Morgan*, of the Inner Temple, conveyed to Henry Clerke, of the Middle Temple, and Grace his wife, "a messuage and several pieces of land in St. Margarets neare the citty of Rochester." It is possible that Nicholas Morgan was the first owner. Hasted (and Le Neve) call him *George Morgan*.—S. T. A.

† His son and heir Francis was also M.P. for Rochester. He died in 1691, aged 26, and was also buried at Ulcombe.

‡ Is it possible that Gibbons was *forcibly quartered* on Restoration House? Clerke seems to have made a composition in 1648, as appears by the following letter:—

"Honoured Gent.

"Your Order of y^e 10 of Decemb. last upon y^e Petition of Walter Jenkins for a p'ticuler of y^e estate of ffrancis Clarke of

that in the assessment made in Rochester the 25th of September of this year (1660) for the poll-money levied for disbanding the army, neither Clerke nor Gibbons is mentioned; the inference may be that the house was not at that time occupied.*

On the last day of June 1667 the celebrated Mr. Samuel Pepys, after a hard morning's work in viewing the dockyard and examining the defences at Chatham and Upnor, shortly after the disastrous expedition by the Dutch up the Medway, walked into Rochester Cathedral, but he had no mind to stay to the service, preferring a visit to the *White Hart Inn*,† where he had previously ordered a bed, and where he now refreshed himself with a drink (he does

Rochester, Esq., we received. In answer whereunto be pleased to understand that we have perused the bookes and papers of the late Com^{tee} for Sequestracon in this county, and cannot find any p^ticuler of the said Mr. Clarkes estate remaining. But we find that y^e 26 of August 1648 a composicion was made for y^e said M^r Clarkes Delinquency for y^e said Com^{tee} for 200^l, w^{ch} was paid accordingly.

“We rest,

“Your most humble serv^{ts}

“JOHN BROWN. G. LEESE ROBERTS. THO. MONNE.

“Maidstone 9 January 1651.

“For the honoured the Commiss^{rs} for advance of money sitting at Haberdashers hall, London.”—S. T. A.

(*Royal Composition Papers*, 3783 to 3880,
vol. xcvi., 1st series, p. 196, Record Office.)

* The names of Clarke and Gibbons are not in the assessment of 1660. (*Lay Subsidies, Record Office*.) But on July 8th, 1662, I find an entry in “*an accompt taken by me Thomas flight Bosholder in the Bourrough of Southgate Rochester of all Harthes or Chimnies in the same*—S^r frances Clarke fifteene, 15^s.”—S. T. A.

† The White Hart Inn is still in existence, and the date of its establishment (Richard II.'s reign) is noted on it.—S. T. A.

not tell us what this beverage was). The streets were full of soldiers, and he thought it "very odd" when he heard the "Scotch march beat by the drums before the soldiers." Afterwards, in company with his friend Mr. Creed, he went over the Castle, and then strolled into the fields—"a fine walk, and there saw Sir F. Clerk's house, which is a pretty seat,* and into the cherry garden,† and here met with a young, plain, silly shopkeeper and his wife, a pretty young woman, and I did kiss her, and we talked and eat our dinners together; and then to walk in the fields till it was late, and then to our inn, to supper, and then to bed, (this was 'corded') but could get no sheets to our bed, only linen to our mouths—and so to sleep."‡

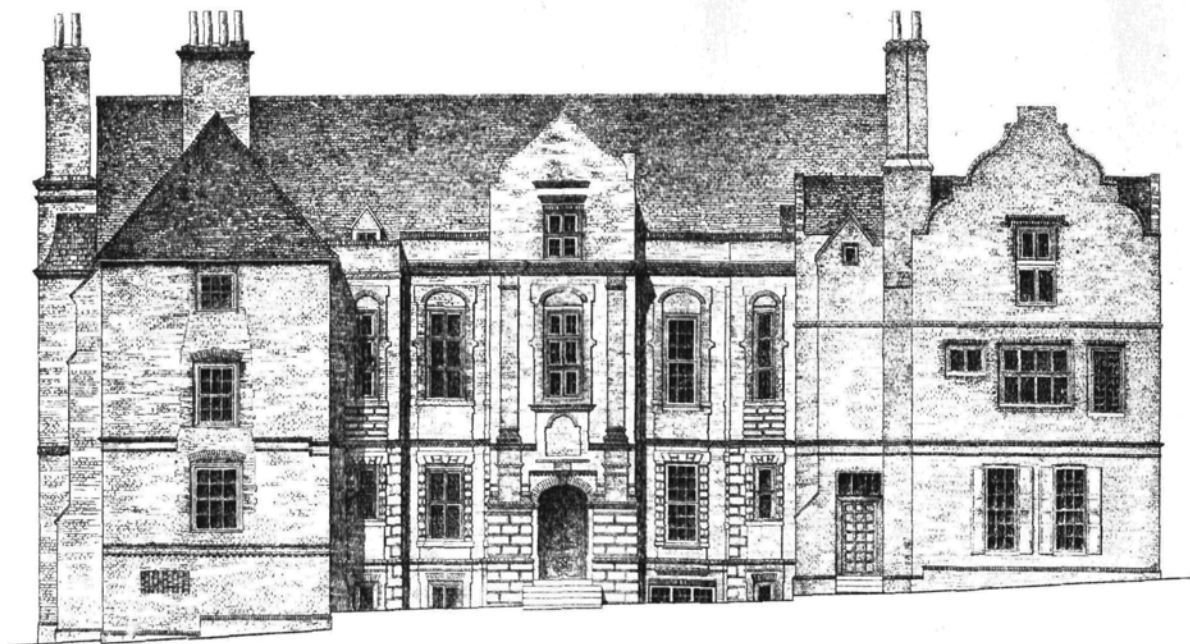
The well-known picturesque old mansion appears to be of the time of Elizabeth or James I., and is an interesting example of domestic architecture of the period. The Rev. Thomas Austen (Kentish Collection, *circa* 1760, Add. MS. 24270, Brit. Mus.) says, "Mrs. Baynard's great brick house in Crow Lane, I am told, was built by Sir T. Knight, whose family still exists

* Sir Francis Clerke was one of the Commissioners on the *Chest* at Chatham with Pepys in 1662. (*Diary*, Edit. Bohn, i., 349.)

† One of the title-deeds, 26 Feb. 1693, transferring the property to William Bokenham, has the following: "And all that Orchard or little piece of ground, planted with fruite trees, containeing by estimac'on half an acre more or lesse lying in St. Margaret aforesaid, and adjoyneing or lying neare to the yard and gardens belonging to the said capitall messuage, and now or late in the occupac'on of Roger Pilcher, gardener." Roger Pilcher paid hearth-tax, July 11, 1662—"rec^d of Roger Pilcher for 3 fire hearths, 3^s."—S. T. A.

‡ This quotation from Pepys occurs only in the recent edition of the *Diary* by the Rev. Mynors Bright, 1875, etc.

RESTORATION HOUSE.
ROCHESTER.



FRONT ELEVATION.

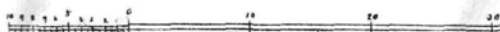
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H. BAKER
MEAS. DRAWN 1882.

C.F. Kell, Photo-Litho. Castle St. Holborn, London, E.C.

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SCALE



MERGE & DRAWN. H.BAKER
1983

G.F.Kell, Photo-Litho. Castle St. Holborn, London, E.C.

in the county.* In 1681 it was occupied by David Jones, a physician," who died two years afterwards, and was buried in St. Margaret's Church (*Reg. Roff.*, p. 727). In Sir F. Clerke's time the house was considerably altered, and at one time it was divided into two residences, one of which was during many after years used for a Ladies' Boarding School.

Mr. Aveling informs me that he has lately discovered what seems to have been a private communication, through a panel, between the room in which Charles is said to have slept and the roof, and also with the room below and the basement. The entrance to the underground passage is 14 feet below the basement (which on that side of the house is on level ground), and consequently 14 feet below ground. But it is curious that this underground passage does not leave the house quite at right angles. Over the passage on every floor are windows cut through a wall 4 feet thick, at the same angle as the passage.

In the house there is some very good tapestry, which, according to tradition, was given by the "Merry Monarch" after his visit. The costume of the figures is of this period, and the tapestry was probably made at the royal works at Mortlake. "Restoration House," with its imposing front, quaint old gables, and clothed with luxuriant ivy, is a favourite subject with artists, and is seen to the best advantage from the "Vines" field—whilom the *Vineyard* of the monks of Rochester.† An excellent

* Austen was wrong about Sir T. Knight building the house; the Knights did not get possession of it until early in the eighteenth century, and in 1760 Thomas Knight of Godmersham sold it to John Baynard.—S. T. A.

† The Account ("Comptus") of brother John Dane, the Cellarer of Rochester Priory, rendered 7 Ric. II. (1384), supplies

lithographic sketch of it from this point of view was made by Mr. W. Dadson in 1825 ; in the foreground is shewn the familiar group of stately elms, which then appear in vigorous growth.

the following curious items of payment in connection with the Vineyard of the Monks: "Custos Vinearum. In primis solut. i homini fodienti vineas hoc anno, x s. Item solut. ii garcionibus mundantibus vineas per annum, vii s. unde i iiij s. In iii vangis [spades] emptis cum ferris, x d. In i ferro pro tribulo [beetle or mallet], iiij d. In iii pipekoleres empt., vi s. j d.—Summa, xxiiij s. iiij d." (*Dr. John Thorpe's MSS. in Library of Soc. of Antiquaries*, bundle 178.) In an early grant mention is made of "terrulam, que jacet inter Crowlane et Vineam predicti Prioris et Conventus." (*Reg. Roff.*, p. 533.)