



THE DOCTOR'S WORLD

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
CLAVER MORRIS, 1659 - 1727

PAUL HYLAND

ROUTLEDGE

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THE DOCTOR'S WORLD

This is the story of the extraordinary life of Claver Morris and the society in which he lived. After his marriage at Chelsea in 1685, Claver Morris moved to Somerset where he established an outstanding reputation for his work as a physician. His diaries show us how he worked with apothecaries and surgeons, and travelled widely to treat all kind of patients, from the children of the poor to those of the landed gentry. The diaries also tell us about the joys and pains of Claver's personal and family life, and of his various intrigues.

Claver Morris was a man of many talents: immensely enterprising, knowledgeable, sociable and loving. His house was always filled with music, guests and entertainments. Yet he was often faced with disputes and troubles partly of his own making – as when he courted a bishop's daughter, or stole some land to build his Queen Anne house.

The Doctor's World provides a unique portrait of a physician living and working through the political and religious turmoils that beset the nation at the turn of the eighteenth century. Tales of medical treatments, clandestine marriages and self-serving priests are entwined with famous acts of treason and rebellion, and the pleasures and tragedies of daily life.

This meticulously researched book will appeal to all readers of social, political, medical and family history.

Paul Hyland is an award-winning teacher and Emeritus Professor of History. He is a specialist in Eighteenth Century Studies and editor of *The Enlightenment: a Sourcebook and Reader*, published by Routledge.



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THE DOCTOR'S WORLD

The Life and Times of Claver Morris,
1659–1727

Paul Hyland

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It was long ago, on a trip to Virginia, that I came across Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale: the life of Martha Ballard based on her diary, 1785–1812* (New York, 1990). I was hooked. Ulrich showed how, through 'the very dailiness, the exhaustive, repetitious dailiness' of Martha's humble record of her work in Maine, the life of a whole community could be evoked. I had been reading *The Diary of a West Country Physician AD 1684–1726*, edited by Edmund Hobhouse (1934) and was wondering how much of the original dairy, 'for the most part a bald record of events', Hobhouse had reproduced. After examining the manuscripts it was clear that about 20 per cent of the original diary had been published, plus a tiny fraction of a much larger body of accounts.

Like Martha's 'plain, matter-of-fact' daily notes, Claver's 'bald record of events' were private and full of what most historians who had looked at Martha's diary saw as 'trivia'. But Claver's writings revealed his distinctive character and voice, and showed that he, like Martha, believed that 'living was to be measured in doing. Nothing was trivial.' Faced with well over half a million words in the manuscript diaries and accounts, and a cast of thousands, thanks to Ulrich I thought it might be possible to tell the doctor's tale.

I am especially grateful to the late Paul Hobhouse and to his wife, Jeannie Hobhouse, for enabling me to work on the Claver Morris manuscripts, and for encouragement and patience during the long gestation of this book. Niall Hobhouse tracked down a book of Claver's accounts that had been missing for over seventy years and provided tremendous support through the final stages of research. Staff at Drawing Matter, Shatwell Studios in Somerset, where the manuscripts are held, have also been exceptionally helpful, and I am particularly grateful to Niall Hobhouse for permission to reproduce extracts and images from the manuscripts, and to Craig Stevens for much of the photographic work herein.

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I have also been helped by citizens of Wells, where I grew up. As well as school-friends, I should like to thank Pat Robinson, a former mayor who shared her knowledge of the city; William Smith, a former archivist of Wells who drew my attention to sources that I might otherwise have overlooked; and David Walker, curator of the Wells and Mendip Museum, who kindly took photographs for me of the Symes map of the city. I am grateful for the help of staff at the Cathedral School, the Chapter Office, the Public Library, and the Wells and Mendip Museum. Further afield, I should like to thank staff at Bath Record Office, the British Library, Dorset History Centre, the National Archives, North Devon Record Office, the Public Record Office, and Somerset Heritage Centre.

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Finally, without my wife, Pauleen, who has shared all the joys and pains of bringing Claver's world to life, there would be no book at all. What appears here (at least in all the best bits) is as much hers as it is mine. X

Paul Hyland, Bath.

FAMILIES & FIGURES

ANNE (QUEEN): daughter of James II, reigned 1702–1714.

ARCHER: Edmund, married to Elizabeth, was archdeacon of Taunton, and later of Wells.

AYLESBURY: William, a clergyman, married to Frances.

BAMPFYLDE: a gentry family from Devon. John was married to Margaret, the daughter and heir of Francis Warre of Hestercombe, near Taunton. Sir Coplestone Bampfylde was John's brother.

BARON: a large Wells family including: the brothers, Matthew (a mercer) and Charles (an apothecary), both mayors; and William and Martha of New Street, and their daughters Hester, Anne, Martha and Katherine.

BATHURST (RALPH): dean of Bath and Wells.

BEAL (HANNAH): one of Claver's maids.

BERKELEY: a gentry family with several branches. At the Pylle branch, near Shepton Mallet, colonel Edward Berkeley was married to Elizabeth (née Ryves). Their children included: Maurice, MP for Wells, who did not marry; Elizabeth, who did not marry; and William, who married Anne, the daughter of Sir Edward Seymour. At the Maiden Bradley branch, near Bruton, Sir Maurice Berkeley, 3rd viscount Fitzhardinge, had two daughters by his wife Anne (née Lee): Eleanor, who married Hugh Montgomery, 2nd earl Mount Alexander; and Jane, who married James Gendrault.

BRAGGE: a gentry family from Devon. William I (m. Mary Drewe) had four daughters (Mary, Anne, Elizabeth and Margaret) and a son and heir, William II (m. Edith Larder). William II and Edith had several children, including their son and heir, William III, who did not marry.

BRAILSFORD (MATTHEW): dean of Bath and Wells, who did not marry.

BRICKENDEN (THOMAS): a residential canon of Wells. His son, Edmund, was also a vicar.

BRIDGES (HARRY): the son of Sir Thomas (squire of Keynsham), and the father of James.

BRYDGES: Marshall was a residential canon and chancellor of the bishop's court, married to Frances (née Creighton). His brother, William, was a barrister.

BULL: a large gentry family from Shapwick near Street. Henry, a barrister, married Elizabeth, by whom he had three children: Henry, Elizabeth, and Eleanor. Eleanor married George Dodington, and her son, Henry, inherited the Shapwick estate.

BURLAND (JOHN): gentleman and heir to the manor of Steyning in north Somerset.

CHAMPION (GEORGE): Claver's senior man-servant.

CHARLES II: returned from exile at the Restoration in 1660, he ruled until 1685.

CHEYNEY (THOMAS): residential canon and bishop Ken's chaplain.

CHICHESTER: Sir Arthur Chichester (3rd bart.) married Elizabeth Drewe. Their eldest son, Sir John (4th bart.) married Anne, the daughter of John Leigh of Newport.

CLARK (WILL): Claver's man-servant.

CLAVER: a farming family from Dorset. Hannah was Claver Morris's mother. James, an apothecary in Salisbury, was Claver's cousin.

COMES (RICHARD): a gentleman attorney of Wells, married to Sarah, by whom he had several sons.

COWARD: William, a wealthy lawyer and MP for Wells, was the father of William (also an MP for Wells) and Bridget, who married George Hamilton.

COXE: John, of Leigh in Wiltshire, married Margaret (née Hippisley) of Ston Easton manor. They had several children, including Ann, Susannah, and their son and heir John Hippisley-Coxe.

CREECH (THOMAS): vicar of Butleigh and the chapelry of Baltonsborough, near Glastonbury.

CREIGHTON: Robert, married to Frideswide (née Piers), was the precentor of Wells cathedral. Their children included Robert (a schoolmaster), Katherine (m. Henry Layng), Margaret (m. John Pope) and Frances (m. Marshall Brydges).

CUPPER (RICHARD): a Wells apothecary and shopkeeper. His son, Richard, was also an apothecary.

CURTIS (JOHN): Claver's man-servant.

DAVIE: Frances, daughter of Sir William, was married to Sir George Chudleigh of Devon, by whom she had several children.

DAWE: Edmund I, lord of the manor at Ditcheat, was married to Anne (née Salmon), by whom he had several children including: Edmund II (m. Martha Hill), Anne (m. George Farewell), Elizabeth (m. Robert Jeanes), Charles (the father of Nancy and Elizabeth), and Thomas. Edmund II had several children, including his heir, Hill Dawe.

DREWE: a gentry family from south Devon. Edward was a canon of Exeter cathedral and archdeacon of Cornwall.

EDWARDS: Thomas, an attorney and MP for Bristol and Wells, was married to Mary who inherited a fortune from her uncle, Edward Colston.

- EVANS:** a Catholic family in Wells. John and Anne Evans of the Liberty had a daughter and heir, Mary.
- FAREWELL:** George, rector of South Cadbury, was married to Anne Dawe by whom he had two sons, George and Thomas. He also had a brother, Nathaniel, married to Susan Coker, and a sister Ann, who was married to the choral vicar Farewell Perry.
- FOX (BARUCH):** a wealthy mercer from Sherborne.
- GENDRAULT:** James, a Huguenot refugee, married Jane, a daughter of Maurice Berkeley, 3rd Viscount Fitzhardinge. Their children were Charles, Jane, and Ann.
- GEORGE I:** the first Hanoverian king, ruled 1714–1727.
- GODDARD (EDWARD):** a Dorset gentleman, married to Claver's sister, Hannah, by whom he had a son, William.
- GOULD:** Sir Henry, of Sharpham Park near Glastonbury, was a Justice of the King's Bench, married to Lady Sarah (née Davidge). Their son, Davidge, was a barrister, and their daughter, Sarah, was married to Colonel Edmund Fielding, by whom she had seven children, including Henry and Sarah Fielding.
- GREENE:** family and relations of Grace Green, living in London, Middlesex and Wiltshire.
- GWYN (FRANCIS):** was married to his cousin, Margaret Prideaux, from whom he inherited Forde Abbey in Dorset.
- HAMILTON:** George, a son of the 6th earl of Abercorn, was married to Bridget Coward of Wells, by whom he had eleven children.
- HARDRES (THORESBY):** citizen of London and guardian of Grace and Elizabeth Greene.
- HARRINGTON:** a large gentry family of talented musicians. John Harrington, lord of the manor at Kelston, had many brothers and sisters, including Henry, William, Robert, Edward, and Helena, who married Lawrence Huddleston, the rector of Kelston.
- HEALY:** William, married to Mary, was a doctor of Law and clerk to the dean and chapter. Their children included Mary (m. Thomas Cook, rector of Thorncombe), Phyllis (m. Francis Warre, rector of Cheddon Fitzpaine), and Richard, the vicar of St Cuthbert's, who was married to Mary.
- HELYAR:** an old gentry family from south Somerset. William I married Rachael Wyndham. Their son, William II, married Joanna Hole by whom he had seven children. Their son, William III, married Mary Goddard.
- HILL:** Samuel, married to Grace, was rector of Kilmington and archdeacon of Wells. Their children included two sons: William, a choral vicar and vicar of Dulverton; and Sam, who also became rector of Kilmington.
- HIPPISLEY:** Preston married Susannah (née Yorke), and their daughter Margaret (m. John Coxe) was their heir.
- HOOPER (GEORGE):** bishop of Bath and Wells. His daughter, Abigail, married John Prowse.
- HORNER:** Thomas, of Mells near Frome, was married to the heiress Susanna Strangways. Their daughter, Elizabeth, became their heir.

- HUGHES (WILLIAM):** chancellor of the bishop's court, married to Cecilia, and father of several children.
- IRISH:** a gentry family from the Liberty, Wells. John (a son of Matthew), a mercer in the Market Place, was married to Elizabeth. They had two daughters, Grizelda and Elizabeth.
- JAMES II:** the Catholic brother of Charles II, reigned 1685–1689. Married to Mary of Modena, he was the father of 'The Pretender', James Francis Edward Stuart (born 1688).
- JEANES:** Robert, of West Pennard near Glastonbury, was married to Elizabeth Dawe.
- KEEN:** Christopher, a merchant from a gentry family, was married to Jane (née Berkeley), the widow of James Gendrault, and later to Rose Aldworth. Sarah Keen (daughter of Francis) was married to William Westley.
- KEN (THOMAS):** Bishop of Bath and Wells.
- KIDDER (RICHARD):** Bishop of Bath and Wells, and father of Susanna and Anne.
- LAYNG:** Henry, subdean of the cathedral and later archdeacon of Wells, was married to Katherine, a daughter of Robert Creighton.
- LEIGH:** John, of Newport on the Isle of Wight, was married to Anne Bragge. Their daughter, Anne, married Sir John Chichester.
- LONG:** George, son of the republican Sir Lislebone Young of Downside, was married to Mary, daughter of Marmaduke Jennings. Their children included William, Elizabeth and Deborah. William's children included William, Elizabeth, Frances and Anne.
- LOUIS XIV:** King of France, 1643–1715.
- LUCAS (CHRISTOPHER):** a surgeon in Wells.
- MALET:** William, a Wells attorney, was married to Margaret Bailey, by whom he had a daughter, Ann.
- MARTIN:** a gentry family of East Pennard, near Glastonbury. Gerard was married to Mary, but they had no children.
- MATTOCKS (GEORGE):** a barrister of the Liberty in Wells, married to Martha, with a daughter, Mary.
- MILLS (HENRY):** the headmaster of Wells Grammar School.
- MITCHELL (MOLLEY):** one of Claver's longest-serving maids.
- MOGG:** a gentry family from Farrington Gurney. John and Dorothy had several children, including Richard and Dorothy, who married Thomas Churchey of Wincanton.
- MUTTLEBURY:** a Catholic family of Wookey manor, near Wells. Thomas and Mary had many children.
- NEWCOURT:** John and Mary of Ivythorn manor near Street, had a son and daughter.
- NEWMAN:** Francis Holles Newman of North Cadbury, had nine children with his wife, Eleanor Mompesson. Of these, his heir Francis (Frank) married Dorothy Gifford but had no children. Nor did another son, Henry, rector of South Cadbury. But a further son, Charles, married Hannah Sandys and had five children.
- NOOTH:** James was a clerk and a choral vicar. Jane, his wife, was a nurse and midwife.

- PENN (WILLIAM):** Quaker, writer and founder of Pennsylvania.
- PHELIPS:** Somerset landed gentry. Edward inherited Montacute House from his uncle who was married to Lady Edith. He married his uncle's daughters, first Ann (by whom he had two daughters, Anne and Bridget), and then Elizabeth (by whom he had a son and heir, Edward).
- PIERS:** a large family descended from William I, bishop of Bath and Wells (d. 1670). His son, William II, archdeacon of Taunton (d. 1682), married Mary Coward. Their first son, William III, was married to Katherine, daughter of William Coward. Their second son, Captain Thomas, married Mary and had one surviving son, Thomas. Their daughter Frideswide married Robert Creighton, the precentor. William III and Katherine had a son, William IV, who became MP for Wells and had several children.
- PITT:** William, of Kensington and Cricket Malherbie in Somerset, was married to Jane. Their only son, Samuel, was married to Mary Speke.
- POPE (JOHN):** vicar of St Cuthbert's, Wells, was married to Margaret, a daughter of Robert Creighton.
- POULETT:** Francis (second son of John Poulett, 1st baron of Hinton St George) was married to Catherine, the sister of the precentor Robert Creighton.
- PROWSE:** John, from a gentry family near Axbridge, was married to Margaret Bragge, and later to Abigail Hooper, the bishop's daughter.
- REBOTIER (ELIAS):** a Huguenot refugee who was Bishop Hooper's chaplain and the rector of Chelwood.
- ROGERS:** Mary was a midwife, and her husband, George, a choral vicar.
- SACHEVERELL (HENRY):** High Church preacher and chaplain of St Saviour's, Southwalk.
- SALMON:** William was a wealthy draper who, like his father and grandfather, was a mayor of Wells. His brother, John, was an apothecary.
- SANDYS (EDWYN):** archdeacon of Wells and rector of Yeovilton. He had six children by his wife, Elena.
- SELLECK (JOHN):** archdeacon of Bath. He had a sister, Joan, and several children, including John and Nathaniel.
- SEYMOUR:** an aristocratic family with several branches. Anne, the only daughter of Sir Edward Seymour, married William Berkeley of Pylle, the younger brother of Maurice. Lady Katherine, a daughter of Charles Seymour, 6th duke of Somerset of Petworth House, Sussex, married Sir William Wyndham.
- SHIRLEY (NICHOLAS):** a Dorset gentleman, married to Claver's sister, Ruth.
- STARR:** Richard was one of Claver's tenants, and Anne was his sister.
- STEARE (ROBERT):** a mayor of Bridgwater.
- STRODE:** a large gentry family with branches at Downside, Shepton Mallet and Pilton. Edward (Ned) of Downside had many children, including Edward, John, Elizabeth and Mercy (m. Francis Wyndham).
- TAYLOR:** a large family in Wells, including John, an apothecary, and the children of Robert and Frances Taylor: Robert, a grocer; Charles, a builder; Joseph, a grocer; Benjamin, an innkeeper; and Frances.

TREVELYAN: Sir John, of Nettlecombe Court, was married to Susanna, by whom he had several children.

WESTLEY: William, from a gentry family, was clerk to the dean and chapter. His first wife was Sarah (née Keen), and his second wife was Frideswide, widow of Edmund Brickenden.

WHITE (ANNE): the nanny for Grace and Elizabeth Greene.

WILDING (BENJAMIN): headmaster of Sherborne school.

WILLIAM AND MARY: ruled as joint sovereigns from 1689 until Mary's death in 1694, after which William ruled alone until 1702.

WILTSHIRE (GEORGE): a choral vicar.

WYNDHAM: a large landed gentry family with several branches. Thomas, of Witham Friary near Frome, was MP for Wells. His nephew, Sir Edward, of Orchard Wyndham near Exmoor, was the father of Sir William Wyndham who married Lady Katherine Seymour, a daughter of the 6th duke of Somerset.



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P. OF GLOUCESTER S.

BRISTOL

Marshfield

Wreahall

Cold Aston

Bedminster

Bristolton

Shire Stoules

Chelvey

Cainham

BATH

Bourton

Whitchurch

Wilton

Barrow

Combton

Tiwerton

Brookly

Whitchurch

Wiltcomb

K. Seymour

Combton

Preiston

Congerbury

Combton

Fernborough

Wrighton

Combton

Phillips Norton

Chew Stoke

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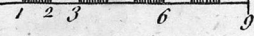
3 Longit. W. from London

40'

30'

20'

English Miles.



PART OF

DORSETSHIRE

3

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40'

30'

20'

20'

10'

51'

50'



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PART ONE

1659–1697



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1

GRACE

It was a three-mile ride from the heart of London through Westminster and across the fields to Chelsea. On other days, the reports of highwaymen lurking on the commons might have led some travellers to prefer the safer but longer up-river journey to the village. But, on Tuesday 13th October 1685, the progress of the coaches carrying the wedding party of Claver Morris and Grace Greene from their homes and lodgings in the city was not interrupted.

Before arrival at the old brick church there was much to see along the autumnal riverbank: the fine houses of courtiers and merchants, the ‘physic garden’ of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries now boasting two new cedar trees, and the foundations of the new Royal Hospital. These were all signs of Chelsea’s appeal to people well beyond the small farmers, artisans and servants who made up the body of the population. Inside the church the appeal was even more apparent: there was a cornucopia of monuments to former residents, from the chapel and tomb of Sir Thomas More to the marble sarcophagus of Lady Jane Cheyne, a recently-departed benefactress.¹

Looking around, Claver Morris and his guests would have known that ‘Chelsy near London’, as he put it, was by any measure a long way from his father’s parish, deep in Dorset. But at the age of twenty-six, as an Oxford-educated Bachelor of Medicine and *Extra Licentiate* of the Royal College of Physicians, hard-working and ambitious, he had everything before him. So did Grace Greene, who was just twenty-two. As the daughter of John Greene, a woollen draper and member of the Clothworkers’ Company of London, Grace had grown up in the city. She was still a baby when the Great Plague had taken an official toll of 68,596 souls in London during the autumn of 1665. A year later, the Great Fire, blamed on ‘barbarous Papists’, had destroyed 13,200 houses, St Paul’s Cathedral and most of the city’s churches. This included the two houses that her father owned off Fleet Street,

in the parish of St Dunstan in the West. During the re-building, Grace's mother, Mary, had rented a house in Chelsea, and it was here in the hamlet of Knightsbridge that she died on 18th May 1674. She had died so quickly it was necessary for those present – her mother Elizabeth Tyrell, her maid Anne White, and Bernard Skelton, a local clerk – to compose a 'Memorandum' on her dying wishes.² They expected this would stand in place of a signed last will and testament, and it did.

Aside from small bequests to servants and relations, Mary Greene left everything to be divided equally between her young daughters, Elizabeth and Grace. As with most orphans, their prospects depended as much upon the character of their relatives as upon the size and nature of the inheritance. Among their relations, Mrs Tyrell was granted an annuity of £10 and released from a debt of £50. She would take at least a passing interest in her granddaughters' development over the next few years. So would aunts and uncles from the Willoughbys and the Greens; old gentry families from little villages near Salisbury. Aunt Willoughby and Captain Greene would be fully reimbursed for the costs of accommodating and feeding the girls during occasional visits they would make in the years ahead. So, the daily joys and troubles of bringing up the girls fell largely on the shoulders of their mother's maid, Anne White. Starting with two bibles and two silver spoons, she would oversee the purchase of all the silk and cotton gowns, petticoats, aprons, stockings, scarves and hoods, as well as the coats, gloves, shoes and all the other 'necessary things' needed 'for ye children' over the next ten years. She would accompany the girls on visits to their relations in Wiltshire, and nurse them through their illnesses. By 1685, after ten years of looking after them, Anne ('Nan') White would have known the girls as though they were her own.

Alongside her expenses, Nan White received wages of £10 a year, plus an initial gift of £10 from Mary Greene's estate. This was sufficient to secure her loyalty and even to allow her to make some savings. So, by the time of Grace's wedding Nan could afford to lend an out-of-pocket Claver Morris £20 – something that she would surely not have done had she thought him an unsuitable match for Grace. A few months later, when Grace and Claver were still both short of cash, she did the same again, this time lending them each ten shillings and £5. Claver was not rich, but more important to Nan was the fact that standing at the altar was a healthy young man from the West Country: a man of middling stature and good family; a firm believer in the Church of England; well-mannered, well-educated and well-dressed; highly sociable, generous, inventive and inexhaustible; maybe a little vain and certainly strong-minded, but almost certainly in love with Grace.

For all Nan White's industry, legal responsibility for the girls and the management of their inheritance was entrusted to executors: Mr Joseph Hall, a mercer, and Mr Thoresby Hardres, a linen draper and fishmonger, both citizens of London. As Joseph Hall did not trouble himself with any kind of work for the estate, it was vital that Thoresby Hardres should be trustworthy and capable of presenting fair accounts of money spent for occasional scrutiny by the Court of Aldermen in London. His first task was to orchestrate the funeral arrangements. These were

extensive, including the hire and purchase of coaches, hearse and coffin to carry Mary Greene and all the mourners from Knightsbridge to the Guildhall for overnight 'watching', and then for a half-mile procession to St Botolph's in Aldersgate. In all, the making of mourning clothes and gloves for Elizabeth and Grace, the payments to the parish, plus a £1 sermon and other costs amounted to over £114. £50 of this was spent on mourning clothes and £20 on mourning-rings, including a special one for Nan White. These costs could be met quite comfortably from the cash that Hardres gathered in the 'ready money' of coins and gold left in Mary's home, the sale of her household goods, her silver-plate and lace, and the collection of small debts. But this was just the beginning of his work.

At a time when orphans' legacies were often squandered or stolen, there could be no doubt that Mary's trust in putting her daughters' future in the hands of Thoresby Hardres needed to be well placed. The principal assets were two houses off Fleet Street in Crane Court: one on the east side leased to a merchant Mr Samuel Lawrence for £50 a year, and a slightly smaller one, 'the lesser house' where the Greens had lived, on the west side, now let to the earl of Suffolk for £40. Another resident, Dr Nicholas Barbon (son of the radical Puritan, Praise-God Barebone), a physician-turned-property-developer after the Great Fire and a builder of new houses in Crane Court, owed £60. Thereafter, two other £200 loans made to the young linen-draper John Dennett – who Hardres would call his 'loving friend', and with whom Elizabeth and Grace would occasionally stay – were the only other major assets of Mary Greene's estate.

After accounting for the costs of house repairs, legal fees and taxes, there would be an income of about £100 each year; a respectable sum for a family from the 'middle orders' of society. Hardres soon set about securing this, signing longer leases on the houses and recovering the loans to Barbon and Dennett so that £400 could be invested at a better rate in the Chamber of London, run by the city corporation. In all these steps he was sure-footed.³ But having no wife or children of his own to call upon for advice, he might well have felt less confident about the paternal responsibilities that Mary Greene had placed upon him, possibly very unexpectedly.⁴

As soon as he had retained Nan White to care for the girls and moved them to a home in Hackney, the most pressing question that Hardres faced was what to do about their education. Based upon centuries of religious teaching and patriarchal thinking that women were less capable of reasoning than men, and best suited to supporting life in the domestic sphere, the proper education or 'embellishments' of a girl were usually considered as being very different from those needed for a boy, particularly if the boy were to be sent to university. But a good education was no less important for girls of a middling or higher rank if they were to attract the kind of husbands of which their families might approve.

Within two months of their mother's death, Hardres had enrolled Elizabeth and Grace in Robert Woodcock's new boarding-school for girls, paying £2 in entrance fees and another two for 'dancing, writing, cooking and singing'. Seeing the girls regularly, occasionally with treats – 'two muffins', 'a bottle of scent for Grace',

‘wine and a lobster’ – Hardres could chart their progress and justify the expense of about £22 per year on each girl’s board and lodging. As they grew older, so their need for more pocket money grew, and by the spring of 1685 Hardres was giving each of them a very generous £5 every month. Robert Woodcock, their school-master, was also doing well. Having married another teacher, Deborah Littleton, daughter of the rector of Chelsea, in 1683, he had moved his school to a large house in Chelsea village.⁵ But in the summer of 1685, all was not so well.

There was nothing unusual about the annual cycle of births and deaths across the 132 parishes of London and Westminster in 1685. Every year there were more burials than baptisms. This was due to the piles of human and animal excrement that were deposited in the streets; the choking smoke from the coal fires of homes and industries; the overcrowded houses, burial pits and graveyards; and the leaking of cesspits which contaminated the sources of fresh water. Such living conditions spawned a host of stomach problems: worms, diarrhoea and dysentery. Diseases such as typhoid, meningitis and asthma were also prevalent, as was rickets due to the lack of sunlight in most streets.

Periodically, there were outbreaks of diseases such as plague and smallpox. And there was a regular loss of mothers and babies’ lives in childbirth, and of almost everyone from common infections of the teeth and gums. In the published *Bills of Mortality* for 1685, listing a total of 23,222 burials for the year, most were attributed to common causes: ‘Ague [malaria] and Fever’ (3,832); ‘Consumption and Tissick [tuberculosis]’ (3,502); ‘Convulsion’ (3,420); ‘Flux [diarrhoea] and Small Pox’ (2,496); ‘Griping in the Guts’ (2,203); ‘Aged and Bedridden’ (1,163); and ‘Teeth’ (1,138).⁶ There were no deaths due to plague, and of the major causes of death, only ‘Teeth’ sufferers were likely to have called upon a barber-surgeon, for an extraction if they could afford one.

In the summer of 1685, before his wedding, Claver paid an apothecary £5 for medicines for Grace’s sister, Elizabeth, and Grace called for visits from the surgeon Henry Tonge.⁷ But, whatever medical treatment Elizabeth received, she did not survive. To pay for the funeral in July, Grace borrowed £100 from Tonge, a sum that Hardres guaranteed. At the age of twenty-two, Grace would now inherit the whole of her mother’s legacy, and as a single woman she could enjoy the financial independence of owning her own property, taking an occupation or running her own business if she wished. But as soon as she married, all of this would change. The whole of her inheritance would be transferred to her husband. It was a high price to pay for the greater social standing that a married woman normally possessed, especially as Claver had so little money of his own. But Grace did not demur. Following the fashion among the wealthy, on 19th September, Grace and Claver were granted permission to marry without the announcement of their marriage bans, either in the city or at Chelsea.⁸

In choosing Chelsea for her wedding, Grace was returning to the place where her family had settled after the Great Fire; the place where she grew up with her sister and where they prayed together in the church. In recent years she had also

been taught in Chelsea by Deborah, the rector's daughter and her husband, Robert Woodcock. The rector, Dr Adam Littleton, had himself moved to Chelsea to set up as a schoolmaster, supplementing his income as a prebend of Westminster and Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the king. In 1669 he had delivered the sermon at the funeral of Lady Cheyne, and in the following year he was made a doctor of Divinity on account of his 'extraordinary merit' and 'ready facility in preaching'. Yet it was as a scholar and linguist of rare learning that he was most widely known. His works included *Solomon's Gate, or, An Entrance into the Church* (1662); a catechism on the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments; a large dictionary *Linguae Latinae* (1678); and three volumes of *Sixty One Sermons Preached Mostly upon Public Occasions* (1680) dedicated to his parishioners at Chelsea.⁹

From these and other texts there could be no doubt about the nature of Littleton's opinions. But even if Grace and Claver had never read any of his works or heard him preach, they would certainly have known of his views by reputation. In almost every respect his views were unsurprising: Littleton was a devout believer in the Church of England and a fierce defender of its liturgy in the face of what he believed were the foolish errors and dreadful assaults of Protestant nonconformity and Popery. On one subject, however, his views were shocking.

Put simply, Littleton believed that 'the woman has equal rights with man'. He never tired of explaining that God had intended 'the Equality of Woman's Merits and Rights with Men'. For Littleton, women were just as intellectually capable as men, even though men had fashioned a society in which 'Vertue and good Education were undervalued, and Wealth is become the Lovely Thing, and all the Shafts of Men's Desires are Tipt with Gold and Silver'. Such extraordinary views went even further than those expressed a few years later by the Anglican campaigner for women, Mary Astell. And being a young resident of the parish, she would have heard them preached by Littleton.¹⁰ They would have been at the heart of his message in his marriage sermon too, and whether or not Grace and other members of the congregation were paying much attention, when it came to sermons, Claver was always listening.

O October 7 13 An: Dom: 1685 I was Married to
M^{rs} Grace Green of London, by D^r Littleton at Chelsea
near London,

FIGURE 1 Marriage to Grace Greene, 1685

This is Claver's first entry in the book of accounts he received from Thoresby Hardres

2

CLAVER

When Claver Morris was born at Bishop's Caundle in Dorset on 1st May 1659, the celebrations at his baptism would have proceeded with solemnity and caution. As one of only two sacraments (alongside Holy Communion) to survive from the Reformation, the fundamental importance of baptism as the foundation for a Christian life was not in question.¹ But as almost every aspect of how it should be conducted was contested, and the ancient festival of May Day had been banned by parliament, with maypoles reckoned 'a Heathenish vanity generally abused to superstition and wickedness', any sign of feasting, singing or dancing on this day would be sure to attract attention.² So too would the unusual decision not to give the baby a good Christian name. There was no mystery here, for everybody in Bishop's Caundle knew that Hannah Claver was the baby's mother, and that Claver families had been living and working in Lydlinch and neighbouring parishes for generations.³ And where two old families came together through marriage, it was not uncommon for a son to be christened with his mother's maiden name. Even so, William Morris's decision to honour his wife's maiden name – one that was still associated with illicit paternity in the records of the parish⁴ – was bound to set tongues wagging.

There had been no rector at Bishop's Caundle since 1646 when, at the height of the Civil Wars, the incumbent Henry Watkins had been ejected from his living. Like many other clergy, he had been ejected for his opposition to the revolution that was underway.⁵ Dorset had not suffered any major battles, but the royalist garrisons, sieges and marches that had swept across the county since 1642 were quite sufficient to have fed the deep religious and political divisions that had taken root. Inevitably, amidst all the fighting and incessant looting, by 1645 there was also exhaustion, not least among the common people of Dorset living in the Vale of Blackmore, south of Salisbury. Here, the three villages of Claver's youth – Bishop's Caundle, Lydlinch and Manston – lay in the gently undulating landscape of the Vale.⁶