

## PART THREE

A CONSTITUENCY WIFE

August 1696 - September 1696

*Mary cultivates local voters - Grace Spreat comes to Chipley - Clarke the Highwayman and Standard Clarke - trade at a standstill - reports of a bull being sent to trample down Chipley -*

A loyal wife in his constituency was invaluable to a Member of Parliament.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke      August ye 18th 1696

My deare,

I hope this will find you safe and well at Bath notwithstanding the malless of your enimy I thank God we are just as you left us heare and I have indevored to put on an outside diffrent from my inside, and dessemble the matter as well as I can and though they say it is a tallent given to our sex, yett I find it at this time very difficult though absolutely nessesary and I dont doupt but I shall improve in this way the longer I live in this parish; but now I must indever to devert you by giving you an account of our corse of life and what has passed heare since you went; the same day Mr George Musgrove came in, about 12 of the clock to dine with you, but not finding you inquired after your good health, I told him you went from hence well in the morning in order to dine with Mr Dicke and from thence did desire to go to Sidcott and Churchill etc; and indevered to devert him as well as I could though I phancey he seemed to be more thoughtfull then usuall and not so full of discorse ; I entertained Mr Musgrove with the history of the report of your having lost 4 fat oxen and six fat sheep which he sed was very hotly discorsed all about them and that they should write in verss what they had set over the dore which was that they had taken 6 fat sheep of your best and if you would not let the idle mony pass they would fetch all the rest. I told him twas all as false as the report that the mob was raised on you at Taunton and that you was forst to fly to the 3 Cupps for shelter and be convayed out the back way to save your life, at which my cozen George laughed and sed he had had that story so confirmed by such hands that it was almost a rudeness to contradict it and thearefore only sed he had the honer to meet you at Taunton on one Satterday when you was theare and he thought you was received very kindly and respectfully by every body, at which the ladyes cryed out what Satterday and when he told them, they sed O but ye was since and that it was certainly true, I desired to know wheare twas he heard this, he sed at Mr Malletts table wheare Mrs Beare of Hunsame had bin 2 or 3 days and he went to dine theare and my Lady Warr dined theare to, and both the Lady Warr and Mrs Mallett was so positive in the matter that Mr Musgrove and Mrs Beare could not tell what to say or thinke of it; I sed I thought they did say as they would have it, but I did assure him it was very false for that you had not bin at Taunton neither had you had time to be theare since he saw you theare; and so we past away an houre after dinner in the long walk and he went home leaveing his service for you. The next day we was all alone and Thursday heare came the town Clarke of Taunton Mr Burd and his fine lady and daughter and as soun as I could put me on a clean apron I went down to wait on them; and carried them all into the drawing room with great respect, and told them I was very sorry that you was not at home to receve them Mr Burd sed he did desire to wait on you that day I told him that you went hence on some buisness for my cozen Blewett or otherways you did not desire to go into those parts till the assizes but now I sposed you

would take this opportunity to do your own business also which John knew nothing of, till I believe he had not time to give him notice it happened we had a pretty good dinner and without beef or mutton so I told them they was all very welcome notwithstanding we had no such food nor I did not know when we should be threatened so hard, which might be the fore-runner of what they desired to do, but I thanked God they had hitherto prevented; for the oxen I had prevented that in selling them all before you came home so I made repetition of the history of raising the mob at Taunton, and Mr Burd said he wondered people should invent such things and none of those things must be minded people in publick places was liable to all sorts of reports; he had met with a great many of them I told him I did not mind them nor believe them otherwise then to be raised by malicious people that would have it so and that I had asked you since I had heard the report and you told me you was never more kindly and respectfully received in Taunton in your life and if they had inwardly other desires they was great hypocritts upon which I concluded with myself the report was the forerunner of the thoughts of another parliament soun after the King came home; Mrs Burd said no that could not be till the 3 yeares was up; I said I thought when ever the King pleased she said there had bin the same reports to of stealing things from Mr Sandford; I said I thought they need not use any such methods for that I had heard you say ever since they thought fitt to make choyce of you you had served them faithfull and honestly and had not failed to give them an account by every post during the session of parliament and had not acted in any thing without their consent and as long as they thought to intrust you you would continue to do so and when they did not it was fitt they should have their free choyce to which Mr Burd answered he believed the town now was very well satisfied in relation to money and that a month or to hence they would all give you thanks he was sure the most sensible part did already; then I told them I hoped that part would take care to set the rest right, that they might not be ready to kill the man that would advise them not to take 3d instead of 6d I thought that was very hard, in answer to which some of the company said that if Mr Clarke had spoke what he said to some of his friends privately and not in the publick coffee house they would have taken it more kindly and it would not have bin so soun carried out among the rabble to which Mr Burd said he did more generously and that he did not doubt but a little time would make them have other thoughts and so produced a scuroless lampoone made on the mayor which he said he brought to show you it was a paper full of all sorts of name jumbled together such as ugly tode and horss faced dogg etc; and threatened him if he came into their street he was in danger of his life but what street that was no body knowes and also threatens him hard what he must expect when he is out of his maiorship; at all which I shewed not pleasure nor displeasure but said it was a pittifull way of making verses to call names and that I thought they was bold fellows to meddle with the mayor ; thus we passed away the day with such like chance discourse till twas time to take leave and then they left their services for you with their hopes of seeing you and me in towne at your returne I gave them thanks and told him if my stranth did permit I would wait on them with you if not as soun as I was able and that I was shure you was very sorry you could not wait on the mayor at the sessions which you would certainly have done if you had known it before you had appointed other business; at which he seemed to have his memory refreshed and said that was part of his business to make Mr Mayors apologise if you had bin at home and that your going threw the town when you

came from London so suddenly without seeing any body had disapoynted Mr Mayor of waiting on you or of discorsing with you, then I sed that was my falt for that I not being able to meet you myself at Taunton I sent you a letter to desire you not to be out late with the little weake child that came down at that time, which I beleved made you hasten the more; in answare to which he repeated his hopes of seeing us in town at your return and so took horss and after all the judgment I make of Mr Burd is that he is a sort of a cuning man and pretty much a trimmer, but be they what they will methinks I have a very good hart still and do beleve shall very quickly go trim among them without fear ; I think I must venture alone when I am able among my corporation at Wellington to indever to set those right that are gone astray if I find any such; for I am in great hopes now you are gone away this storm will blow off and theyr eys will be opened and when you and I meet agen it may be under a more fortunate plannett, for it is very hard not to be permitted to have one months conversation you in a year quietly in your own house; I find Mr Lock and Mr Danvers begin to think that one months absence long then sure it cannott be thought strange in my circumstances if I think alevn so.

I have had another letter from poor Ward who I find is very carefull in your absence for which I desire you would give him halfe a peece as a token from me or a whole peece as you think fitt and a croune to Nanny and the like to Jack with my blessing to them all and if you please and do think it convenient pray give Mrs Morriss that is Nannys teacher half a peece as a token from me for I have a service from her in every letter from Nanny which I sopose is to put me in mind of such a sort of buisness and I hope it will induce her to take a perticular care of her.

This morning being Munday I am just taking horss to wait on my cozen Blewett but as I was going out I met Frank Trott coming in who tells me that things begin to be much changed now; I asked him how for the better, he sed yes I asked how much ten in the hundred he sed yes he did think it might hold to twelfe; so I went on to Holcombe and upon consulting my cozen Blewett we are of opinion that notwithstanding all this tis best to let the fire go quite out before you return agen; and that the malicious sort may not have oppertunity to raise any more false reports so much to your prejudice it is highly necessary that you should appear at the assises in the face of the countrey. My humble and hearty service to all my frends at London to which place I pray God to send you a good journey and defend you from the envy hatred and malice of your enimeys perticularly those in this knayborhood which is the hearty prayer of your truley affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

I have sent what linning you have foule and cleane that is whole and strong and what you want I think no better a place than London is to supply your self; I have also sent the short cravatts you sed you would carry up for Jack they are all pind together in a neck.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke    Chipley August ye 24th 1696

The Thursday after you went hence heare came 2 souldiers into the Great Hall wheare the cloth was laid haveing company twas asked what they would have they sed they was come for Justiss and inquiered if the Justiss was at home twas answered noe then the same question for the Clarke with the same answare then they sed theyr landladys would not take such mony as they had and seemed

to be discontented so they was told that Mr Sandford was at home and they was best to go theare to which they answered they had bin theare and he sent them to you; but I beleve people begin to be a little better sattisfied then they ware and I am told that my cozen George have declared to be of the same opinion with you in relation to mony; which is that which have brought your name into everybodys mouth but I have heard that after great stormes and hard shours some time comes a hot sunshine that makes thinges flourish the more; I have a dunning letter or 2 for John Spreat which I think ill come time enough to his hands when he comes home, his wife was heare Satterday morning to speak with you but I did not see her she made a shift to spend the whole day in the knaybourwood and I had the luck to see her ride home and heare some of her discorse though she did not see me; and I found by her discorse she desires nothing less then to have a heareing of her buisness before the King but that must I beleve be when the K is as idle as the fleet at Torbay; both she and the man before her was as drunk as they could well sitt the horss.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke Bath August ye 27th 1696

My deare,

I writt to you yesterday from Wells by the same hand as brought mee yr verie obleiging letter of the 24th, and am now here in order to goe for London tomorrow morning in the two dayes coach; Mr Stringer and his lady and sonn are still here and haveing nothing new to send you from hence, I cannot but againe repeate the greate satisfaction I have in heareing wth what resolution and courage you mannage and conduct everything in my absence, I pray God to enable you to goe on in soe doeing, and I shall endeavour to doe the like till I am soe happy as to meete you againe, which I hope by some good providence or other will bee in a short time, there being nothing that I more heartily wish for in this world.

I am heartily sorry that I am this suddainly and unexpectedly commanded by my Masters up to London from you, the rest of my freinds and all my affayres in the countrey, tis noe small misfortune to mee and therefore I hope that you, my sister, my cosens and all my other neighbours and freinds will excuse my not returning home from the Assises, since it was noe wayes in my power, and I desire you to remember mee kindly to my children, to Mrs Burgess and the family at Chipley.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke August ye 29th 1696

I thanke God Betty and her fellow travellers came safe home last night though very wet and weary; but I hope your convayance will bring you safe and dry to your journeys end this night, wheare I hope you will not find so many enimeys as you have heare, though I hope they do lessen at least I will beleve so since tis my fate to live amongst them as long as I can and when I can hold it no longer I'le follow Mrs Stringers rule and put in some knaybour and his wife to keep clene the house and so march after you to safe the souls of those that have reported that you was run away and that we was to have a day of sale of all our goods and when we had made a little mony I and the children was to go after you; I cannot emagin what they will think to say next, I pray God to delever us from all our enimies at home and abroad; concerning some of which I will give you a fuller account as time and oppertunity will permitt; I have taken the Drs physick

which was a little unluckey to begin upon just at this juncture of time when my mind was so uneasey which often times diseasses the body and is a hard disease for a phesion to find a remedy for but all things will have an end and must I that am, your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

I am just now told that the people now pray for you as much as they curst and if its true tis much one for I beleve theyr prayers and cursess are much alike

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

My deare,

I received yours by the last post and am heartily glad to heare you got safe and well to London and also that the articles of peace are agree on and I hope they are such as that it may be a lasting one; for methinkes there is nothing more desirable than peace at home and abroad; I thank God we are all heare much as you left us, we have our bacon and sheep still; and the tune of the people are much changed; though some was so civell to report that Clarke the highwaymen was ran away; which at first hearing indeed I though they had ment some padder of the rodes; but it seems it was a title they had given you for consarning yourself as much in mending the highways; but now I heare you go by the name of Standard Clarke.

I told you in my last my great corage when Mrs Grace was heare; who soun retreated I sopose to her unkle Webbers wheare she stayed till the hour of twelfe or one and then she came agen pretty well heated in drinke and scolded like any woman upon the steps to entertain Mr Beares servants who stood gazing on her, theyr master and lady dining hear that day; and poor John walking on the further side of the cort under the wall to the tune of fum fum without a 3 stringed lute in hopes to have drawn her further from the house, but to no purpose, for I beleve that was her buisness more than to speak with him, she haveing done that in the morning before; but found her reception both times so cold from me being treated with silence and scorne wheare she disturbed her self and noebody else; I phancey she will have little resen to come agen; I think her a dangerose woman at all times espeshally when she is intraged and one full of revenge. I hope all people will be satisfied better now they hear the good newes of a peace in this scarce time of mony, and it will in some mesure apease theyr wrath and set trade on foot agen which is now generally laid down by all the tradesmen heare abouts, some of which I thought had bin more publicke sperretted and some of those that do keep up a little trade pay them at that rate that it would greeve one to heare it, for example heare was old Goody Thorne of Langford since you went hence who with teares told me that she had spinned 30 ounces for a shilling and they pd her such a shilling that she could not part with for more than a grote by weight; this methinks is very hard that such poor people should be so great sufferers and the scarce byers grow so riche out of theyr labours and no remedy for them but patience.

I had forgott to tell you that hear came a letter from Mounsr to you with a great complement and the 3 verses he sent to you to get printed which he has not got done himself with an adishion of a few lines in your praise one of the prints I have returned with his letter the other I kept to dispose of for I am told they do exceed the sheep stealers verss very much.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

I heare the judge lyes at Mr Portmans and Mr Sandford has gathered the cuntry for partrege to send thether with other things I sopose from whence his fine daughters are to returne the next weeke ; as for our domesticks they are much as you left them so they will continue I dont dought but I will wait with patience in hopes of a reformation, Tuesday last about seven of the clock in the morning Eling came to me from Thomas\* to know wheare I had any buisness to Wilscome for that he was going theare to by otes and that he should go a mile or 2 beyond in a little buisness of his owne; but he would be back agen by twelfe a clock; I sent him word I had no buisness theare but I should have occation to use one of the horses; and thearefore desired to know wheare they were and that he would order somebody to take care of the barley (which indeed we have had very ill wether forever since it was cutt) he sed he would and added that he would be soune at home himself and asked her if I did go abroad she sed she could not tell, neither indeed was I to go anywhere; but at dinner one of the knaybors sending to borrow a horse to go to Wellington I sent out to Dick to go catch the little black mare for them and Dick brought me word that George Bayley had rid the little black mare along with Mr Thomas to help him drive home a score of sheep I asked what hors Mr Thomas rid he sed the snip, (so by the way if I had had a desire to go abroad myself I must have waited Mr Thomasses leasure who did not returne till almost 6 in the afternoon at which time he gave me no account of his days worke nor I asked no questions but 2 days after going in to the stables I saw a bag of otes lye in the windoe, so that day when he came into dinner I asked him how many otes he bought at Wilscome the Tuesday before he sed 2 bushells I asked him if that was those that lay still in the stable windoe he sed yes I sed I thought that was no proper place to lay them and I thought it had been much better to have carried them wheare the remaining part of the five bushells that was bought before which I was sure could not be used yet, he sed no theare was 2 or 3 bushells left but that he left these below for Gabrall to put in a coffer he had in the stable to keep such a quantity in for present use I sed it was very uncertain when Gabarell might return and I thought it was not much labour to bring them down agen when ever that should happen; and I wondred what made him take another hors and man with him to bring to bushells, he sed he thought to by more, but found them deare I sed I thought this was not a time of year to expect them cheap, he sed he could not tell what occation you might have when you come home for them and thearefore went ther, so I asked him if he had bought any sheep he sed a score, and thearefore he took the boy to help drive home I asked him who he bought them for he sed for himself I asked him what he gave for them he sed £9 good mony I asked him wheare he kept them he sed in some ground he had neare heare and so we parted with no more words as if I had very well aproved of all his works and I desired him that he would send somebody to drive the piggs into that 3 acors that we had which had bin neglected for almost a week and 2 or 3 more such like favors I beged indeed he dos act in many thinges as if he had no regard to a successcer, but I must, and I am glad his raine will not be long, and to conclude what I desire now is that you will write to John Spreat that you had forgot to tell him that you would have Bayley discharged and a boy taken into the house by the year in his place but in case theare was any prentisses to be bound out by the parrishes that was like to fall to your share it might be ordered that such a won might be the boy, and that you would have him consult me and take speedy corse about if for that Bayley did not do as he

ought when you was at home etc and take no notiss of any thing els to him; I have given Eling some new mony myself by your order but for all the rest in general I think it best to let it alone for resens that I have; you can give them what you will at any time when they deserv it but now I think its beter lett it alone because they do not all do so in my opinion that am your truley affectionate and faithfull wife MC

Mrs Grace Spreat was heare this morning and scolded her husband upon the steps most sadly and to shew her how little I cared for that entertainment I went and shut the dore upon them both and bolted it so in a short time she went away in great pation and he was lett in agen, by the next you shall know further. My service to all. M

\* Thomas Spreat, John's brother

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke September ye 6th 1696

My deare,

I receved yours by the last post and have given the inclosed to John Spreat and am very glad to hear that after all your care and paines you are at some places and by some people receved civelly, I hope all things will be better in time and all things will be as they should be; in the meantime pray returne my perticuler thanks to Mr Freake for his great care of you and all other his favors to me, with my humble service to him, and Mr Lock, when you give him the inclosed; wherin I have given him an account of Jenney; and the best account I can give him or you of myself is what I have heare inclosed a cobby of that I sent to the Dr. I cannot complaine of any perticuler paine in my body; nor compare it to anything so well, methinkes, as to the wether glas for as thear is a sine of foule or faire wether so the quicksilver rises or falls, just so it is with me when my mind is easey or uneasey so methinkes my speritts sinkes or risses and it has an operation on the whole body, I hope you will pardon me that I did not return you my hearty thanks in my last letter for your kind token of an apron and night raile by my daughter Betty which is very pretty and I will weare it for your sake.

The worthy gentlemen that had so many meeting heareabout of late desire to have made a bussell heareabouts I am told was thus to have a bull driven near the house and so to bait it and the rable that was to come with and be gathered to at that sport was to fall out and so come and plunder and pull down the house and frighten your wife and children out of dores and pull you in peeces if ye had bin heare; but I thank God theyr desires has yett come to nothings nor I hope such wicked ones never will; and that we shall be able allways to turn everything into a jest, as we do this of the bull baiting to which I have added to his name and we call him the great bull of Orange which has a great long story to it that I use to be entertained with when I was a little girl but did not then think I should have had occation to have talked of it now and indeed this history has not yet appeared more frightful to me than that, and the addishion I have given to the name I am apt to think will not be so agreeable to the contrivance of the sport.

Mary Clarke to Dr Parsons Chipley Sep the 3rd

Your directtions I have carefully followed and have now allmost finished the 4th bottle of infusion and am drinking my second quantity of dyett drink; and do find my leggs are not so constantly swelled as they was the bath has agreed with me very well only one night I used if after I had bin 4 mile abroad and that night

I thought I was in a perfect fevor and they felt very uneasy but whether it was the motion of the cotch or the bath that occasioned all this I knew not for I have used them both at other times and it had not that efectt, but the next morning after I had slept it was all very well agen; I find the more rest I give myself and my leggs the better they are, as to all other things I can give you no other account than what I did when you was heare, only I think my stomack is not so good as it was for my infusion in the morning the dyett drinke at dinner and super and the infusion in the afternoon so fils me that it is meat and drink etc; all as to my looks I must leave it to the bearer to discribe and am your most oblided humble servant MC

I had forgot when you was heare to aske you whether I was to follow your direttions at all times or seasons; and thearfore have done it without stopping on any occation whatsoever, but whether I did well or ill thearein I know nott.

Suggested letter from Edward Clarke to Thomas  
Spreate written by Mary Clarke

Thomas                      London September 1696

*I am heartily concerned I was so unexpectedly commanded from my business in the countrey to the dutye of my place in the King's service here whereby I could not return home again to have absolutely settled all my affayres in your care that you might have been perfectly at liberty before I left the countrey to have applyed yourself wholly to the management of your own proper business, and therefore I will not expect you after yr year is up wch I think is some time the beginning of the next month the certainty where of the entry in yr wages booke will manifest that my businesses would any longer divert you from spending yr whole time in your own affayres and I heartily wish you such success therein that may answare yr own desires and if there happen anything wherein I may at any time hereafter do you any kindness I shall readily perform it, and I hope you will leave all my business in the very good order with a perfect inventory in writeing of all my livestock and out dore goods which will bee very well taken by him that is desirous to continue*

*Yours*

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

Sept ye 9th 1696

I receved yours by the last post and am concerned that you still toyle and labour so hard, and will tire and weare out your self before your time for those that will not thanke you; for my part I am almost disheartned from doing good to anybody but resouled never to do them any harm if it lies in my power though if I could do that I beleve I should be thanked and for the contrary as you know by experiance one is to be abused, in this part of the world wheare they want of sence civility and good nature makes them very difficult to be conversed with; you may make what resolutions you please wheare you are and keep them but do not promise yourself much in this part of the countrey wheare you must incounter with wild beast and that which is worse for ought I know; for I phancey I that can live heare now almost 3 year am fitt to make some great officer if the termes of peace had not bin agreed on but I hope its all for the best since I know not how longe my corage may last for my tongue is my best wepon and best imployed when it is vindicateing you, for whom and my children is all the care and concerne of your truley affectionate and faithful wife Mary Clarke

I hope you had mine and your daughter Bettys by the last post who I think is very much improved by being with Mrs Stringer but I fear will soune loose it agen among this contrey conversation.

Gustavus Adolphus Venner to Edward Clarke September ye 12th 1696

Dear Sr,

I am heartily sorry I had not ye oppertunity of takeing my leave of you ere you went out of ye countrey, but am very glad as I ever shall to heare of yrs and my cozens healths Sr I desire you would be pleased to give yrself the trouble of delivering ye inclosed to my cozen Edward wth a five shilling piece and soe likewise ye same token to each of my two other cozens Mr Jack and Ms Anne as a small remembrance of their favors wch I shall thankfully repay att yr return or order, and ever acknowledge it to be a great kindness bestowed on him who will ever endeavor to manifest himself yr dutifull nephew and humble servant  
Gust Venner

My wife presents you her humble service

## PROBLEMS AT CHIPLEY

September 1696 - October 1696

*- Mary visits Taunton - did Mrs Spreat poison her child? - Isaac and Thomas have too much liberty - Mary irresolute about which silver to melt down - Mrs Spreat visits Edward in London - the poor forced to beg*

Servants were part of the family; when Edward sent his love to the "family" he did not mean his children only. The master and mistress were responsible for their physical and moral welfare, and provided them with clothes, food and a share in any social jaunts. But they were not necessarily permanent fixtures and many just worked for a year before seeking pastures new, often annoyingly leaving immediately after they had been provided with their annual suit of clothes. There was a never-ending hunt to find good ones, and the continual problem of keeping them, particularly as many had a possibility of other income from land or money they had salted away, Edward acting as their banker and paying interest on the wages they accumulated. They turned their hands to various tasks - a coachman or a gardener might also be expected to be able to serve at table. Many of the maids were farmer's daughters and after a year or so in a country house would go to London for a more exciting job or set up as a milliner until they married. When Mary Clarke decided to spend more time at Chipley the servants resented her continual presence which prevented the easy going ways they had got used to.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

September ye 16th 1696

My deare

I receved yours by the last post and was forst to be very short to you by the post before being then at Taunton wheare I was receved very frendly by all your old frends and came home safe and sound at night I dined at Mr Friends, and after dinner had a cople of horses put in the cotch and so with Mr Frend his daughter and my daughter and Mrs Burgess made our personnell apearance near the High Cross at Taunton to visit the widow Smith who poor woman is as she has resen greatly afflicted for the loss of her husband, and more that, they have raised so many scandaluss reports of him since his death; but I comforted her as to the latter part and advised her to do as I did, take no notiss of falls reports otherways then to laugh at them, and that I thought they had really don me good and you no harme, for that it had stired my blood and made it circulate, it being at a stand before etc; and from thence that we might do a great deal of buisness in a little time having larnt at what house the coffy treat was that Munday, they meeting at one the others house upon that occation every Munday, we went to them wheare we mett, and had gathered together before we came away a little parliament of women and some men, and we all spoke in our turnes and spent as much time as we could and get home in seasen they all presented you theyr humble service and are great cheates if they have none for you; but theare is very few to be trusted in this unaccountable world wheare some thing are monstross viz Mrs Spreat whose last child by this unfortunate husband is now dying, and the strongest circomstances that can be without actually seeing her put the stuff into the childs mouth to prove that his child and some of the rest had theyr buisness done by her own hand, I pray all things of this kind may come to light so as to stop any further mischife to be practiss by her if possible; for I have alredy bin a sharer in her mallise and revenge I know I have had

dangerose miscarriages before now; but they was not atended with such vomittings at the rate of a hundred in a day and a night and in that dreadful manner; and since that the loss of hair my skin and nails my great ones being but half of yett and all my teeth loose in my head since which are for the most part turned as black as ink and some of them are like dead bones in my head I feel no more of them then I do of the table I now write on all this is very strange; but if I could prove that it was all by her occation I would by no meanes have nothing sed of it or don then what might free others from the like danger; I thank God I am well from all paine but do think my leggs do swell much as when you was last in the countrey and when I have used the bath of late they have bin apt to pain me so I have not used it now this weeke; I have returned your service to your sister as you desired with your thanks for her kind letter; I could tell you a history of another wonder very remarkable if I had time, of my sisters going to make a visit at Esq Sandfords wheare she has not bin this seven yeare just at this junture of time viz not a week after you went hence which I thought very odd.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley September ye 19th 1696

I had forgott to let you know that I had sent Thomas your letter inclosed to me for him by his brother John who I hope will take care with Thomas that all your affairs under his care be mannaged till that time with respect to you and all your goods under his charge left in theyr proper places with a perfect inventory of them as you desired, by the time that his year is up which I find by the wages book is the 25th of the next month; I could wish your place and the people heare would give you a little more time to do your own buisness your selfe, which would be much your advantage, for, I find a woman is thought a very importunent creature in such sort of afares as indeed the generality of us are, I am sure I am and fitt for nothing but to be imposed on or wholly set by for a sifer; but I hope all will be better or worse in time if I have but patience to hold out till the end; I do assure you I do not wonder at your stile in your letter to Isake or anything else indeed now a days that comes from servants that have had so much liberty given them as Thomas and Isacke have had by which you thought to have obliged them to your service; but instead of that you have made yr ungrateful masters and robed your selfe of servants; I heartily thanke you for communicating your answare to Isake to me, and much the more since I find he so secretly writt and convayed his letter to you; I beleve if I had had the honer to have inclosed it for him it would not have bin the worss received by you; and since you have bin so very kind to let me know your answare I begg leave to returne it agen to you that if you think fit and it be not to much troble it may have some alteration; for I do not think it at all proper for Isake to be chafering for the wheeles till Thomas is gone at least; for Thomas and Warren did advise me in poynt of your husbantrey to have kept those wheeles as they might run short journeys a good while and afterward they might serve for the wagon or in case a wheel of the cotch or wagon should fail at any time they might be much better worth to me than to put them to peeces, but I knowing how troublesome new boxes was at first espeshally having people about them that did not know to manage them and they being cast boxes which was impossoble to be had in the countrey thought it best to take them out without any farther consideration and it was done and 3 of them served agen but the 4th I beleve remaining it being cracked as they told me and unfit for use agen, and theare was another made and the old wheeles are all set up together at the end of the longe stable by the

oven and Warren tells me he thinks I have done much for the best he finding those boxes such as are not to be got here for lightness and goodness; so the 4 wheelers and one box stands all very quietly without the least regret made to me for them by any body or the thought of an old custom which is a matter I would not have brought up here if I had a perfect coachman if I could help it and certainly Isake does not pretend to that, indeed he cleans the coach and goes into the box to drive it to the door and after he has brought us home he sets it up again but he does not concern himself with the horses at all; but this is more for my purpose at present than the best coachman that is to be had would be, provided I can have him when I want him, about which he and I have a little household discourse some times, for his natural temper is to undertake everything that there is anything to be got by, and because you gave him leave when you and the family was not here to use his time as it was his own he thinks still to have the same privilege but I cannot bare it for my family has only you wanting; and as liable to company one time as the other when company comes in and I want the service and credit of a servant than he shall be elsewhere appointing and when his business is done he will take this for his home again so that I must keep a house here for the convenience of my rich trading surly proud servant which is that I cannot endure; I rather part with them all in their turn be they never so useful; your letter to John Spreat when in you ordered him to tell Isake to clean the things therein mentioned was all cleaned before by Gabarell but not oiled and I thinking that Isake could do it better took the letter from J Spreat and bid him say nothing at all to him of it not knowing where Isake would bare to have orders come from him or not, and therefore the first opportunity Isake and I had alone I read the letter to him as if it had been writ to me and aded that you expected he would be very careful to sweep the chimney often to prevent it from firing and also to keep the ledges clean swept to prevent the stopping of the pipes which carelessness I believe was the occasion of the fault made in his room and bid him oil and paper up the things and take charge of them to see them forth coming when you did want them next and to conclude gave him five shillings in new money as by your order telling him you desired to have done it your self when you came back but being sent for up to London was prevented; which is all the people I have found occasion to present by your order beside Elinge as yett and how this will turne to account I know not, but he returned you humble thanks and promised performance in all things; I have Burts son hear to mend the pigeon house and do believe he will be the properest fellow for what else is wanting but I will consult Mr Heath about it when your next letter comes If he thinks fit to acquaint me with it and in the mean time begg leave to subscribe myself what in all reality I am your affectionate and faithful wife M Clarke

Edward Clarke to Isaac Heath London Septembr 15th 1696

*"My letter to Isaac return'd by my wife with another to be writt wch was done accordingly on the 22th September 1696"*

Isaac

I recd yr letter by the last post and in answer to yr desires therein am verie ready and willing, as I have always been upon all occasions, to encourage you to a faithful execution of yr place and station in my family, and as I have ever been a true friend to you, soe I shall for ever continue the same as long as you are willing I should, and shall never be ungratefull to any person that serves mee,

much less to those that have served mee long and faithfully, as I beleive you have done; as to the old wheeles of the coach, I freely and willingly give them to you to make the best of them for yr selfe as you can, and doe desire the continuance of yr care in what ever you thinke is for my interest or advantage in or about the House, or any where without doors, that happens to come to yr view or knowledge; particularly I desire you to gett the places in the rooffe of the House where the wett comes in through the tyeing thereof, well mended by the best hellier you can gett, and with the first opportunity. One place particularly where the wett comes down by the syde of the chimney into the garrett where John Spreate lodges, wch was formerly mended by Hall, and I beleive will bee easily mended againe now, either by him or by Burt's sonn, or by any other person that shall be thought best to bee employed therein; I allsoe desire you forthwith to gett that ledd-pype sett to rights that comes down in the corner between the Little-Hall and yr roome that soe there may bee noe more wett come throught that wall; yr particular care in these, and what ever else is necessary, will bee a further obligation upon, yr loveing and faithfull freind, Edw Clarke  
Pray take particular care not to displeas yr mistris in anythinge whatsoever; and as you see any thing amiss, acquaint her therewith, and follow her directions for remedying, or rectifying thereof, and remember mee kindly to all my freinds and neighbours particularly to all the family at Chipley, Gundenham and Fyfield.

Mary to Edward: I have sent your letter back agen that you may see what alterations I have made. I beleve my staying heare is a little troblesome to the old servants that use to be left heare without controle; and I cannott blame them for they had a good time of it and have made suficient improvemnt I beleve or they could not doe as they doe one haveing soe much mony out att use and the other bying and selling and mannageing such a farm as he doss when they both begun out of nothing and yett to complaine of theyr loss of time is very hard. I am told yesterday that Thomas is worth to hundred pd or more.

Marys suggested letter for Edward to write to Isaac  
*Isake,*

*I receved your letter and in answeare to your desires thearein am very ready and willing as I have allways bin upon all occasions to incorage you to a faithfull execution of your place and station in my family and as I have ever bin a true frend to you, soe I shall desire to continue the same as longe as you are willing I should and shall never be ungratfull to any persen that serves me, much less to those that have served me longe and faithfully as I beleve you have done, and you have bin allways respected as such both by me and my wife to whome the cotch an all that relates to it according to old custom does properly belonge and thearefore I shall leave the disposall of it wholly to her, and all other things relateing to that place she haveing reson to take it ill if I should doe other ways when she has bin willing to spend soe much time alone there as she has done of late for the intrest of me and my children, and I feare not without hazard to herselfe and inconvenience upon severall accounts all which must ever be acknowledged by me as a perticuler obligation, and I hope neither she nor I have ever given you or any one just cause to thinke us ungratfull and thearfore doe desire and expectt the continuance of your care in what ever you thinke is for my intrest or advantge in or about the house or any wheare else with out does that happens to come to your view or knowledge perticulerly I desire you to gett the*

*places in the rooffe of the house wheare the wett comes in throw the tileing theareof well mended by the best hellier you can gett and with the first opertunity, one place perticulerly wheare the wett comes downe by the side of the chimney into the garratt wheare John Spreat lodges which was formerly mended by Hall and I beleve can be easily mended agen now, thearefore pray consult your mistress about it, and inquier out the properest person and best workemen to be employed thearein, what remaines on this subject relateing to the led pipe you may and if you thinke the wett came in threw a falt in the pipe, but I beleve otherways that it was carelessness suffering it to be stoped up with the waishing down of the tiles.*

**Perhaps you may wonder att this alteration I have made in your letter but if I could see you I dought not but to satisfy you haveing very good resens I thinke for it and for every perticuler word added as that by your study was once in the same manner when Isake raishly cutt of the arme of the pipe which cannot be mended agen but have looked ugley ever since, if you please to be soe kind to ad the same postscript to this as to ye other letter I beleve I shall have the more respectt for it.**

Locke to Mary Clarke London 19th September 1696

Dear madam,

I am very very glad you find so great an amendment in your little daughter since she came home. I make no doubt but she will every day recover greater degrees of health and strangth under your way of ordering her. For the weakness of her ankle and the treading aside as you mention, you must help this with a boot which must hinder this turning of that joint, which when kept in its due motion and straightness by this outward help will be confirmed by nature as she grows stronger.

As to your own health, I look upon you as in the safe and ready way of return to it by finding you in the Doctor's hands who has had so very good success with you all along your last illnes, and to whom I look upon it under God you owe your life. I am glad to find you so much resolved (as you have reason) to follow his directions, to which I need add none but that you will often reflect upon what you say in your letter to Mr Clarke, that you find your health as the quicksilver in the weather glass rise and fall as your temper of mind is. It is that which I know to be so, and do tell you but that half your cure depends on the Doctor's prescriptions, the other half is in your own mind. Cheerfulness will have a greater efficacy towards your recovery than anything the apothecaries' shops can afford. and it being of all other the most pleasant remedy, you will have nothing to say to your self and your friends if you do not use it. I am one of those, and therefore expect it of you, and am, Dear Madam, your most affectionate and most humble servant, John Locke

Anne (Nanny) Clarke to Edward Clarke September ye 22 1696

Honored father,

I humbly thank you for yr kind visit to me, and I hope you got well home, pray be pleas to send ye coat of Armes with ye other things as soon as you can with some wax candle with my humble duty presented and my love to my brothers from Sr Your obedient daughter A Clarke  
I desier you will be pleas to give my scroll to Mrs Smithsby

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke    **Chipley September ye 26th 1696**

I thanke you for communicating Mrs G Spreats which is very deverting to me that knows the history of her latter days, and I think you are much in the right not to answare it or to take any notiss at all of the receipt of it, for if you should write to her let it be what it will she will report it quite other ways than it is, if it does not answare her expectation, and make use of your name as frequently as she did Mr Dickes, who she sed heare would spend a thousand pound to vindicate her, and if she would have the rigor of the law against her husband and that young roge and villan Gabraell, and that Mr Clarke did breed up a percell of them to be hanged for that her father Spreat did think Mr Clarke would bring Gabraell to the galloss and severall other things she laid to your charge, which when she went of she sed Mr Clarke might be ashamed off; all this happened when Mr Beare and his lady was heare; and I do assure you John was so far from huffing her then that he was allmost strook dum and had very little more to say than that he would alow her the sallery she demanded before Mr Dicke, she keeping talking of sueing him for allymony and if he would not tell her when she should live with him agen, to which he sed when he was out of dept and did heare of her refermation he should be able to tell her more of his mind, which was no satisfaction to her but she demanded an acount than he did, and also what he had discharged of it; all this very imperiously at the dore and so kept scolding beyond mesure upon the steps John walking under the wall all the latter part of the discorse without saying a word till she and her brother Stacey marched of, they being both prety much in drink as they told me and what I now write I heard myself as I stood withinside the windoe where I could not see them nither did I desire it, this brother Stacey by the carrecter I have heard of him may be fit enough to go about with her for he have bin a very idle young fellow, such a won as his father could not govern and so he run away and was sent to sea; as for drinking that she owns under her own hand and for her being a theefe I fear you have pd a little for your experience in that, and I have no cause to accuse her for any thing she having I verily beleve never desired to use me worss then her own children; the next thing that stands in the way I do beleve is her husband; let him look to it for heare is an ugly story abroad of an accident that should happen at Wood it was this; John never loved to drink warm beare and Mrs the contrary so there was a mug that was called masters and another that went by the name of mistresses; so one morning masters mug was set redy with his morning draught before he went out, but he being hindred from coming to take it as was expected, John Parsens coming in the meantime and finding masters mug redy charged, took it of; upon which his master coming presently and finding the mug empty inquired who had medled with it to which Parsens answered it was he and there upon they seemed to be very much surprised and ran and fetched him a pint of oyle and gave him and about that time they say Parsens was very sick and went home for a fortnight and Mrs sent every day to see him; sure all these storeys can never be without some truth and if it be so it must and will come out some time or other when please God it shall; as to what related for this last child there is the strongest circumstances that can be except seeing her actually puting it into the childs mouth and Johnneys is almost as plaine her unkle Comer of Laingford have bin to inquier of it they being willing to do all what they can to haing her but they can prove nothing against her; she was a fortnight at Wickham before she gave this green stuff to the child and was very kindly entertained but the next day would go away to Fixhead afoot and

would not be persuaded to stay till they could get a horse but they would not let her go alone so she made choyce of the nurses daughter to go with her but instead of going theare she went directly the contrary way to one Goody Taylors that used to make her malt hearetofore; and she asking her how her child did she sed it was very ill and she beleved it would not live very long and thearefore she came away that they might not raise such scandalous reports on her if the child should dye as they had don when Johnney died; and the same week she came heare and Isake had a diologue with her neare an hour when she told him that her husbands relations had raised a new report of her now that she should go to poyson this child to, and that she should be with child by her cozen Will Exon, which is what I never heard before Isake told me; it is very unlikely, Will Exon being theyr near relation and a young man upon his preferment and will have a pretty good estate and this would be an ill requitall for his mothers entertainment of her when no body else would. The same day being Saterdag she went to Mr Comers and made his wife call him down out of his study for that she must speake with him and when he came she made him some few complements for not seeing him so longe, and that she could not pass by without calling; but after all it was to tax him for telling her father Spreat that she had poysoned Johnney at which question Mr Comer was very much surprised and asked her if she thought him a witch that he should be able to tell what she did when he was at that distance and desired that she would do him that right to let him know who told her so, she sed no it might be he would be inquierring and exammining of them and that should not be so they had some few words and her frend and she marched off they being both very drunk and in this pickle they went to most of the houses in Langford and great deal more like this I could ad enough to fill up a book but it is not worth my time to wright it, or yours to read it, but I do thinke to show her husband her letter to you that he may know her resolutions and desires though they be not brought to pass.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley September ye 27th 1696

I have also considered what you writt in relation to the mony and plate; and upon inquierring of John Spreat what he has in his hands I find he can hardly since you went hence get enough to pay wages poor rates and find the house but he will go among the tennants and inquier though he feares he shall get so little and it will be so late that it will not be worthwhile to subscribe; and for the plate I cannott aprehend how you propose they should make such profit in parting with it that must by agen; for I can part with it at any time for 5s and 2d as it is and at the mint they will give but five and 8d after they have melted it downe and you have bin at the loss of all the soder which some plate has a great deal in it and when you by new what fashioned plate can you bye that will not cost more than five and 8d then in deed you will have whats in fashion when you bye and perhaps that will last a year so after a great deal of troble in parting with this, and bying more, and I find if one has patience the fashions comes about agen for I have cloths that I bought when I was last at London and some yeares before; having lain conceled methinkes makes a good show now they come out and appeare like new; but how ever I will send tomorrow for my trunk to Holcombe wheare I beleve I shall not find so much as you aprehend you know what I had all that was not fit for use was changed into what was absolutely nessesary when we was first married for we had not mony then to lay out in what was not so, and the peaces of anticuty that was your fathers you brought up with you after his

death and you gave me leave to change it as far as it would go to add such peeces as we then wanted and all the rest has bin presents to you and to me and the children I dont remember any that we laid out redy mony in so that we have not bin yet very great losers neither have we any that is battered or any were abused or worn out except one little salt and snuffered spoon and to that I am redy and willing to ad what you shall order me after you have received this I have 2 silver salts one that was my fathers and mothers and one that we bought when Will Clarkes plate was to be sold at the rate of 5s 2d which was what the gouldsmith gave for the rest we do not use them bothe at a time but when the long tables are laid at Crismas but that never hapened but once and where it does agen we must gat another for we can hardly be without them and we have 3 silver tankards of 3 sizes the largest is one that the young Mrs Cuff sent me to by a peece of plate with on Good Hencell\* when we was married and the other is that which was your fathers with the foot to it the other is one that was my unkle Watts which I desire never to part with but the 2 former if you think fit may be disposed of we have 2 silver basens one heare and one in London both as good as new at London is of the new made one that was presented me when I was theare last and this heare is one that is agreable to all the rest of my plate so that I know not which to part with I have a pare of candlesticks of that new fashion which I never used and was given me by the same hand; this coming to a resolution of parting with my plate I find the difficult thing I ever met with since resolving to marry but then you sed you should be well pleased with it and in that assurance I did agree to it and do find myself ever since most inclined to do that which I do hope is most pleasing and agreable to you that am your affectionate and faithful wife M Clarke

I am apt to think Mrs Spreat will have confidence enough to troble you with another letter when she dont find an answare to this if she does send any more pray let me have the pleasure of seeing them she writt her husband a letter not long since to pay her what remained due of her years maintinance which he has done and she writt also that she did desire for London very quickly and she told a frend of mine that she did intend to have a hearing of her buisness in the Highest Cort in England wher Mr Clarke should be ashamed to hear it and railed against me that I had made difference between her and her husband and endeavoured to insence him against her by saying that her last child was like you and that I did beleve it was yours and for that resen he and I did agree to have it called Edward and cristened it up presently as soun as he was born without her consent or knowlege which is alltogether false and a pritty construcktion indeed of my kindness in doing what I did at that time.

Your daughter Bettys request to you is to send her a fashionable black petty cote which indeed she wants the mesure of the lenth it must be from the hipp to the ground is inclosed in tape; I do also desire you would send me at the same time a black silk apron and another paire of slippers they need not be quite so big as the last; if you would please to put up the chocholett in round cakes that are without vanilla in it it would be very acceptable .

\* Good Handsel - Handsel Monday was the first Monday of the year when small gifts were given for good luck.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke      Chipley September ye 29th 96

I have the same luck yet in letting Lee as I had in disposing of Wood, I hear of tennants and they apoynt to come and see it and then they fail and when Thomas goes to them to know the resen they did not come they have changed theyr minds; so that I have now bin forst to consent to bying seed wheat for sowing some of the ground which as Thomas tells me was by your order mannged accordingly, and will be all lost if it be not done and the time of the year is come for it; and this is the state of that matter Thomas is gone today to Milverton faire to dispose of some bullucks for himself which he got from the marsh last Satterday; he would have advised me to have bought 2 to have fatted one for my self against Crismas and the other to have disposed of to the butcher at ye time saying we should have grass enough but I know his rule that he walkes by not to have any regard to his suckesser and being aprehencive that I should have 2 of the worst of his at what price he pleased to charge did consent to the bying of but one; I have taken in half almost of one of the old wheat mowes and it proves to be exterordinary good wheat both to yeald bread and for coler I have sent but 6 bushells of it to markt and it was sold for 5 and 10d so I thinke to send no more this munth at least nor then without your direction or I find very good resen in the meantime not knowing but I may want it for the use of the house having ordred them to sow no wheat this year; Thomas told me you did desire broune close for wheat and come to me to have order for bying seed wheat for it but that ground not being broke up it will be as well for that purpose the next year and serve for sheep or horses as it hitherto and by that time I hope we shall have somebody to look after it as have not so much buisness of theyr own for Thomas sowes 21 acres of wheat for himself and has imployed most of your workmen this season in making the ground fit for it he had turnaps in it before, and I am told by the larned he cannot put wheat into it under forty pound so it may be a conveniency for him to by your seed wheat and his together which he should have had none to by for you if it had not bin for the ground which I found was ordered for that purpose of John Dennings, and if I should not be able to let that estate I shall have more wheat theare and everything else then would turne to account unless I could go to markt, and you come home and mark bargens for your self and understood the manngement of your farm as well as the farmers do, as for farmer Thomasses part he has had so much buisness of his own and so many irons in the fire since I have made my observations and took upon me to concern myself that I have hardly had patience for as I lessened my buisness and expected more of his time to look after what remained regulerly and orderly and for your advantage I still found less and less of which I will give you one instance; we had had no provision of wallatt made this twelf month or more more than just what has bin brought when it has bin wanted to brue and that very seldome so that we have used for brewing washing baking matt makeing and in the kitchen all hard wood and hassell facketts which has devoured a vast quantity and we have now in the wood cort but one fackett and a little peece of another provided for the use of all the offices of the house this winter; which I told Thomas the other day I beleved would be all done by Crismas but he sed no; I asked him why he had not provided some wallatt he made some poor excuse which I have forgot and sed the time of the year would now come and theare should be some got I told him that our devoring chitching chimney would soun destroy the brands in the cort every one loving so good a fire thear if we had none any wheare else; he sed yes that was a destroyer and I

should find it would cost me a great deal of money more than I thought of to fetch coles at the rate I must for that use, which I suppose was by way of reflection for my forwardness to lett out the estate contrary to his inclination, he getting more by keeping it then you for ought I know but that aside as they say in the play; I told him I was informed there was a great many roots in Leigh wood of trees that had bin felled down which might have bin brought in he said yes there was enough to last me a great while that if they was not taken up would rot in the ground, and I might imploy my horses and plow to fetch it this winter; which I believe will be a pretty troublesome job we haveing so much wett that the wheelles will cut very deep for my poor old horses; and thus I have laid before you the state we are in as to this particuler Thomas has made was made provision enough to keep himselfe warme while he stays and us also for a short time after; and when it is done I think I had best come away to for it will be very hard to sit hear and blow my nailes which punishment with some others I believe there are those hearabouts would be glad I should have but I hope with the blessing of God I shall take care to prevent them. Please forgive me wrighting such long letters and consider this is all the ways I have of conversing with you or disburdening myself.

Mary Clarke to Locke September 1696

Dear Sir,

I humbly thank you for your last letter, notwithstanding you tell me I must often reflect on what I have formerly writ to Mr Clarke in comparing myself to the weatherglass as I will answer it to you and the rest of my friends, which challenge I do accept as to yourself. And if I was at my own dispose, or it was more in my power, I would meet you tomorrow in the middle of Lincoln's Inn Fields at your peril. For I do assure you I pass in this country for one that has as great a temper of mind and greatness of spirit as any of my sex. I appeal to Mr Clarke himself, who was lately an eye-witness of some of the trial I met with upon the account of his suffering in the esteem of the people by their misunderstanding of their won interest, but now I hope the generality of them at least are better satisfied. But when these sort of spirits reign among them, and they threaten to expose him and his to the rabble, can you imagine that the very noise of such a thing should affect my quicksilver, and if I am to suppose I must not have an inward concern though I disguise it.

Pardon in that I tell you with this history a little to vindicate my own ill humour; and give me leave to tell you that I think poor Jenny the most mended since she came home as ever you saw. She has got a great deal of flesh and that pretty firm, and for this month has been able to run from one room to the other, and this without holding her string\* at all, and when she is under my charge I venture her to go to one end of the gallery by herself and I stand at the other till she comes back again. But this is a liberty I don't give anybody else leave to take with her, she having so great a weakness in one of her legs, that a small matter will throw her down, for she goes on one side of her foot almost on her ankle, but since she goes more I fancy the fault is in her knee; for the knee of that leg in her walking comes quite over to touch the other, and by that means turns her foot so upon her ankle. I have sent for a boot for her as Mr Clarke and you directed me, but cannot yet get one here, so I have sent to borrow that Mr Clarke mentioned of my Aunt Strachey.

\*leading strings similar to reins

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke 5th October

I have a phancey to troble you with 2 of the last letters John received from his wife with his answare the first was a day or 2 before the child dyed and the other a day or 2 after if was buried; but I observe she takes not a word of notiss of theyr child no more than if she never had a child by him which is very strange to me for upon such an occation theare are a thousand things that falls naturally out of a mothers mouth that is not guilty and tis very strange to me if all this should be talked and nothing in it and if it be true I pray God to make it more plaine; methinks she fit to live noe wheare but in Italy I do not write this or send her letters that you may be trobled to wright anything about it to me more than what you think necessary but that you may observe her way of wrighting and know what her intentions are etc I desire you would send the letters back to me agen because it may be necessary for John to keep them by him; to whom I desire you would write some time between this and the 26th of this month which is the time that Thomasses raine will be over; that you do expectt he should assist me and give me what ease he can in the buisness that was under his brothers care till you have heard of one that you like and think fit to be imployed in that place, which you hope may be in a short time though you do beleve you shall find it more difficult for you to place that intire sattisfattion in them for the future than you done at least till you find better what use will be made of it and that you do expect he should see that inventory made perfect which you ordered Thomas to leave when his time was out and that every thing bee left in his right place so that John may be able to be accountable to you when you come home to any one else in the meantime that you shall order for the whole or any part theareof and this will be some authority to him to follow your expectation; and I beleve your intrest otherways what is expected from every body is really thought nobodys work nor performed by anybody either to the masters advantage or in any sort or order or method, pardon me that I find out any more writing worke for you than you allredy have, but it must be so sometimes it cannot be helped I wish I could give you more ease in every thing then I do but I find it impossoble for me that am your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley October ye 7th 1696

This day came Giles Ford one of the men that petitioned for the removall of the souldiers to pay a 46s lords rent and in Johns absence I was forst to receve it and he then repeated his thanks for the great kindness you had done them in removing the souldiers, I told him I was glad you could answare theyr expectations and that I thought they was more beholding to thos knayborghs that removed them than those that sent them thither he sed Aye they might thank Mr Sandford for that and he did wonder why that gentleman had no more kindness for Milverton since he had an estate theare and that he did apose them in everything of parrish buisness and aded that he did beleve they did intend they should take up theyr quarters theare this winter; and that the mayor was at Esq Sandfords at dinner when the letters came in which they thought had brought talleys for monny for pay; but indeede of that it proved to be an order for theyr removall which made them look very blank as he expressed it; they sed they would serve you and yours to the utmost of theyr powere to theyr last breath and so I made myself merry with them a little on the subject and after

they was gon we laughed more Mrs Burgess telling me that she thought I was going to draw them into an asociation, the people heareabouts are of opinion that when the King comes home when the parliament sits agen at least that theyr midle mony will pass agen and some of them ask me what I think to which I answare that that little discretion that I have tells me that after the King and parliament have bin at so much troble in rectifying the coyne and they have gone so far in it and have bin at the charge to set up Mints in the severall cityes and we are to pay such a sum for the deficiency of it that it will never go agen; and then they begin to be of my mind etc but I am apt to think this notion is put into theyr heads to keep them from carting theyr mony into the mint at this junture of time, and to make them more uneasey afterwards with the King and parliament when they find it will not pass as they was with you when they had fed themselves with phancy, that when you come down heare it would be so agen and when they found they was disceaved, then they could have nocked you in the head and set us all in flames, which would have bin very hard mesure for those that was ignorant of the whole plot and disire etc;

I writt this far before I had your last letter for which I thank you and am very glad you do aprove of anything I do; when I do assure you tis all desired for the best let the event be what it will, and I have only this to add that I will endever to follow all your directtions and desires as neare as I can in all things and take the libberty to give you an account theareof as time and opertunitys offers.

The black pettycote for Betty is to have a trimming on it such as Mrs Smithsby and you shall think fit according to the faishion if trimings be woren for it is to weare for change with her best mantua

My humble service to Mrs Smithsby to whom I am ashamed I have not writt since her last letter to me which I desire every post, but my letters to you are allways so long that before I have done them I am quite tyred and yet I could say methinks twice as much upon severall other subjects that are absolutley nessesary and must come in theyr turne to though I am loth to troble you

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

October ye 10th 1696

What you observe I think is very metteriall and what I minded John of before that she had given it under her hand yt as long as she thought him kind to her her love would be to great to do him any hurt but when she thought otherways whether he deserved it or not he must expect his doome etc; I thanke you for the sight of yours whearein I observe she desires you to be so much her frend that now she doss not live with her husband she may have her libberty according to law and what sort of prevelidge she has found out amonge her lawyere for wifes in those cases I hope we shall all have the benifit off though I have bin a lawyers wife so long and have bin hitherto kept in ignorance I hope my cozen will alow the same law to be good for his wife too; for I doupt not but Mrs G do make him acquainted with all her cases but I wonder what she means by telling you of her paying so much to Drs for John has pd 2 bills for her besides her £10 a year maintinance he alowes her, and I thought her fitts had bin quite gone by this time for I have not heard of them since I heard she had seven the day that she gave the child the stuff at Luckham, and upon being asked wheare she was not afraid of riding for feare of falling of her horss or of being near the fire or water least she should be surprised with her fits to which she answered no Dr Skinner had given her something that she should be sure never to fall with them in any dangerous place, and I was in hopes it had bin in this Drs

power to have cured her quite by this time that being one of the Drs that John had discharged his bill, her going to Exeter I sopose is to give her husband the same carretter theare as she has taken paines to do every wheare heareabouts in order one way to do his buisness for him and has as he tells me so much lessened his buisness as it is become very inconsiderable, it is a bad burd I heard that will foule her own nest and raile at her husband and make him and all his relations so odious that they are beloved by nobody and yet at the same time desire to live with him.

I am heartily glad to heare the King is safely landed I pray God to preserve him from all his publicke and private ennimyees I have noe news to return you from hence but that Sr Edw Phelipps at the sessions came from his place and pulled of his hat to John Spreat and inquired very kindly for you, and Mr William Phelipps made a thousand excuses that he had not waited on me, and further to my Honer Madam Sanford with one Mrs Goodenough and Madams 2 eldest daughters made me a vissett yesterday; I had a good occation of saying what a loss I had bin at of late in knowing my own quality they haveing heareabouts of late bestowed so many new titles on you, to which they looked down and made very little answare, and we souned found a new subjectt and I entertained them as well as I could and so we parted in all outward apearance in the hight of civility and frendshipp, which is all att present from your affectionate and faithfull wife  
M Clarke

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke    Chipley October ye 19th 1696

My deare

I should have written to you by the last post but it being the day before John had desired to go to Exeter I was so divided in my thoughts what of my plate to send, and what not, that I could think of nothing else; having so often picked it over and parted with all that I had not some resen or other to be willing to keep all that was left, and yet I was willing to send it in, you having proposed so great an advantage, and for fear you should tell me as you formerly have done upon other occations that I was against it for no other resen than that you proposed it, and was for it; which I have thought a pretty hard construcktion when I declare I never acted so in my life but the quite contrary and no other resen have now induced me to send above a hundred ounces into the mint some of which I beleve if I had agen I should not part with, I mean a guilt peece of plate which I was long resolving about but at last considered the advance price might be much about what the goldsmiths would advance for it being guilt and thearefore let it go all together, though I considered at the same time that we wanted mony much more then I thank God we do now when we resolved to keep it, but I feared I should have bin thought childish to have kept any thing that was so odd fashioned any longer ; when you so frankly offered me the mony of what I would part with to be laid out in what ever I pleased; for which I humbly thank you, but notwithstanding to redeem my basen that was hear, which sentence was passed on, I looked up all the little passells of mony I had by me, most of which was in the trunks at Holcombe and in some of them little notes of it of your own writing that was almost rotten and as I remember put in by you at Sutton when we was first married; when it came alltogether it amounted to four score pound which I was surprised at; but gave it all to John to carry to carry to the mint in case they would accept it, if not to get bills and return it to you from thence which he did do for fifty pound of it Sr John saying it was all such mony as

ought to pass, so John pd the fifty pd bill and brought back the other thirty which remains hear at your service and I hope I shall get a bill or bills for it very quickly though I offred some of it today to one that came for mony and he refused seven pound of it saying it was not weight for they are come to that pass hear that they take no mony at tall but by weight every one carriing scales about them or a kickcombob as they call it which is in the nature of a little stilliard and much a quicker way of weighing; but the people will take no mony hear but what will hold its waight and the mint will not take that which is uncliped it being lawful by the Act; so that now we are like never to be without mony though at this rate may be little the better for it; I hope you will like as well my keeping the basen as keeping the mony that being enough to by 4 such basens at any time as I find by the weight engaven on the bottom; and I am upon second thoughts loth to part with it being a well shaped one and I remember I had 2 or 3 made before I could get one such, thearefore if you please I think to keep it a little longer for my own use and the other likewise till one of my eldest daughters is married which to do well ought to be before the new one is out of fashion they being so large of theyr age this I heare anyone would take to be 18 years old; I can hardly think her otherways my self and if any honest gentleman worth accepting would think her so too; the new basen and the candlesticks given by the same hand and of the same fashion would do very well for good hansell, and for ought I know turn to better account then if you could make thirty in the hundred in parting with it any otherway.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London October ye 20th 1696

My deare,

This day His Matie opened the session of Parliament wth a graciouse speech to both Houses, wherein he takes notice of the greate defitiancy of the intended supplyes of ye last years service and shows the necessity of the Parliamts enabling him to carry on the Warr agst France in order to the obtaining an honourable and lasting peace; His Matie was therein allsoe pleased to recomend the perfecting the Remedy of the ill state of the coyn; and the being speedy and unanimous in all our resolutions; the speeche itself (if it comes out time enough) I will send you by this or ye next post and proceed to acquaint you that the House of Comons have this day resolved that they will support His Matie and this Governmt, and effectually assist him in ye vigorous prosecution of the present Warr agst France; that they will not alter ye standard of the gold or silver coine of this Kingdome, neither in weight, finesses or denomination, and wth ye like unanimity resolved to make good all the Parliamentary funds that have been granted for loanes from the subject since His Matie accession to ye Crown; then they appoynted to take His Maties speech into consideration on Thursday next, and adjourned to that day; this is a verie good begining, and I hope a happy presage of a prosperouse session for the support of this Government.

I was yesterday morning early (even by candlelight) surprised with a visit by Mrs Grace Spreate shee imediately told me she came to London on purpose to have mee write to her husband and order him to make a settlement upon her, which I absolutely refused, then shee desiered mee that I would give it under my hand that I would not protect him agst her suite, which I allsoe absolutely refused then shee desiered me to write to him, to lett her know by a letter what he would settle upon her, wch to bee ridd of her and gett her out of the house I did promise, and would have him (whenever shee writes to him ) in his answare

to set forth her extravagant ill conduct and the many debts she has thereby contracted, wch he hath allready paid, and the many more he is still able to and must pay and discharge as he shall be able and tell her that he is still content to settle ten pounds a yeare being the moyiety of that small tenement at Buckland wch is all that is left upon her dureing her life, or to that or the like effect, or what else he thinkes more proper; she came to town as she told me Saturday, but would not tell me where shee lodg'd but said she would write to her husband and direct him where to write to her and thus we parted, and I have given Mrs Watts directions to say I am not at home when ever she comes again; if I at any time heare anything further of her, I will be sure to give you an account of it; in ye meane time pray communicate this to John and lett him know that I recd his letter and Byll for £5 by the last post, wch is accepted and I beleive will be paid when due, I approve verie well of what he did at Exon, and am in a greate hurry, yet yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke

On 20 October Edward had been the third named to the privileges committee and was now acting as a parliamentary manager for the court.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke      Chipley October ye 21st 1696

My deare

I thank you for your last letter and will take care to send to Taunton for the box you mention and do hope Mr Whitmarshes man will not now refuse to delever Mr Freaks cheese at the same time, which has hitherto bin as hard to get as if it weare now coming from Parma; John is gone agen once more this day about among your tennants to try them upon the same subject but I am apt to think will find but little mony for you, clipped or unclipped for most of the people in this contrey are still strongely of opinion that the midle mony as ye call it must go agen; and what they think fit to put away to the shopkeepers if they by anything to suppley theyr nessessarys with part of the mony and have the weight of the rest in new mony presently; it is a greater advantage to them then to pay theyr landlord (he may stay till mony is plentier) or to put it into the mint and stay so long for theyr mony as to take it out in case but I think the shoppkeeper is the cuningest man for I beleve he alowes his gaines proportionable to the mony and then is sure to get the eightpence in the ounce when he puts it into the mint at any time between this and the 4 of the next month. Heare is a sad complaint among the poor and a great many are forst to go a beging that are carriers and weaver tradesmen they say will not give them any work but have almost laid down theyr trades and the spinners must go to or 3 times before they can get a pound off work of them and when they have it, it is thirty ounces and they must take such a shilling for it as will pass but for eight or 9 pence or if it be a broad one that is weight they must take it at the rate of 13 pence; so that I know not what will become of the poor this winter at this rate theare a great many goes abeging allredy, and we have had a great robbery committed not far off the perticulers of which I will get John to write you he being better acquainted with the circomstances of it and the names of the people concerned then I am; I beleve all these that was clipers will now turne house breakers; the men at the mint at Exeter John tells me complaine that they have such weak things sent them down from London to work with that theyr instruments do nothing but break and disappoynt them in theyr business and some times endanger theyr lives; and I find by the newsprints that the same complaints come from other places so that

I think it is all of apeece to delay the coming out of mony, theare is John sayes a great many ingotts lyes redy to be coyned at Exeter.

I find Thomas under some concern to know how you will deal with him about his wages at his going off and the other mony that remained in your hand when you balanced his account last, but he has never sed the least word to me nor taken any notice of it but I beleve he has to his brother, thearefore I do think it convenient if you please to inclose three or 4 line to Isake to this efect that Thomases time being out on the 26 and you not upon the place you have ordered him with his brothers assistance to make up an exact inventory of all your goods and leave with me, before he goes and everything to be left in its proper place of what kind soever and Isake knowing what sadles have bin bought at London that he would perticularly see over all those things belonging to the stables that are in the press in Thomases keeping and your own sadles bridles and portmantells traps and male pillions gambadines and give me an account of it. Pray wright nothing to Isake but upon this subject that I may privatly show it to John Spreat before I give it to Isake that he may not be surprised that Isake should concern himself this I think proper to be done I am sure since Thomas has had so much buisness of his own things have bin but indefferently looked after what soever ye wright to me in answare to this letter let theare be nothing mentioned in it that I desired you to wright to Isake nor any thing relating to Thomas in mine that I may not show to John least it should create any jelosey or heart burning between John and Thomas and Isake which I would have by all means avoided for these times of danger we all ought to agree.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London October ye 22th 1696

My deare,

Yr obleigeing letter by the last post with that inclosed for Mr Lock came safe, and I have been this day twice at his lodgeings to have deliverd it to him, but not finding him at home was forced to leave it there for him, and doe hope you will receive an answere from him in a little time; in the interim I cannot but expresse my joye and satisfaction at the increasing strength of Jenny, but am concern'd that you have not all this while been able to gett a boote made for her according to the discription I gave of the Little-boote my Aunt Strachey made use of with such greate success for her grand-daughter; I heartily pray God dayley to increase and perfect her health, and restore and strengthen both Sammy and her, that they may have the right and perfect use of their limbes.

I am concerned to thinke that my perswadeing you to melt down some of our oldest plate hath been the occasion of soe much trouble to you, and am most heartily sorry that you have parted with any wch you wish for againe; but am verie well pleased that you have kept yr bason, and doe verie well approve of the use you designe that and the candlesticks for, and shall thinke them best disposed of that way, and doe not care how soon they are parted with upon those termes

The money that shall arise by melting down the plate, and the money fetch'd out of the old holes and corners, and whatever else I have shall be layde out in what ever you like best; I am sorry it is like to be soe long before yr plate will be turn'd into money, by wch meanes the advantage will not bee soe greate as I proposed, and it would have certainly been could it have been coyn'd sooner; I assure you, the advantage by ready money here has been made from 20£ to 40£ and fifty pounds but by buying up of tallyes and other as good securityes as any

are in the kingdome, but now that market begins to bee over, but those who had ready money by them here for two months last past, by laying it out in Tallyes and such like securityes have doubled theire estates, wch I would have been glad to have done likewise wth all my small parcels when ever I could have gott them into my handes but the vote of Parliament upon Tuesday to make good all Parliamentary funds that have ever been granted for loans from the subjects hath spoyled that market, but I will make the most advantagious use I can of soe much of it as you doe not order mee to dispose of in anything in particular; I heartily thanke you for sending the money to Exeter and John's furnishing mee with a good byll for £50 part of it; I assure you there will be much more advantage to bee made by that, and what ever more hee can send mee Good Bylls for, then can possibly bee made of it on the verie best securityes that can bee had in the countrey, and therefore lett him get mee a good byll for ye rest as soon as he can.

I have heard nothing from Mrs Grace since my last, but pray lett John know that I recd his letter with a cobby of Mr Crosses his Afft but have heared nothing as yet from Mr Hoare, but shall bee ready to waite on Judge Powell and doe him all the right, and all the kindnesse in my power. I am quite tyred, but remaine yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley October ye 23 1696

My deare,

I receved yours by the last post by which I find you have had a very early vissitter which newes I have communicated to her husband who receved a letter from her by the same post wherein she contradictts everything relating to the discourse you and she had and made your answar to her quite contrary; that they might the better answar her purpose she thanks God for the great civility she has found among strangers she need not want for fair words at London as long as she has any mony in her pockett but when thats gone those that will be pleased with her face and conversation I feare will allow her but a poor maintenance she says she will live at London or anywheare else wheare her husband please, if he will not live with her agen I think tis no matter wheare she lives and unless she was better it would have bin happy for him if he had never seen her; she ses she is in a private house and with very honest people methinkes she has great confidence in them I beleve she never saw before having never bin in London in her life and I beleve had no acquaintance theare except 2 or 3 factters she also ses she cant live by the ayre I dont understand how she lives by the ayre when she has ten pounds a year allowed her which a great many people would think a very good maintenance, but whether it will support her to keep roveing up and down the countrey I know not, for travelling is chargeable unless she makes it turn to account now at London if she has carried all her wardrobe with her what she has left it will cost her a good deal and she will soune be cheated out of them as wise as she was once thought in this countray; she ses you did not huff her and if she did expect you would she was to blame to take such a journey on purpose to make a request to you; I wonder she never ses nothing of her children in none of her letters; pray take care of yourself for I think her very dangerous sort of a woman upon many accounts.

I am very glad there is so good a beginning of the session of parliament and I hope it will go on and progress and that mony will be settled and grow plenteous for heare is a sad complaint among the poor the tradesmen are extremely to

blame in crushing the poor so they have allmost laid down under pretence of wanting money to carry it on when it is thought by some they have it and do keep it by them to make other advantage of it. Everything sells at a good rate which I wonder at when money is so scarce I sold some of our old wheat yeasterday at Wellington for 7s the busshell and I hear some sold for 7 and 6 and I sold barley for 3s and 6 which are great prices, for the poor that have no worke. I am very glad to hear the Bill of Exchange from Exon is accepted I hope by this time you will have another of £14 of the same money which is all at present more than to desire you to send the inclosed to my Lady Acton and give my service to Mr Lock Mr Freak and accept the same yourself from your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

My blessing to my children The news that I had in a letter from my Aunt Strachey was yt the groom that went with us into Hollond has lately hanged himself in his own little stable his feet being but 2 inches from the ground when he was found dead.

Locke to Mary Clarke London 24th October 1696

Madam,

I should be glad to meet you in the middle of Lincoln's Inn Fields, or some more convenient place not far from it, in answer to your challenge, but it would be with a resolution to submit to you as a better manager of your weather-glasse than I am of mine. I am not a little glad of it since it will not only give you the victory over me, but also over the remains of your late disease. I am very glad Jenny is soe much recovered. I look upon her to be in the right way to health and strength in your hands. As to the weaknesse in her leg, I take it to be in her ankle which turns her knee in, and not in the knee which you suppose makes the bending in her ankle, and this I doubt not you will find by the use of a boote.

What you suggest concerning Sammy I owne ought to be examined and looked after. But at this distance I thinke it necessary to have a little more light in the case before I can advise anything in it. To inform yourself and me more fully concerning his hip, whether there be any sprain or dislocation there, I think it would be convenient to consult your Doctor, who being a learned man and skilled in anatomy will be seeing of him naked, handling of the part, and observeing when he sets him upon his leggs, whether both the child's legs are of an equal length, and whether he standing upright can set both the soles of his feet flat upon the plain ground, be able to resolve you whether his hip has been hurt or noe, and when that is discovered that will be ground to proceed to other things. I wish you and all your family perfect health and am, Madam, your most humble and most affectionate servant.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke October ye 26th 1696

My deare

I hope you received mine by the last post with Madams inclosed and now to show you how carefully I have followed all the Drs directions I have inclosed sent you a copy of what I writt to him by John Spreat and his answare to me; I am told severall little meddicens by my frends that they say have cured many people when the famous Drs prescriptions have done no good but I have no faith in them nor shall never trye I am now taking the tenth bottle of the bitter infusion and I know not how many barrells of dyett drink that I am now drinking and the thought of being first to purge all this away and then to begin

agen is a little tedious and disheartening; thearefore I think to be quiett and see what the effects of it will be and if I find it absolutely necessary, and you are willing and your afaires heare will permitt I will come some time or other to London and spend a month in a lodging and hear what Mr Lock thinks and see wheare he will do anything for me when I am near him for I am entirely of his opinion that the phesion ought to be near a patient that is in a corse of phesike to see what effects it has and observe the alteration of the body in the taking of it.

I receved the box and the basket with Mr Freakes cheese Satterday last for which I humbly thank you both and do wish there was anything heare you could think of worth your acceptance, your daughter Betty will wright her thanks her self to you for her pettycote and so will I mine to Mr Edward for the Queenes speech so delicately writt by the first opertunity but at present I have any afaires in hand perticulerly that of letting Lee having hither to had the same luck as I expected Mr Trot and the old man are now waiting to speak with me about it and thearefore I am forst to conclude with my service to my frends and my blessing to my children Your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke . The remainder of the fower score pound is now returned up by a bill inclosed the people heare abouts are all in fear of theyr lives of being robed; the poor trading people having nothing almost to do; tis feared what nessesity will put them upon; methinkes tis a thousand pittys there was not workehouses set up by the goverment like those in Hollond wheare the poor might allways be imployed and not be forsed to depend upon the uncertain favor and humor of these illnatured gripeing trades people.

Anne (Nanny) Clarke to Edward Clarke October ye 27 1696

**Honored father**

I received yrs with ye coat of Arms and likewise my feather cap, for which I give you humble thanks; I have done yr crovate and had sent it now, but I have not bought a frenge as yet, I am now a goeing about ye coats of Arms and I will take care to do it as well as posably I can; be pleas to accept my humble duty and give ye same to my mother when you write with my love to my brothers and sisters from Sr, yr dutyfull daughter Anne Clarke  
Pray give my servis to Mrs Smithby with ye enclosed.

On 29 October Edward met with others to discuss how to handle Fenwick's accusations against Shrewsbury, and there were further meetings to hammer out a common line. He took an active role in support of Fenwick's attainder. And there was still work to be done on the coinage issue.

TROUBLE WITH THOMAS

October 1696 - November 1696

*- Mary still worrying about silver - Edward sends medical advice from Locke in London - Mary suspects Thomas is keeping profits on Edward's farm business - Thomas resents having to make an inventory -*

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

October ye 28th 1696

My deare

I hope you received mine by the last post whearein I told you I was then stayed for to treat with Goodman Dening about Lee and at last I have agreed to let it to him agen on the same termes he had it before, for the term of fower yeares the old man not being willing to take it for a longer time which perhapps you may wonder at, but I met with such a disapoyntment of an exterordinary tennant that I was told would take it for 1 or 2 or 3 seven years; for which resen and severall others I resolved then to agree with the old man on those terms which after several meetings and discourses was the most he could be brought to, and in my sexly wisdom thought it best to take it at this time and do hope when I see you to satisfy you that it was so in the meantime I begin to be very busie in my new office of head bayliff and my under officer John is very digiligent yet in seting all things in the proper place and I hope both he and Isake will indever to keep it so for it is enough to vex anybody to see and find it in such confusion and disorder; Thomas I find is uneasey that his brother had no orders to pay him his wages by the last post and hope for some by the next, by which time I hope we shall be able to bring all your things together that are now wanting by being mislaid, lent out or taken without leave, to be brought home at lesure according to the custom of this countrey which I must break in all things that relates to your buisness while I am heare or else I cannott beare it.

Goodman Dening would not be brought to sow clover this last year he sed if I would take him and hang him which I though was pittty to do now he has lived to this age.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London October ye 29th 1696

The inclosed is a long letter to John Spreate about my business to bee taken care of by him at Puriton, Sydcott and Churchill etc and I intended to have written my thoughts at large to you allsoe on the subject mater of yrs to Doctor Musgrave and his anser to you, and yrs to mee touching the present state of yr health, but I am just unexpectedly sent for to atend ye Lords of the Treasury, (my Masters) and feare that I shall not return timely enough to write to you on that subject as I intended, but will doe it if I can; I hope you will pardon mee and bee assured that I am, yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

October ye 30th 1696

I humbly thank you for your letter by the last post and the liberty you thearein give me of parting with or not parting with our plate; which I wish I may make a good use of, but my naturall inclynation being not to part with any thing almost that is old for new, makes me fear I shall mannage in that as in most other things indiscreetly; but if it proves so I hope you will forgive me and in the meantime I should be glad to know if they do not alow at the goldsmiths more for old guilt plate, then for that which is not guilt for I have a peece or 2 that is as well guilt as if it was new; but as to those great candlesticks that you

mention which cost 15 or 10 pounds they was changed into 2 pairs of the same fashion when I was last at London nether of them are so big as the new paire that was given me since so that I know not which to part with nither have you sed anything to deside the poynt about the basens; pray dont let Mr Freake know what a fool I am, not to be willing to part with that which I am afraid to have my thought cut to keepe, and now at this time of advantage to all which I am cencible of; and yet I shall be the fool not to part with so much as you will think I ought to have don it is just like matreymony, and for that resen dont let Mr Freak have the pleasure of laughing at us more then he doss alreedy.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London October ye 31th 1696

I have read and considered yr letter to Doctor Musgrave, and his ansvere to you of the 16th, and allsoe yrs of the 26th wch inclosed them both to mee, and upon the whole matter, am perfectly of opinion with you, that since you have taken soe many bottles of the bitter infusion, and drunke soe many barrells of ye Dyett-drinke tis best to respite the doeing any thing more for some time at least, to see what effect that wch you have allready done with soe much constancy and exactnesse taken, will have upon you; and the rather because I beleive the entring now in the dead of winter on a purgeing course, (wch I have allwayes observed does verie much weaken and disorder you) and then to goe on with the bitter infusion and the Dyett-drinke all over againe in the manner as you have allready taken it, must necessarily tyre you out, and instead of strengthening quite destroy your stomack, wch will bee verie injuriouse to you, and I am therefore more confirmed in this opinion, by reason I have soe often hear'd Mr Lock say, that a multitude of physick is in verie few cases absolutely necessarye, and that turning yr stomack into a constant apothecary's shop is hardly in any case proper.

Thus farr of my letter I writt before I was call'd out of Mr Freke's house in the morning, and meeting fortunately with Mr Lock this afternoon, I discovered him on yr case, and on the substance of what I had written to you about yr thoughts of respiteing for ye present yr takeing any more physick, and to waite a little how nature will worke towards yr releife, all wch he seem'd to approve of, but told mee I should doe well to advise you to drinke every day 2 or 3 or more glasses of the strongest wine you can gett, and to put some dropps of the infusion of Centry\* in it as you find yr stomack will beare, which hee sayes will verie much strengthen yr stomack, invigorate yr bloud, and create an appetite, all wch are verie much to bee desiered in yr case, and in order to it I desire you forthwith to send to Exeter or Taunton for the best Old-Hock you can gett, and if there bee none good to bee had there, I will send you some from hence, but first pray search carefully in our own wyne sellar at home, if there bee any old-hock to bee found there, and then to use that, it being I beleive as good as any that can bee gott, and if there bee noe old-hock, then to use instead thereof some of the Rinkoe (if there bee any left) which I beleive to bee the best of that sort of wyne that is in the Kingdome; he sayes you must make the infusion of the centry in the same manner as you have been formerly directed to make an infusion of wormwood\*, to putt in some dropps of it as yr stomack will best beare into what wine you drinke, you may use it likewise in sack or in any other wyne that you drink, and hee sayes that hee thinkes you cannot drinke a better sort of wyne then that I sent you wch was part of a present from Admirall

Russell to mee, hee advises allsoe yr drinking the strongest drinke you can gett, and frequently Mumm.

As I learn any thing further from him relateing to yr health, I will certainly communicate it to you, but I thinke you cannot doe any better than to come to town to him and bee guided by his directions here upon the place, and therefore cannot but verie much approve of yr intention in that particular, and shall most readily and willingly contribute all that is any wayes in my power to have you brought safe to mee; there being noe comfort or satisfaction to mee in this world, like to that of enjoyeing yr society and therefore nothing can be soe welcome as yr company to yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke

The votes and newsprints are inclosed to our daughter Betty

Mr Lock and Mr Freke are intirely yr servants and particularly kind to mee

\* century - aperient, astringent

\*wormwood -strong and bitter diuretic with offensive taste

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

November ye 2nd 1696

My dear

I received yours by the last post and communicate the contents theareof to J Spreat and desired him to excuse my not writing to you the post following being then very buisey in putting up the remainder of my plate and other things of most vallew in a trunk to send to Holcombe for the more safty not that I think theyr house better garded than howrs but the mallice of the people may not be so much towards it and our house is not so strong as it was by one since Thomas went, which was Fryday last haveing stayed till Thursdays post in hopes to have your orders for the paying of his wages ; he agreed with John Stevens the last week in the kitching for all the wheat he had at 6s the bushell fifty or three score bushells or more as it held out; he is become one of the greatest dealers in the countrey methinkes to carry on which I am apt to think he will sometimes want the command of your pursse; to which he has had ingress and regress without control to long for your profitt I phancey; if you remember I have often writt to you hearetofore that if you did not come ofner in the countrey I beleved Thomas would take all for his own, but that was between jest and earnest; but now I do veryly beleve he has not bought nor sold nor managed anything of yours almost that he has not made a profit to himself acording to the privatt observations I have made on him, though I can not accuse him of anything in perticular so as to prove it; he has carried his buisness so privatt and cuning and has hitherto kept the mob on his side; but alltogether it lookes very ugly the Satterday before his time was out he had contrived it so as to imploy most of the workemen that used to work to the house and they came in as they used to do to be paid and as I satt by the fire not thinking anything when they was pd Thomas told me now the workemen was alltogether he desired they might be asked if they did know anything that he had defraded you in or imbasseled any of your goods that they would speak and not raile at him after he was gone to which I was dum, then he called them all over by theyr names and bid them speak now; so then they all muttered some in a low voise and some in a higher one; and then I began to open my mouth and aske Thomas what made him make this declaration and call witnesses for I did not accuse him of anything nor requier the men to speak but if I had or when they was asked I did hope they would speak truth and when they was gone I asked him whether he was going into France or Irland that he would not be able to answare for himself if there should be any false accusation

laid upon him, he sed he was going no farther than Milverton I sed I wondred then he made this noyes, so he looked simpley and sed it was because he knew theyr temper was such that they would cutt anybodys thought behind their backs; John is this day at Exeter to put in what clipt mony has bin brought by the tennants which is not much and that, that is, is most by the tennants that are the best pay masters, those in your little troblesome cottages at Langford are so poor that they have it not to bring and Coram and Will Trott and that sort bringes none being in hopes to make more of theyr mony; I wonder at the patience of the poor the tradesmen having almost all laid downe, and every thing very deare those that do keep up, make the poor do anything that they may have work, some of them are forst to take 36 ounces to the pd and for that they have a shilling that is worth but 10 pence; the auther of these misfortunes they say is bank bills I know not what it is but alltogether I am sure it is very bad and unjust; I pray God to support us all under our grievances and give us patience I am sure mine is allmost worn out with haveing always to do with one turbelent Spreat or another but at last I hope I shall be rid of them all; the things in Thomasses charge are almost put together those that can be found of them some has bin brought in since inquierry was made and I hope the rest may in time for I have told all the workmen that you have sent to have a perticuler account of your things and that I do beleve you have a note by you of them but that I cannot tell wheare to find it, but desired them if they had any or did know of any they would bring it or cause it to be brought home yt you might not find it wanting when you did come home, this I thought the best way to get what otherways might never have bin had; he and I parted very kindly and nobody knows that ever I writt anything of this kind to you about him, for I have always taken such times as now when John is from home though I know he is sensible he has not done as he ought; yet it cannott be so easey to him to hear complaints of this kind made of so near a relation and if I should be discovered I should always be distrusted. I had the last night John being gon to Exeter Trustorome to ly in the house being garded by none but boys and scolding femalls besides Isake and I think to have him lye heare when John goes to Churchill etc for I find all the knybourwood is upon theyr gard, for the number of roges that robed Mr Passens house was 10 and none of them taken yet.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke    November ye 4th 1696

My deare

I thank you for yours and Mr Locks advice by ye last post in relation to my swollen leggs and I must truly own my sexly infirmity that I know not what I would do nor what I would have for methinkes one day I could wish for some resens that you was heare and when I reflect what a troblesome time you had when you was heare last makes me fear it should be so agen, and for some resens I could wish myself at London and for many more I ought to be heare, so that how to divide myself I know not, so as to do for the best in all things I know not I think I must take the dead of the winter to consider of it.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke    November ye 9th 1696

I hate to take mony till it is a little better settled for the people will perswade me to do anything and make me take 20 pence for a shilling if they can, saying that I may do it if I will and think it very hard if I dont, when they cant press John so much he telling them that he must pay it out of his own pockett if he should take

such light shillings having your orders to the contrary which silences them sooner than I can if I should make a thousand words, they knowing that your pocket and mine is all one; and when I pay money they expect better from me than anybody being Standard Clarke's wife; Thomas was heard again today and inquired for his brother John I suppose to know where there was any orders come for payment of his money, but I think as you do that he ought to write to you himself he being able so to do and had a very kind letter from you which I think deserved an answer and an account of his having done as you ordered him before he went and what he reckons is due to him; as soon as you was gone to London he began to sell of your old barley as fast as he could a score or 2 before I knew of it but when by accident I did I desired him to forbear he said he thought it would not bear a better price than it did; I told him I thought it would, but if not, I should use it myself and that put an end to it and the same sort that he sold for 2s and 6d and 2s and 8d than I have sold since for 3s and 3s and 6d so that I conceive his reason for selling so fast was to bring as much money as he could into his hands for his own use and thereby to shorten the account between you and him; but of this pray take not the least notice but if you think fit when you write next to his brother tell him that you understand by me that Thomas is gone and very uneasy you are he had no orders to pay him, which you wonder how he could expect since he never answered your letter nor had never given you any account whether he had left the things in that method and order as you desired etc which indeed he was very far from there being nothing at all done in it by him and I believe never would if there had not been others concerned to see it done for there was nothing towards it till the very day his time was out and then from that time to the Friday following John and Isaac was very busy in routing out the holes and seeing altogether that could then be found some more there is come since and some still is wanting; as little wedges Iron bar, bags etc which is in the memory of man but who to ask for it it is not I that can tell, I was told that Thomas was in a sad fret all the while the thing was looking up and said he believed there was never such an inventory required before that these things was never delivered into his charge or that he never took the charge of them I know not which

Gabrell being sent by me another way Saturday last I sent Will Littlejohn to Taunton market with wheat where he sold for seven shillings the bushell and Thursday last it sold for 6s and 6d the bushell at Wellington which is a great price but if our neighbours have it I know no reason we should not for I believe our wheat have stood us in as much to put it into the ground and before it comes to market as most in the country the farmers doing of it for themselves to better advantage I have sown no wheat this year so I must keep enough to last me that I may not by I am head bayley and by employing several under officers and discarding them a little I get a great deal of experience though we had never so few workmen as now and if I had been to pay them always I should never have had patience to have paid a way so many hundred pound without being better satisfied then I now am.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley November ye 11th 1696

I cannot but smile at Mrs Spreats inquiry whether her husband be well or no by which she would induce you to believe that he has not written to her and nothing but sickness could hinder him; I have kept every market this week with wheat and sold yesterday at Wilscome for 7s the bushell where the man was

offered 7s for a score but did not accept of it because he did not know wheare I would like it or not, methinkes it is a great price but it may be dearer by resen we have had so bad a sowing time I am told severall people have not bin able to sow at all thoss that theyr ground lyes wett; I phancey I make more of my corne by sending some times one and some times another to markt for they indever to out sell one the other; heare was a man to offer his service to you one that has lived 2 year with Mr Lambe 2 year with Sir John Trevilian 3 year with Mr Manly from whence now he goes upon wages I asked him what wages he did expect he sed he hoped you would give him £5 a year I told him I did not know wheare you weare provided or not and that I did not care to take any till you did come home not well knowing what buisness you might expect of them; the fellow seemed a good likely fellow enough but I am utterly against one that has binn so neare a knybour such a won will to soun be like the other; methinkes every servant I part with I am so much the easier that it gives me a sinking of sperrett when I think I must have more in theyr places; I wish I could do all the buisness myself though I have bin a little busselled some times how to set the workemen into theyr work since John has bin wanting but I shall have this convenience by it Satterday night when I come to pay them I shall not be forst to aske them how many days they have worked heare and what they have bin about as I observed Thomas was very often pray excuse me to all that I ought to write to for I am not only a perfect farmers wife but a farmer to now; and as such pray give my service to Mr Lock and Mr Freak and the rest of my frends.

## TRADE AT A STANDSTILL

November 1696 - December 1696

*Mrs Spreat on the warpath - talk of the poor rising - no wood at Chipley for fires because of the wet winter - Jepp and Sammy racket round the house - Mary turns serge maker to help the poor -*

As well as letters from Mary, Edward received frequent messages from his borough about the distress and unrest caused by recoinage, and because his own political reputation there was involved he took notice. At the end of October he was nominated to the inquiry into the poor laws, and later he was first named to the drafting committee of the R Avon navigation bill and to the committee for the bill to encourage woollen manufactures.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

**I find the parliament men that stays at home do ingratiate themselves more among the people then those that quitt theyr familys and buisness to serve them; John Spreat came home last night and will wright you word of his proceedings at Churchill by this post, the letter yt lay hear for him was from his wife as I apprehended and I have communicated that from her to you to him and I find them to be a perfect contradiction one to the other they bore the same date being the fith of November and in hers to him she owens the receet of his and sends him an angrey threatening answare to most of the perticulers of it ye she will go on her knees to the Kinge and petition the parliament and try all the corts spirituall and temperall that she have the advice of able counsellors by the intrest of her frends in London who together with those in the countrey are redy to testify what she was worth when she came to them, and she will now make him give her an acount what he was worth and what he has since got in your service and by his attorneyshipp as she expresses her self and what he had pd of her depts, and a great deal of this kind of stuff to as little purpose methinkes and in the conclution she tells him she will leave no stone unturned; I cannot emagin what he can write to her more than repetition of same things agen and thearefore I think no answare is better than any, she also orders him to send up her clothes by Whitmas; methinks tis strange to think how a woman can have the confidence to wright this to her husband and the same day wright to you that she have not heard from him and desire to know if he was well.**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke      **Chipley November ye 15th 1696**

**Here is nothing but talke of the poore rising for want of trade; and a wrong notion raines among them that all old mony must not pass after 1st of January which I beleve proseeds from the votes of the House relating to the takeing in of all old mony till that time into the mint that is deficient in other ways and that signifies nothing nither as yet, for nither the Exeter no Bristoll mint will receive any more mony in at 5s and 8d per ounce saying the 4th of November is past and all though it is voted and resolved yet it is not passed; all these things together makes the ignorant and disafected more outrageous then the poor who in truth are the greatest sufferers by severall degrees, I pray God to give them patience and put it into the harts of some body or other to think of some way of imploying them, that they might not depend on these tradesmen that have got all theyr**

wellth by theyr labours and now are so cruell to lay down theyr trades; they say the resen is that they have a great many peeces of sarge by them that theyr mony lyes dead in; which they cannott dispose of beyond sea or anyweare else what the resen of all this is that everything is at a stand I wish I could tell, for they say it is not want of mony but returnes of it now; so that theare is allways something in the way methinkes to disquiett and disease us.

Thomas Spreat is now hear and desires me to put you in mind of what is due to him for he wants his mony I should be glad to know if you have heard or seen John Barber in London yet for he was hear I beleve a month since and told me he was to begin his jorney thether in a few days.

John Cary\* to Edward Clarke Bristol 16th November 1696

Honoured Sir,

I humbly make bold to write you this on occasion of your late vote of taking in hammered money at 5s 8d per oz in future taxes but no mention made how it shall be received in the revenue of customs, excise etc. This will be a very great injury to the traders of England, especially in great cities, many of them having received large sums in that sort of coin on encouragement of your former vote, and wrote to their chapmen to send them their vessels at that price, which hath been a great means to keep things so quiet in the country as they have been, so the loss will light on the well-meaning men who have endeavoured to serve the Government, and will very much disoblige the corporations.

All trade on this last vote will be at a full stop, nothing but milled money will pass, unless the revenue is ordered to be received in hammered money; if this were done but till the 25th March it would make all current again; if the House thinks fit to explain the word hammered money twould not be amiss; it makes a puzzle in the country.

I desire you will pardon the liberty I take to be so free with you in this affair. I have no peculiar interest, the quiet of the nation is the thing I aim at, and that those who desired to disaffect the people against the Government may have no just occasion of doing it. I wish you may settle the credit of the nation for us to ensure the ends intended. I am afraid the banks will not be a foundation solid enough to build a National credit on, nor anything else that is private, and thereby liable to be swayed by interest; I love the Kingdom of England though I am not in any station to serve it, and this makes me take a greater freedom with you who are. That little acquaintance I have had with you hath given me full satisfaction that you are an honest English gentleman. With due regards, I am, Sir, Your most humble servant, John Cary.

\* John Cary of Bristol (died 1720) was a merchant and writer on trade.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

21 Nov 1696

Munday last was the first day that Mr Trott and John Spreats buisness would agree so as to go into Lee Wood to consider what the roots there might be worth the sum to take up for the use of the house which will be really wanted as well as other wood before we cann possobley get it, for it is such continuall wet wether that theare is nothing to be done abroad and every place so full of water at present that they must spend half theyr time in caveing up the water to come atthe roots this worke ought to have bin done the last year and then the wood corte would not have looked so naked now as it doss though I have favored it as

much as tis possoble having had no fire above stayrs this winter; Jenney and all the rest have bin dressed and undressed without it yet for the peaple of the chitchen will have a constant good fire theare who ever wantes and to spare my fagott wood ( which all that is in the cort is but part of one reeke) I have for this last 2 burnings bin forst to live with straw which is not very good husbantrey but this is the poor cold state and condition I am left in and contrive what I can I beleve I shall not be able to subpley the offices of baking waishing and ironing till I can have more for having nothing to do this with but dry fackett wood I will leave you to gess how long that will last; pardon me that I wright this troblesome history to you, but I am provoked to that degree that I cannot avoid it, it would make a def speake I think if he could consider what chaffer and dispach heare has bin made to sell away your wood and now if I live hear I beleve must be forst to buy agen; we live hear betwen hope and fear allways hearing of one dismall story or other the other day it was reported that the French was landed and some of the revengeful poor was wishing it was so for that a great many would go to them I beleve the disafected raise these reports to incence the poor and try what they will do this miserable hard time for it is enough to make them disperatt to have no bread no work no fire nor no cloths if they had not bin in some mesure used to it heartofore it would certainly be insupportable to them now I hope trade will move agen in a short time or else it will be very sad in this part of the country that depends the most part of it upon these illnated sarge makers; I find by your last letter which I communicated to John that his wife have now shown her naturall temper to you, which I hope have made Mr Freak more in love with matreymony then ever; I cannott emagin how John will be able to come to London to perform his place of under sheref in case he should get it, his wife will run up and down raveing and ranting and intrupting of him so perpetually wheare ever his buisness is; she imploying her self and her time about nothing but to do mischeefe.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke November ye 23rd 1696

My deare,

If John can gett any other security that Mr Dicke will accept of I phancey his wife will allways be interrupting him in performing his office; she lattly writt the inclosed letter to him and sent it in one to Mr Baker I sopose that she might be sure it came to his hands it is as you will find a second desire to have her cloths sent to her and some mony and I am apt to think if he should give leave to Mr Baker to order the payment of any it would be a meanes to incorage his being perpetually duned by her or if he should send her to Mr Phill Gickley or Mr Comer her to former factters and great croneys it might prove a like inconvenient to him thearefore he can thinke of no way soe convenient if you give leave and aprove of it as to beg the favor of you to give the porter you imploy or whom else you shall thinke more proper fifty shillings which is not due to her as her quarters sallary till the 11th of the next month as he tells me though she sends for 3 or 4 pound thearefor if you think it best to pay her that, he will wright a receipt for her to sett her hand to before the porter parts with the mony, and he will write to her to go to any little ale house or other place as you shall think fit to meet the porter at such an hour on such a day to receve it if you please to signifye to me what the name of the man is you think best to send it by if any; and for her cloths he thinkes it not proper to meddle with them any more, not knowing wheare they are or well what they are left of them; he delevered

them all safe into her custody when she demanded them after she was gon from him and they have bin sent to severall places since and if any of them should be lost she would certainly say he had cheated her; she tells him if he wont live with her agen she is resouled not to live in England and I think it would be happy for him if she would go another side the water for then he might be able to do any buisness he happens to have quietly on this, I hope you received mine whearein I gave you an account of the heads of her long threatening letter dated the same day as that she writt to you; I beg your pardon for interrupting your more wayty afaires; but I must be wrighting something to you by every post and this being of great moment to John and coming some times in my way I take the libberty of makeing it my subjectt.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

I hope you have received both myne by the last posts and do thank you for yours with the newes constantly inclosed and should be glad if I could hear that trade and mony was settled for I am afraid that the poor will get such a habit of beging that they will not know how to work when they have it; I hope the next Act about the coine will be so nicely worded that the most disafectedt may have no way left to make confution; I phancey if all the old hammered mony was to go by wait till after such a time as might be thought nessesary to call it all in except all the old hammered mony that has all the letters and both the rings distinkely to be seene all round on one side at least; and if it was allowed always to pas provided it wayed not less than 10 or 11 pence ye shilling I beleve it would sattsify the people much better then to have it all called in; and I beleve there are many of ye old hamered shillings and sixpences that have both the rings and all the letters distinkly on one side and have it not perfection on the other and yet have bin never clipped nor any ways diminished since they was first made and do hold to the wait above mentioned, which I do beleve to be as much or very near as much as they was at first, for I observe the new mony that is now made severall peaces of it differs as much and they say it cannott be helped, and if so methinkes it is a thousand pittyes that those peaces everyway perfect would not remain untouched in memory or our gratiose queene Elizabeth and King Edward and others that had such fine large heavey mony coyned in theyr raines also was I to vote I should be for it unless I could hear any other resens against it then I can now think off; but I am utterly against any clipping mony to pass agen at any rate or any that is not so perfectt as the shilling inclosed, I am perfectly frightened to find by the last newes prints but one how much deseite is allredy used by counterfitting the new mony; pray dont put any malitiouss interpretations on my silly notions nor expose me to Mr Freake whom I stand very much in awe of.

Heare was a report that Mr Sandford had writt down a letter that all broad mony must pass agen if it was even so thin, I sed I heard nothing of it nor should take none but by weight untill I heard further, I phancey it was a contrivance of somebody that had kept light mony by them to be able to get rid of it agen without loss; but this silly notion seemed to please the ignorant.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

November ye 28th 1696

I beg leave now to lay before you the nesessaty that there will be in a short time of Jepps and Sammys learning something which I feare is impossible to be done without it be somebodys buisness apoynted for that purpose, they

being of the same temper that theyr brother theyr 2 likenesses was before them; Jepp is now growne tall and bigg enough for britches\* and must have some after Christmas and it will be very odd to see him in britches and cant read a word they are very capable of larning but no body about them have the way to teach them, they are very fond of Gabarell and allways desirous to play with him, so I stucke on the 24 letters on the blank dice you brought down but what improvement they have make I know not, but this I know by experience that teaching anything heare is allmost like indeavouring to strive against the streeme, and sinke in the undertaking onesself at last; for certaine they are to little to bee put abroad and to bigg to spend theyr time thus at home; Jepp is of a very tender nice temper to be dealt with and Sammys infirmityes must be considered and yet they ought and must learne something and how to bring that to pass I know not, for my part I have my thoughts on so many things that it is and would be impossoble for me to do that or anything else well or as I ought, and what way to have it done I hope you will helpe consider for I have bin told to heads are better than one and I beleve it to be so in this case and most others; Jepp is the head and neck taller than Sammy; he grows thick but I beleve the crookedness of his legs and this hinder his growing tall; notwithstanding I borrowed my Aunt Stracheys grand daughters little boot for a pattren yet the shoemaker heare have had it by him this month and have make 2 paire before he could make one tolarably fitt; I hope you will be able to get so much time as to come and see them your self and judge what is the best corse to be taken with that and everything else, in the meantime we must wait with patience, and I think if you did write to your daughter Betty to teach them theyr book and theyr prayers 2 or 3 times a day and see if they would lerne of her it would be some employment for them all and if nothing did come of it theyr time would not be worss spent then in theyr being wholly idle and perpetually racketting and thundering up and down the house.

\* Boys were dressed in frocks until they were 6 or 7 years old.

#### Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

I have another subjectt to write on now which is that I hear the alehouse people at Wellington are under some troble how they shall be paid theyr mony that they have bin out of pockett by entertaining the soldiers that have bin quartered upon them; and Esqr Kitt and they have had severall meetings about it one on Wensday last at the Swan wheare I was told he advised them to draw up a petion to Mr Sandford and you, and offered them to draw it for them, and it should not cost them a farthinge, but wheare it was done they know not you will know best when you receve it; but no more of that at present, for I must tell you that I must no longer write Mary Clarke spinster but M.C. scarge maker; for now that sort of people have almost all laid down, we the substanshalls of Milverton are contriveing a way to raise a stock to sett the poor a work and it was yesterday published in the church wheare all the best of the parish set theyr hands to it except the serge makers; who will not set the poor a work themselves nor be willing anybody else should, but I hope if this prove it do take it will be an example to the rest of the knybouring parishes; if not it cannot undo the undertakers and the worst of it can be theyr laughing at us for indevering to do good at least, and there is an necessity some corse must be taken or else the poor will be to many for the rich for you cannot emagen what a multitude goes

about beging everyday methinkes looks like Crismas 20 and 30 in a day all which theare is no deniing of at this time.

Sarah Griffin to Mary Clarke

My hartly thanks for your great kindness to me in sending that token by my brother, for the thoughts of my not being so bad a servant but that you are pleased to mind me still is more credit to me than anything I could have thought of.

Anne (Nanny) Clarke to Edward Clarke

Honrd father,

I received my mothers letter with my sister Bettys from you and I have hear answer them again and I have hear sent ye crovate which I desier you will be pleased to excuse me if it is not so well done as I wish it weare and like wise to pardon my not sending it sooner, ye reson was my teacher not going to London before to buy a frenge, and I was not willing to send it without. Sr Mr Cary haveing a daughter hear at school who I understand you do know, she is cousin to Mr Sanford ye young gentelwoman say yt her mother will come and give me an Invitation home with her daughter, for ye Christmas holidays; Madam Beckford says she will not give consent for me to goe without yr leave; which I desier you will be pleas to admit of, and I further beg yt you will be pleas to send me some mony for my pocket is at present very empty, if I should goe ther I hope you will be pleas to alot me some money exterordinary for to give to ye servants, and to have in my pocket if I should play at cards; I writ to my mother and Mrs Smithby, yt I am in great want of cloth for shifs, I hope you will be pleas to give order for ye same, my humble duty to yourselfe with my love to my brothers from Sr, yr obedient daughter A Clarke

Lady Acton to Mary Clarke November 1696

Deare cozen,

Ouer gret distance must not make us silent it being the grettest injoyment we can have of each other I had answered yours sooner but then when I thought we had bin quit clere from that sad distemper I had just then a man fall sick and since that I have boys have had it but now I prays God we are all well again I have had 12 in my family have had it since Whitsontide and all well without any disvigerment except one maid sarvant she died which made me so ferful that I hardly dare leave any of the rest till they was past the worst I hope all yours are in good helth my thinks I do now quit long to see my cozen Bluet and your selfe I cannot leve my family so long as to com to see you now.

On 1 December 1696 Montague presented the first "budget" to House of Commons.

## TURBULENT SERVANTS

December 1696

*Mary accuses Isaac of ingratitude - Dorcas suddenly gives notice - Isaac plans to leave and do decorating work - another maid gives notice having quarrelled with the cook - Mary busy giving relief to the poor - beggars in Wellington cut down wood - Mary sends hamper of goodies to London - are Isaac and Dorcas planning to marry? - weather so severe the day labourers cannot work - Mary's trade going well -*

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke 4 December

**Pray inclose this to one by the next post after it comes to your hands if the estate be lett I may give it him with the first oportunity after. Pardon me for meddling with and trobleing you in these afaires, but it is nessesary it should be don and it cannot be don well without it, nor with halfe soe little troble and it may be a great many words will a rise to very little purpose amongst them without it alsoe and when you have given orders for it theare is noe more to be sed; some of our horses must be sold alsoe those that I find most convenient to part with I will give Thomass orders to dispose of as from you, whose name I doe make use of some times on these occations without trobling you to avoid dispute; for which I hope I shall not incur your displeasure, it being nothing but what I thinke it your intrest it should be soe.**

enclosed

*"Isake,*

*I hope before this comes to your hands that Wood house and what grounds I ordered to be lett with it, is or will be, disposed of, in a very short time; thearefore emmediately on the receipt heareof you must higher some other keeping for your horsse; for I shall have but just ground enough in hand to keepe those that are for my present use who am in hast Your loveing friend.*

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London December ye 5th 1696

**My deare,**

**You will find by the inclosed that Mr Thomas has at last written to mee and desires his wages that is due may bee paid him, I thinke tis two yeares you will find it duely entered in the Wages-book, I used to give him something over and above his wages when I paid him but I thinke his behavior in the latter end of his service has discharged mee from that part at this time; pardon the hast I am in, and bee assured that I am yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband, Edw Clarke**

**Inclosed it ye last Act for remedying ye ill state of ye coyne passed Thursday**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke 7 December 1696

**I have hearin according to your desire framed the properest letter I can think of to Isake on this occation if you approve of it if not you may alter it as you please; I am very cold for it is severe wether heare.**

*Isake,*

*I receved your letter by which you give me to understand yt you have taken my house for your home almost as long as it was or is convenient for your purpose but I have not had time to answere it till now, or to tell you that I think ingratitude and*

*covetiousness two of the greatest evils that can befall mankind, and I am sorry to hear the disease now rains so much in my family, I believe you must take pains to infect one the other, that it breaks but so all at once amongst you, it is a reward of kindness that I did not expect from you, of all the servants I had, all circumstances considered, for I may be bold to say I have done that in your favor and for your advantage that all the friends relations and acquaintance in the world you had besides could not nor would not have done for you, I mean by keeping your life and soule together when otherwise you must have perished and helping you in your greatest extremity, and since that time you have had such liberties and opportunities of improving, and enriching your self under my roofe, that you now know not your self and have forgot your obligations to me, which indeed I thought had bin such that I had made myself a friend, as well as a servant, that I might have depended upon in you who was once so ready to serve me in any capacity and even in the meanest place in my family but now notwithstanding your riches are so increased I perceive almost the best place there is not able to maintain you with out the help of my neighbors, it looks very strange and I wish your great chancey to painting ( as you express your self) and theyr works had given you an opportunity to try them and theyr charity, when you first came to Chipley, as you did me, and if they had accepted you in that state and condition I did; but if you are resolved, I hope I shall be able to take that care that I and mine may live without you, as well as you may without us, and shall be forced to alter the resolutions I had made of giving you this year a new suite of cloths the same with the High Sherriffs men, to have made my complement to him in; and obliged you as I thought and have done credit to myself in the wearing of it, but now I find all obligations are void on your side, you have no reason to expect they should continue on mine, who was willing, if you had thought fit, to have continued your friend and master as I have for many years bin, but now I must find another to perform that office* Sr your servant E.C.

*I had almost forgot to thank you for the offer of your brother's service, but one ungrateful one out of family is enough, and I should think him but little less if he quitted Mrs Stringers service wheare I heare you have lately preferred him upon this occasion, and besides I should be loth to perswade my wife to venture her neck for a 3rd person to try practices upon since she has bin so unworthily dealt with by one and is now in a fare way to be served so by a second, I confess it is poor incorrigement to be willing to do good to others.*

**This I think you was best to put in a postscrip though perhaps you may think it all to long but I could not contrive it shorter, for one must write in words of lenth and not in figures to such people to make them understand.**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke December ye 5th 1696

**My dear,**

**I received both your kind letters by the last posts with Bettys inclosed for which I returne you my humble thanks and since you have given me leave I will make some little alteration in hers and send it you agen with my resens for it which I thought to have done by this post but was prevented yesterday by the coming in of Mrs Rose and one more from Milverton as soun as I had received them, and Mrs Comer and 2 of Mrs Bacons daughters from Langford to dine with me, and now I am so cold that I am not able to bare it, but I hope by the next post I shall be grown more hardy that am your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

The true reason why I writt no more to you by the last post was because the cold had disturbed my body and the ungratefullness of servants my mind, indeed I thought I had so regulated my family, by discharging all those that was discontented except Margrett who I did resolve to beare with if possible till her year was up which is the first of May next and then part with her, which would have bin about the time that would have bin proper for me to have carried my 2 younger children to the Bath and in the meantime I should have lived quietly heere so as to have got a little strength so as to be able to have gon with them, and left the care of that small family I had remaining to Dorcas as I used to do, but since that my private resolutions are prevented, for notwithstanding all seemed to be very well pleased and contented and do theyr business very carefully, so as I thought I should have no more trouble of this kind a great while, yet on Fryday last about 11 of the clock in the forenoon going accidentally into my chamber for something that I wanted I found Dorcuss sweeping of it wheare we fell into a pleasant short dialogue of Bettys and Mrs Burgesses going out in the morning to walk and had sent me word they should not come home to dinner etc in the midst of which Dorcuss very abruptly told me that she must desire me to part my cook and she, part ye sed I, what do you meane, she sed she was of such a temper that she could not nor would not live with her for that she did provoke her to say such words as she never did in her life, I sed I thought they had very little to do together, and that I thought she had bin more discrete than to revenge cookes quarrell upon her self, she sed there was no doubt but I might have maids enough, I sed if those I had had a mind to be gon as long as I wanted I must indever to get more, but wished her when her passion was over better to consider of it, for that I did not use to be given warning to, and not take it, and so I went down stayrs, and thus the matter stands and no more have bin sed since; Margrett have talked as unhandsomly to me as to any body and I have bore it being willing to part quietly and fairely if possible with one that came with me so far, and I should be glad if we could all live so in the meantime, if not I think I shall make myself very cheep to keep her after she had talked so to me, and now to turn her away upon a foolish quarrell between Dorcuss and she; for if I should once set such an example, if I have servants ever so good and fit for my buisness when they have a mind to fall out I must have it revenged on me, yt having the trouble of parting with one or the other or both or all of them as they please to order me which would be such an inconvenience that no mrs that is able to keep a servant would be able to support herself under.

The next morning being Saterdag I being just laine down in my bead and having set up to write, every body being gon out of the room, Isake came in wondring that I was not up asked me if I did write to you by this post I told him I had writ he asked me if I had sealed it I told him yes, he sed he was sorry for it, for that he thought to have prayed me to have inclosed one in it for him to you; I sed J Spreat had mine to inclose in his and Isake gave him his also it would go all as safe and franked; but he sed he was willing I should see what he had writt to his master, I sed he had writt about his own buisness it was no matter for my seeing it, he sed he had writt to acquaint him that he did desire to go off at Our Lady, I told him I did suppose he had given you good reason for what he did; he sed yes, he found he could have no time to himself to paint. I told him I thought it

was impossible to serve to masters and if his masters service would not maintaine him, there was a nessesaty of providing better for himself, and so he went down and we have sed no more of this matter since, and what he writt to you on this subject I know not, but this I know, the time is altered since you was the meanes to keep his life and sole together and supported him and imployed him when he could not tell what in the world to do and has saved your meterealls for him to try practisses on and improve himself, and let him be byer and seller, and paint for you and for other people and your oyle and cullers lye all in common, you did not know which was yours or his nor he nither, I beleve, and by these ways and other libbertyes you have given him; he now has 2 or 3 hundred pound at interest and can live without you or your service and will quitt it to make a small matter of provett more to himself in another place without considering you in the least or the buisness he now performes or the trust you repose in him, which shows a great deal of good nature I must deede say, but so much for that, and I must tell you that my first thoughts after he was gon down was that he and Dorcuss did desire to marry, they having one given warning one day and the other the next, and have bin old lovers but now I am of another mind and do rather think it a plot and contrivants to fire me out and make me quit the place, for that very day Satterday in the afternoon I had occation to go into the pantrey to Nan that came from Sr Walters who is a good harmless body and one that I like very well in her place and never had a word of anger with her since she came heare and I had not bin long thear but she told me she must desire me to provide myself in another and let her go home agen, into her own cuntry for that she never live such an unquiett life since she was borne, I asked her what was the matter, she sed she could not find any falt with me or my work but the cook was a great grevance to her, I told her I desired we might go altogether they would not be all so unkind to leave me in the house alone, but if it was theyr mind I would keep nobody with ropes or chaines for an unwilling servant was a very uneasy thing, so thus I am turned of by all but J Spreat and Eling who I beleve have more manners, and but if they begin the week at this rate I shall have none left but Nan Trent and to or 3 boys, and I hear Dick have bin to see when he is of age and finds it to be in February at which time he apprehends his time is out and he shall be at libberty and this you see we cannot live together and wheare the falt is I must leave you and others to judge if it be mine, you must provide another housekeeper, for since old servants on whom I have laid so many obligation turne me away all at one I have no hart to take any new, not expecting to be better dealt with by them thearfore when theyr time is come that they think fit to be gone I will rather leave myself if I stay heare to the mercey of the house breakers and beggers then to such ingratitude, but this poynt I hope we shall decide when we meet for it it be not for our intrest that I should go from hence or safe for you to come heare, we may have a meeting at Sutton Cort, Bath or Ivey church to discorse the matter wheare and I and my children are best to be settled, I beleve all the servants that I found heare when I came last down willing enough to stay agen when I am gon, for then they was all pleased though not now, and in deed I cannot blame them for I hinder all the advantages and libbertyes you gave them and they took, for Thomases part while he mannaged your estate and his together, and did what he pleased without control it was all well but when that was lessened and he thought he had not oppertunity to get as much as he did before, then he grew uneasy and was allways wishing that you would come home that he might be discharged, Isakes

case is not the same for he has discharged himself, though much like for, I sopose he would not have had any thoughts of removing if he might have always have had this for his home for him and his horse to carry him about to undertake work any wheare he could; I cannot be so served for I should be loth to be heare to cort servants if I cort any body it shall be you that once corted me; though it is a great while since, I shant forget yet; but I had forgot to tell you that presently after Isacke had made his speech and was gone, our daughter Betty came into my chamber and shutting the dore she told me she was with great greefe of hart to aquaint me from Isake that he did intend to leave your service at our Lady day for that he had the profer of Mr Beares painting and yt for himself, I told her that she came to late, for which resen Isake had bin forst to be his own messenger and had done the buisness himself; now I remember Isake did 2 or 3 times borrow a hors of me to go to speak with Mr Beare and the last time told me that Mr Beare did desire to wait on me before he went to London; but I saw him not and now I sopose it was by Isakes desire to ask me for him; to spare him as Isake calls it to come and do his work which if he had I should have told him that he was your covenant servant but if he had a mind to have him Isake would quit your service for his no dout but it would be more for his profit and I must submit; but Mr Beare had heard this I sopose he is more a gentleman than to incorage anyones servant to leave the place he is wheare he has received so many obligation or to imploy him when he knowes he has quit himself upon such a selfish account. If he was out of service presently he could do nothing to his painting or tell the time of the year that he had ordered his buisness so as to go away, but if I was not hear he might imploy himself in grinding of colers in a redyness against that time or come now and then and recon you so many days at a time that he spent hear to grind colers for himself all these are ways to make people grow rich, your affectionate and faithful wife M Clarke

Isake seemed to be so pleased that you had put him in trust to see the inventory perfected and was so diligent with J.S. to put everything in his place and when we came to the old cotch wheeles he asked me what I desired to have done with them I told him they was at his services if he pleased to accept of them for which he made me many a scrape and I did not expect such a sort of acknowledgement as I am like to have from him at our Lady day for that and all the rest of my kindness methinkes he might have had patience to have kept his desire to himself till you had come home or he had seen at least how we should have steared our course and then perhaps they might have all bin less masters and Mrs to have mannaged and taken care for themselves as they use to do and you have pd them for theyr paines and thought your self much beholding in to the bargaen and under a great obligation to them.

*Annotated : Mrs Clarkes of the illbehavior of most of the servants and of Isaac's, Katharines's and Ann's giving warning to be gone recd 9th December 1696*

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

9 Dec 1696

Since I told you I would make some allteration in your letter to Betty the circomstances of my family is altered and I shall now give her the letter as it is, not being able to think of any other way to have them taught heare unless I could light of a french maid at Exeter to dress Betty and Molly and talk French to them constantly and teach the children, and I have imployed John Barber to inquier for such a one ever since Babett went hence but to no purpose for he tells

me there is none that he can heare of, that is fit for me and if there was it is enough to fright a servant to hear that they go away by droves from me, those that have lived seven year and 11 yeare and 14 year, I cannot emagen what you will think I do to them and therefore I must tell you that whatsoever I do I cannot be better in any degree to them then I am and they was all very well as long as there was nobody to inquier what any of them did, and gave you good satisfacktion and themselves too; therefore when I am removed all will be well agen, if you think fit to permit them to be in the same station they was in before; but I phancey thos that cannot be easey of do not think fit to live heare with me are not fit to live heare without me; I sopose what guides Isake is the hopes of more gain and my long stay heare hinders the oportunitives and advantages they use to make themselves; but this I cannot help if your service is not able to maintain them now, I know the time when it was and I sopose so do you.

I had not room in my last to tell you that I am glad you aprove of our trade to imploy the poor which I do and will give all the countinace I can too as indeed every body else has ye same resen or else we shall be devored by releveing so many, at the dore we served 18 in less than a quarter of an howertime this day besides 18 more before it was night and none of them belonging to our parishes neither have we had one from Ninehead as I can heare of in all this extremity; the beggars of Milverton did begin to do some spoyle among the young trees in Burnhill Wood but now since the hopes of trade they are more civill; but the beggars of Wellington impudently desperate they have got a horne which they sound at theyr apoynted times for a generall meeting and then they go out in bodys with hookes and other convenienceies at noon day and cutt down the wood as if it was theyr owne and nobody dares to control them, for if you touch one you was as good touch them all for they all fall upon you; our overseeres of Milverton have bought wool and dystuff and other meterialls and I hope by that time the wether do break they will be able to set them to work and if they had it now this frost they could not, and then I shall not releve tham at the dore; nor none of the other parishes poor; for they may set them to work in the same manner which they never will do as long as they can have them maintained for them; and if ever they will find out a way to set them to worke it must be now when the tradesmen have laid down and the poor are so troblesome to them at the dore which will force them to stir if anything to safe theyr bacon and sheep from going after theyr wood.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley December ye 12th 1696

I know not but mine which I sopose you have by this time was more surprising to you than Isakes by the post before, and I very much wonder to hear that Isake has offered you his brother, when he got Betty to wright a letter of recommendation to Mrs Stringer for him in his behalf Mrs Stringer sent back word that she liked Isake better than any she ever saw in that place for his clenliness and dexteryty etc; and if Isake would teach him some of his good quallityes she would take him and has since put away the servant she had in his place and Isakes brother was actually to be at IveyChurch the 8th day of this month to subpley the place and perform her service; which was 3 days after the date of Isakes letter to you, so I sopose if he doss not like his place or do think your service may be more profittable by the time Isake have allotted himself to staye in your service or that the winter is gone and the days grow longer and warmer and fit and seasonnable for painting then he is to turne Mrs Maiross off

without consideration; and to prefer himself for by that time he wont be altogether so raw and ignorant as at first going out, but this sort of apprehension dont incorage me to medle with him for one ungrateful body out of a family is enough; and besides by that time I sopes he will be well instructed by Mr Maiors somehow to sit up half the night and play at tables and cards according to custom and smoke sware and drinke, it may bring him to better preferment in time than any you or I shall be willing or able to bring him to, and if he should take a phancey to turn us away for ten or twenty shillings profit more to be made in another place as his brother Isake has done, it would be no newes but all this I leave to your better consideration in hopes that when they have all taken care of theyr selves you will take care of me and mine also; I sopose Isake do think he is now able to perform many little things that the others have not bin used to and I have permitted him to drive the cotch and he is able to drive 4 horses so that if his painting do fail he is now able to perform so many sorts of services that he need not fear being constantly entertained at Mr Beares or else wheare and by his interest get a much better service then mine for Dorcuss, they being all masters and moneyed folks and can now live without you or me; I had occation for the cotch every Sunday to church and at some other times etc as I shall have next Thursday either for me or my daughter, we being invited to Mrs Cannons younger daughters weding who is to be married to one Mr Southey formerly of Wells but now of Taunton for this seven years last past he came himself with Mr Venner to invite us and seems to be according to the carrecter he has of a good humorred sober man by as much as one can guess in so very short a time; I have sent this day from hence by the Taunton wagon a hamper with 2 gammons of bacon and a piggs cheeke and 3 parts of a flitch with the gammon not cut but of it that you may cut it, of what biggness you please; thear is also a pott of your own vensin and a coller of brane that my cozen Blewett happened to send me the day before the thing was to go away so I have venture it in a pastbord box drye hoping this wether it may go as safe but you must be sure to have it put into pickle as soun as ever it comes, for it is now just as it was boyled having never bin in any pickle yet, and when we have tryed both ways we shall know better how to do another time, in the hamper theare is also a cake which I desire you would divide among the infantrey if Ward be not to tall and to bigg to eat cake; it had ye misfortune to be to much baked but it could not be helped, theare is a little bag of nuts sent to Jack by Trustrom Turner and some peares that was put up to fill up the holes; and I was saying I feared they would be spoyled this frosty time but Molly desired they might go saying that her brother Jack would eat them if they were ever so bad , he loving such peares and to fill up what the peares would not I have ventured to put up half a dozen bottles of March beare and one bottle that have a seal upon it I beleve you will wonder att; but it was a bottle of beare that was given me just as it was drawn out of the barrell being the constant drinking bear of a day laborers wife that makes her own malt it is not strong, but is perfectly fine though not above a week old as free from smoke and as good tasted as ever I desire to drink notwithstanding the malt was made upon a common drye, I wish carrage does not spoule it that you may see it in its perfection and not laugh at me; my humble service to Mr Freak to whom I could wish you could make any thing that I have sent acceptable, and give my service to Mr Lock and accept the same yourself from Your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

My blessing to my children I should be glad if you would lay away my venson pott and my bord that the cake came up on that I may have them agen; I did send up by you a pretty while since a new cloth without any seem in it hemed at bothe ends and marked with a blew C and figure of a % with my desires to dear Mrs Buck to by me a quantity of the same if to be got it cost fifteen pence a yard, she was with me when I bought it at Sr Benjamin Thorogoods and I have kept that cloth by me unused and unwashed to be able to match it ; I hope you have not lost or mislaid it and then I beleve Mrs Leavens when you find a proper time to ask her would do it for me, for I want it if any such to be had, of if there was any hopes of any I would wait in expectation; my humble service to all my frends etc;

I think as you do that it will be very proper and nessary for you to send 2 men upon this occation to wait on Mr High Sherriff but whear to find 2 that one may have any cartainty or dependance upon that will stay with you till the year is out I know not in this ungratfull covetouse age now Mr Thomas has and Mr Isake desires to leave I will consider of it I sopose it is time enough between this and the assizes, however you may make an offer of it to him in the meantime if you think fit and convenient.

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley December ye 11th 1696

Honrd father,

I cannot express my thanks to you for your very kind letter, and do assure you that my care and diligent indeavours shall not be wanting to follow your derections about teaching my brothers, but there still remains a doubt upon me whether you will be pleased to have them taught French or English, and untill I have your answer I can go no farder; pray Sir be pleased to present my most humble service to Mr Lock with my true love to my brothers and sister I am Sir Your most dutyfull and obedient daughter Elizabeth Clarke

Anne (Nanny) Clarke to Edward Clarke

Honrd father

I received the books as allso yr kind token for which I give you many thanks and desire you will be pleas to give these to John if he has not gone, I had not writ em when he was hear if he is pray send them by ye first post; Mrs Smithby was hear to see me and I told her what things I wanted but forgot a necklace some ribon for to put behind my musilin head or what she pleases for I had none in it when I came and now they are out of morning I cannot weare it without, my humble duty to yrself with my servis to Mrs Smithby and be pleas to give my love to my brothers from Sr Yr obedient daughter A Clarke

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke December ye 14th 1696

I must needs own that the most troublesome and vexatious part of my life hitherto have bin occationed by the turbulent speritts and ungratefull temper of servants, who are desired and thought to be kept for ones ease, but it doss not prove so to us in this ungrateful age; I told you in my last that I thought it very nessesary for you to send to men to wait on Mr High Sherrife and I cannot think of any more convenient and proper that are like to continue in your service then Gabraell and Dick Barber for notwithstanding I heard Dick had bin to see his age, thinking his time was out, when he should be one and twenty, yet I think it is

not till he is four and twenty, and I must needs do him that justice that he has bin very diligent and careful since Thomas went, but if you think Gabrill may be preferred in the buisness of excise in the yeare, and Isake should think fitt to alter his mind you may change either of them before you make theyr cloths,

I have bin forst to keep your black mare at house all this winter she receiving some hurt in the park by the bucks in rutting time, but is perfectly well agen and Gabriell have bin very carefull in looking after her constantly and very willingly performes anything I set him about, all which I lay before you that you may be the better able some way or other to incorage those that do well or discourage those that do ill etc for I know you to be a lover of justice.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

16th December 1696

I hope mine by the last post went safe to your hands and this is to acquaint you that I have received yours and know not what you mean by the relation you give of Catrens behavior who have not lived with me this 3 or 4 year unless you mention her name by mistake as I beleve you do; but as the subject of Isake and Dorcuss I know not what to think of it wheare they intend mattreymony or not but I beleve theare has bin an intreague betwene them but wheare it was in earnest of jest of Isakes part and taken in earnest by Dorcuss I know not; or whether they can be certain that his wife is dead I know not; but this I beleve it has gon so far that it has made Dorcuss very uneasey in her mind, and I am told by Eling that Dorcuss is really jeoless of every femall kind that Isake has any conversation with; and if Isake seems to slite her she cannot bare it nor is not able to live in the house with him but of this she had made no privatt confession to me neither do I care to heare the folly of our sex; but this I intend if you approve of it to tell Margrett that I desire to part with her when her yeare is out which is the first of May for that I desire to go to the bath at that time and spend the summer abrode and thearefore do give her this timely notiss that she may provide herself for I would not deal unhansomely by any one however they deal with me; and if they think fit to go all for company let them take theyr corse, for Ile keep to my old principle not to make myself so silly or so mean as to cort theyr pleasure any longer when they turn me of, for no perticuler resen of dislike to me, but in a huffing humer, for I thought they had had more love and respect for me then that came too, but if it is thus I think one had as good have the troble of new servants as always be corting old ones; but I am apt to think something or other will happen to make them take witt in theyr anger though I beleve the profit of Mr Beares work doss lay a grat temtation before Isakes covetous mind and sets aside the thoughts that he owes his life and all that he has to you and your favor, you having raised him from nothing and permitted him to do something in every office in your house having depended on his care and constancy so as we should never have bin disopoynted in him and for that resen I was willing to venture myself to be driven by him in the cotch by which means I made him more useful to me then another servant at present and thearefore it will be inconvenient for me to be without him hear which makes it a very good time for him to turn us away; he having the offer of Mr Beares work it will be a privat pleasure for him I beleve to put us to an inconveniency and be at none himself and I sopose he may think if you should be displeased with him for leaving you yet when you come to paint those roomes that are unfinished or want any such work to be done all that would be laid aside agen; and perhaps he will then offer his service to you agen if he finds he cannott do better, for the getting

of mony without many other considerations I beleve is what he setts his hart upon, but sometimes all covett and all lose I have hard.

I am apt to think that all this plot is laid upon Margrett only for a pretence and to remove Margrett just at theyr time for Isake and Margrett are very great as far as I can conceve and I sopose his going or staying do not at all depend upon her, this buisness being purely to contrive what way he may get most mony and for aut I know he would sell the best frend he had for 5s or 10s he is so covetouse; I beg his pardon if I think otherways than he deserves.

The wether is so severe that one can hardly hold the pen, which makes very bad for the poor who growes more and more numerose it is 2 or 3 folkes work to thresh bake and serve them and theare is no avoiding of it for we must give them to prevent them from stealing and other mischiff, our trade at Milverton they tell me is in such a forwardness that if the wether would break they should be able to imploy them ; but now the wether is so severe that all trades are att a full stop shoemakers and everything etc; nither can the day laborers work abroad if they had it and in this part of the countrey they live so carlessly that at such a time they are presently forst to depend upon the charrity of other people, which indeed not withstanding the cold wether is prety warm towards them and I have had the good fortune to merret theyr prayse I beleve it is the more because we use to deny the poor of Wellington and other parishes that we did not belong to, and now I releve all, notwithstanding corne is 7s and 6d and 8s ye bushell and very indiffrent barley 3s and 6d and I hope you will not represent me vaine to Mr Freak or think me so your self if I tell you that my example goes a great way in such matters and matters of mony how I take it and how I pay it; though I live retired within myself concerning myself with nothing but my own buisness and my own family ; I had almost forgot to tell you that we have made a great progress in order to set up this trade to imploy the poor in Langford also and all the substanshall theare did this day signe a paper this day in the church which J Spreat had drare up in redeyness to inable the overseers to borrow mony at intrest for the speedy carriing on of it; and Mrs Assden is so plesed with the example that she has undertaken to work up her own wooll herselfe to imploy the poor having a servant that is a tradesmans daughter who is able to direct her and she had made warping bars and bought oyle and other meterialls for carriing the trade in a little hous that belongs to her at the end of her cort; and sent Mr Elsdon word by Mr Comer that if it turnes to no acount, is done with a good desine; and I am certaine it will save him as much mony as the wooll comes to in doctors fees and phesick by imploying her mind she being of late but malloncoly, and now I talke of tradesfolk it put me in mind of John Spreats wife who not long since sent him a long threatning letter but at the bottom told him that not withstanding all differences she was hard at work for him in making him a poynt cravat which she would send him very quickley but insteede of that it is turned to a paper that he was presented with the last Satterday by one Mr Weyatt a little new set up atourney that was not long since an aprentice with Mr Periam; and I could wish that it might prove a breach of priviledge that such little confident ignorant fellowes might be made an example John desires to send you the paper by post to pray your thoughts and directions in it.

I sopose Mrs Spreat would have sent the cravat if John had happened to have bin under sherriff in hopes of a better maintenance

## TWO UNHAPPY MARRIAGES

December 1696 - May 1697

*Spreat v Spreat - Fenwick executed - tenants in arrears - Gustavus Adolphus assaults his wife - another letter to Isaac - damp coming in at Chipley - Ursula goes to Bath - Mary's legs still swollen - Peace in Europe - Locke sends Betty a top-knott - repairs to Chipley - Isaac is ill - Locke sends medical advise - Edward in conflict with Court - Ward in the Temple - Mary wishes Betty could visit London -*

At the end of the sixteenth century England was the only Protestant country to have no divorce law; there were however various formal remedies for unhappy marriages open to the upper and middle classes, (the poorer classes having informal ones). A full divorce was available by Act of Parliament, but this could only be afforded by the richest in society. An ecclesiastical court could grant judicial separation for various reasons such as nullity, adultery and cruelty, and there could be a private separation with agreement and a formal deed between the two parties. By the end of the seventeenth century most cases went to London because the best lawyers were there.

### Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Decembr 26th 1696

**I have not been able to do much in yr affayrs for yr defence agst the suit of yr wife in Doctors comons\* but will not omitt anything that is either necessary or proper to be done for you in that affayr.**

The Spreat marriage had been heading for disaster for some time and there was no chance of reconciliation. Mrs Spreat was obviously determined to get the best settlement possible by threatening John with a case in the Court of Arches, usually known as Doctors Commons. This was a society of ecclesiastical lawyers in London. 34 proctors, all Oxford or Cambridge graduates duly admitted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, lived in a community of houses on St Bennets Hill, St Pauls Churchyard, headed by a president, Dean of Arches.

Most separations took place without the expense of being heard in open court, and court cases usually meant that agreement could not be reached. Even these were rarely fought to a finish, as more often than not the suits were undertaken to bring one of the parties to terms. Their true purpose was blackmail to improve the size of alimony. By the late seventeenth century 60% of plaintiffs were women, and husbands had to pay wives costs.

Procedure was by canon law, using written documents, private interrogation of witnesses by examiners and decisions by the judge. Proctors represented the parties, and the usual course was for the plaintiff to give the court a "libel" drawn up by a proctor giving the gist of the accusation, followed by an answer on oath by the defendant. Responses and rejoinders could follow, but husband and wife did not give evidence. Cruelty was confined to the behaviour of the husband, and had to involve many episodes which posed a threat to the wife's life. If cruelty or adultery or both were proved, the amount of alimony depended on the husband's means, and not usually more than a fifth of his worth was granted to the wife. On the day appointed for hearing the proctors made their cases and the judges delivered their verdict in open court.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke December ye 30th 1696

I hope you received mine by the last post where in I acquainted you that my sister was much indisposed, and I have bin so much out of order my self that I have not bin able to go to her but I hear by Betty and Eling that Dr Passons was with her and ordered her a blister in her neck and she is better then she was but the Dr thinks her to be much inclined to what she fears the palsey, and that the worst sort the dead palsey, but these thoughts of his she does not know; my cousin Venner and his lady and Mrs Peirce is with her and under the rose I think the 2 former would not break their hearts if she was quite removed what ever the 3rd might do, who must then depend upon young masters favor alone you shall not fail to have an account from me or some of this family by every post how she is. I was latly told an od story of the Lord Munmouth in relation to Sr John Fennick but I cannot beleve it, that my lord was to be baited for it by the House of Lords Thursday or Fryday next; but tis sed in the last news paper that the Lords are ajourned for a fortnight both which I cannott reconcile.

On 28 January 1696/7 Sir John Fenwick was beheaded after the Bill of Attainder was passed.

Anne (Nanny) Clarke to Edward Clarke Hackney January 9 1696/7?

Honrd father,

I received yrs with the inclosed letters and that which I sent to my Mother which I supose was through a mistake for you writ me word that you had sent it into the country; I had sent in another sooner but I have been in spectation of seeing you hear before this time; Mr Willis sent his coach for me to diner at New Years Day when I was treated very civilly; be pleased to give my love to my brother; and I hope the time will not be long before I shall see you hear, my misteris gives her servis to you be pleas to accept my humble duty from Sr yr dutyfull daughter A Clarke

Sr pray send these letters into the countray by the next post be pleas to send one of this to Mrs Smithsby

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke January ye 18th 1696/7

My deare,

I received yours by the last post and am sorry to tell you that I beleve it will be impossoble for me to answare your desires as to the larning the art of malt makeing for really I begin to thinke I am arived to such an age as never noe body was att yett, to old to lerne and quite out of heart to teach, it haveing hitherto bin my ill fortune to meett with a sort of troblesome ungratfull scollers, and all that I can now say to you further in that matter is this, that I am resouled to stay heare or any wheare else that you shall thinke convenient for you or your intrest as longe as you shall thinke fitt howsoever the servants please to deale with me as to their goeing or staying, and as they goe of I will hire chorors\* to doe the workes of nessisity whilst I am heare, in the meane time give me leave to tell you that the longe time of wet and the hard frosts since have made more worke for my mens horses then they are able to doe to carry matterialls for the repaire of your old houses and mills, I could wish you could be heare but one yeare to see the charge and troble of it, and the time that is spent about it; I am certaine amounts to

more yn the rent of the houses if it was pd, and the tennants are such that I know not when it will; for some of ym the parish is faine to by them cloths, and they still run further and further in areare and your miller at Bradford takes noe care to bringe any old or new mony as I can heare of, and the miller of Aish is allmost as bad; I am quite out of love of haveing any more houses upon ones estate in the countrey then what have land belonging to them and is absolutely nessesary for the letting of it.

I sopose Isake has or will write you his answare in a short time for I find him very buissey pussiling with his pen and ink in the roome within the Little Hall very often of late.

I thanke Jack for his letter and I am glad to heare that Nanny and he are soe well pleased.

John Spreat went yesterday to Illchester to indevor to secure a desprate dept of his wives that is oweing to him by a fellow theare in Gale; but I expectt him home agen this day; I heare they are very buisey makeing Liverryes for the High Sheriff and if all the cloth of the coler should be bought up and other meterialls of that kind you would be served a pretty trick. I sopose it you send 2 it will be Isake and Gabraell if but one only Gabraell but if you have a mind to send to, if Isake hant thought fitt to accept of it theare be enough that will be glad to goe

\* charwomen

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke January ye 30th 1696/7

My deare,

Wensday last I had the honer to have the High Sherrife of the county dyne with me together with Mr Rose and his lady, they inquired for you and presented you his service and thanks for the offer you had made him, I told him you had bin very much oblided to him but he sed 2 men was to much, but spoke it in that manner that I cannott tell whether 2 or won would be most agreable to him; the same day Farmer Hurtnell came heare and told me he saw you very well not long since in London so after further discorse I asked him if you and he had made a new bargin for Crookes lease he sed no you had not a word to say about it, so I treated him in the best manner I could and would faine have had him take it for seven yeare and have pd the gessments but could not get the old possitive batchelor to alter his mind, so I have consented to his haveing it another yeare on the same termes unless Mr Trott and John Spreat can get him to do otherwys the next markt day; I am of the mind a burd in hand is worth 2 in the bush.

I have no news to tell you att present but that heare a bin a new scirmage between my cozen Venner and his wife, indeed it is to shamefull and has filled the country with a new subject the perticulers of which would fill up this whole side to sett forth, thearefore in short I will only tell you that one night not long since, he came home in the evening and inquiring for his wife was told that she was gon down to her mothers, so the kind husband went after her, and was observed to look a little glum at first but that as they thought wore of and he talked and dranke part of a jug of beare, and they went out as they used to do in all outer apearance and 2 boys with lanterns to lite them it being extreem darke, but about halfe ways home my cozen Venner took an occation to send one of the boyes home and the other he gave a good blow and bid him go faster, and he followed much faster then his wife could so he was heared to say he would fetch

her and when he came back to her sed he would kill her, and gave her several blowes with a great countrey cudgill that he had in his hand, as big as my arme, one of which fell on her arme which has bin ever since tied up and useless, and they feare the bone is crazed and it is a wonder it had not bin broken, so after severall reviling words they got home, Mrs being in a great deal of pain and master singing and rejoycing, and when they gott her to bead she fell into a fitt and he stood by and sed that was very well that was what he like, and that was what he would have etc; but her fitt held so long that at last I heard master began to bestur himself and burn fethers and such like under her nose, for feare she should not come to her selfe agen, and indeed if she had not I know not what would have become of master if this be all true; I have not seen him nor her nor my sister since; but Betty have bin theare severall times both with and without Mrs Burgess but she took not the least notiss to either of them of it; and I was the last body in the whole country that knew anything of it, nor I do not know when I should if I had not by accident sent Isake to invite Mr Bridegroom and his lady and mother and my cozen Venner and his lady to dine with me Munday last, being as I thought under an obligation so to do ever since the weding but by this meanes was deprived of half my company and indeed if I had known of this scirmidge before I think I should hardly have had corage so to have done, but now the dept pd and tiss over, and I am glad of it for I desire to sleep in a whole skin and live in peace and charity with everybody if possoble I can.

Just as I had concluded this Betty came from Gundenham and tells me that her Aunt Venner had got a little cold agen and excused her sones not comeing to dine heare and began to say something of the matter, so Betty sed she was very sorry for it and that I nor none of this family ever heard a word of it till I sent to invite them; which was the very truth but she sed she could hardly beleve it for that she heard of it the next day and that Mrs Wyatt knew it and John Blewett had spoke of it and that Madam Sandford know it and that she beleved it would be at London by Satterday night and that she did wonder they did not put him into the newespaper.

I receved your last which brought the mallancoly news of Nannys being so much out of order, but I hope by the next post to be fully satisfied of her recovery, which I earnestly wish and pray for , I dought not but you take all prudent care of her.

I cannot think what methard to take in the management of the matter relating to Isake nor I know not when I shall when I consider how ignorant and insolent it apeares under his own hand in his letter to you whearein methinkes he seemes to dispise and jeare the offer you make him, and what is theare to be done to cort such a fellow, all people have commended his great and good quallityes and perfections which has made him so proud and that together with his riches has bin the occation of all this I guess in great mesure.

Mary's suggested letter for Edward to write to Isaac

*Isake,*

*I receved your letter and in answare to your desires thearein am very ready and willing as I have allways bin upon all occasions to incorage you to a faithfull execution of your place and station in my family and as I have ever bin a true frend to you, soe I shall desire to continue the same as longe as you are willing I should and shall never be ungratfull to any person that serves me, much less to those that have served me longe and faithfully as I beleve you have done, and you have bin allways*

*respected as such both by me and my wife to whome the cotch and all that relates to it according to old custome does properly belonge and thearefore I shall leave the disposall of it wholly to her, and all other things relateing to that place she haveing reson to take it ill if I should doe other ways when she has bin willing to spend soe much time alone there as she has done of late for the interest of me and my children, and I feare not without hazard to herselfe and inconvenience upon severall accounts all which must ever be acknowledged by me as a perticuler obligation, and I hope neither she nor I have ever given you or any one just cause to thinke us ungratfull and thearefore doe desire and expectt the continuance of your care in what ever you thinke is for my intrest or advantage in or about the house or any wheare else with out dores that happens to come to your view or knowledge perticulerly I desire you to gett the places in the roofe of the house wheare the wett comes in throw the tileing theareof well mended by the best hellier you can gett and with the first opertunity, one place perticulerly wheare the wett comes downe by the side of the chimney into the garratt wheare John Spreat lodges which was formerly mended and I beleve can be easily mended agen now, thearefore pray consult your mistress about it, and inquier out the properest person and best workemen to be employed thearein, what remains on this subject relateing to the led pipe you may add if you thinke the wett came in threw a falt in the pipe, but I beleve otherways that it was carelessness suffering it to be stoped up with the waishing down of the tiles.*

**Perhapes you may wonder att this alteration I have made in your letter but if I could see you I doupt not but to satisfy you haveing very good resens I thinke for it and for every perticuler word added as that by your study was once in the same manner when Isake raishly cutt of the arme of the pipe which cannott be mended agen but have looked ugley ever since, if you please to be soe kind to ad the same postscript to this as to ye other letter I beleve I shall have the more respectt for it.**

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London January 30 1696/97

**Ward has been this day at Hackney with his sister and gives me an account that she is pretty well again but not yet able to go out of her chamber; she has had an ill fever but the danger has been over this week; there has been all imaginable care taken over it.**

In January 196/97 Edward paid Mr Vilrise £13 00 00 for Jack and Molly's pictures.  
Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Feb ye 13th 1696/7

**Isake has never taken the least notiss to me wheare he has written any answare to your letter or not, but I find he is calling in some of his caish for theare was 2 men heare Wensday last, and pd him in forty pound in new mony ginneys that they had upon bond; but whether it by way of trade I know not, for he sed nothing to me more then sent me his guinneys to desire me to weigh them for him, which was done accordingly, and when I know more you shall.**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Feb ye 17th 1696/7

**My deare**

**I receved yours by the last post and hope that Nannye continues to gather stranth though you mention nothings in perticuler of it; I delevered Isake yours and he was very buisy in writing from the time he had it till I understand he sent an answare but sed nothings att all to me, or tooke the least notiss, nor I to him, and I sopose what ever it is, it is all a secrett to everybody but Dorcus, I phancey**

their plotts are but weake if they disoblidge theyr best frends with all theyr contrariness; your old servant T.S. notwithstanding he rents 3 or 4 score pound a yeare heare yett I understand he is goeing to take the parsonage of Winscombe in which parrish Sidcott and what else you have theare abouts lyes soe that the blockhead is resouled to have one in ten out of as much as he can of you if he can have noe more I am told the pasonage have bin lett for a hundred pd a yeare and now for fower score I am told if he takes that passonage he desines to goe and live theare and his brother Sam is to take care of this heare; and thus you see what brave fellowes your servants makes themselves when you leave them here with the law in theyr owne hands, to goe and come when they please about your buisness or about theyr owne and to doe what they will without controll; it must needs be more to them then they are able to bare to be confined to a Mistress without one remove from them for 3 yeare together, by which they are deprived of all these advantages; it will not be indured but by few of them longe I feare; pray if you write any answare to this or at any time to me about Isake or Thomas or any of the servants write it in a peece of paper by it selfe and inclose it in your letter, that if I have occation to shew your letter upon any account it may not be knowne; I am sorry to heare that the motion about plate passed in the negative but I hope they will better consider of it.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

My deare

Yours with the inclosed I have receved and am much surprised to find Mr Isakes note changed from his silly proud way of huffing and hecktoring to his now silly way of begging your pardon and desireing to stay which I could not have thought having bin told by Eling in privatt that Dorcuss was resouled not to stay if Isake did, and if she was sure that he would goe then she would indevor to stay and the next day after I understood Isake had sent you this last letter, Dorcuss takes an oportunity to aske me to stay and I haveing made my resolution as I told you before, gave her this answare that I was very much surprised att her warning haveing given her noe accation soe to doe as I could ever since thinke of, and that I thought she had had a greater love for me after liveing with me soe longe and that I thought her an honnest and sober servant and if she had not given me warning she must have done something very exterordinary that would have occasioned mee to have given it to her; but since she did it without any provocation and had lett 2 months pass without recalling it, I had done as I had resen provided my selfe with one in her place, to all which she looked very blanke and if she is caute in her own nett she must thanke herselfe I am not at all sorry for it, and if Isake was served soe to, it would be but just, but charrity begins att home and it will be much more inconvenient to me to part with him then with her, all things considered att this time, and thearefore I am willing as you are to forgett and forgive and be to him as I ever was as longe as he is respectfull and civell to mee, we must take care what libbertyes we give them for the time to come, for because you was soe kind to give Isake leave to goe painting when you was not heare and pay him for being heare when he could not tell wheare else to imploy himselfe and for this purpose keepe a horss to carry him up and downe, thearefore he took it ill of me that I would not lay the cloth my selfe, while I am heare, that he might have the same liberty and continue the same corse. In the meane time I shall see how Isake is, for these 3 dayes last past his legg and foot has bin soe swelled and painfull to him that he has with great

difficulty gone from the fire to the bead; it is the rellicks of his old distemper which he feels in some part or other once in 2 or 3 months and won would thinke should mind him to wright to you in another stile then he did. I thinke not to give him your letter as yett nor att all if you thinke this as I have written may doe better:

*Isake I receved your letter which came just in time to prevent my agreeing with another servant finding your way of writing to differ soe much from the last which I will not bringe to my mind agen by repeating it being content according to your desire to forgett and forgive what is passed to shew you that I am willing you should continue my servant as longe as you continue to discharge the dutys of your place faithfully and respectfully to me and my wife in the performance wheareof with easiness and chearefullness you will ingage me to continue your frend and master E.C.*

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke      Chipley Feb ye 27th 1696/7

Isake continues very lame, just able to hop from the bead in his room to the fire, he is taking the dyett drink that Dr Musgrove ordered him the last spring to purge him, and sess he is much easier than he was and hopes the swelling will go off and that he shall have stranth in it agen, but he never saying anything to me of the change of his mind, I have not sed anything to him nor do not intend it till after I have your next letter, being then in hopes of having your letter for him, which will be a good subject for me to begin upon, if I find him in a condishon and if I did speak of it now theare could be nothing done in it till J Spreat comes home, nither is he able to ride to Taunton to be taken mesure of till he is better, which I am in hopes will be time enough, since Gabraells cloths is alreedy making if not made, and I was privettly told as a great secret that notwithstanding Mr High Sheriff complements he doss expect you will send him in 2 men. I phancey Isaak is a little more thoughtfull then he use to be though he sess nothing to any body as I hear off; nither is theare a word in the house that he ever intended to go away; I sopose it was a grand plott to bring me to theyr termes but it was like the papish wars, it did not take as twas expected it should; I have inclosed a letter to Mr Lock in answare to his to give him an acount of mine and my little ones present state; I think it may be nessesary now the season of the year comes on to advise with somebody and take a purge what if I did advise with Dr Passons for methinkes an indiffrent Dr that is near and can see all the changes and alteration that may happen are more safe and benifishiall than these great ones that deales in the dark at a distance. I have but one thing that gives me a dislike to Dr Passons and that is his being so great a creature of Mrs Spreats.

Locke to Edward Clarke      Oates 5th March 1696/7

I could be glad if Mrs Clarke's better health gave her and you less occasion of writing on that subject. As to your two questions, in hast I say: 1st, That the beginnings of a dropsie are not to be neglected, and I fear hers will increase and prevaile upon her if by suitable remedies a stop be not put to it, and the sooner the better. 2nd. The recommending the use of a remedie that one does not know is very warily to be done, and can have noe other reasonable foundation but the truth, memory and judgment of him that vouches the experience of it, and therefore you are a better judge than I how far Mr Philips is to be relyed on in that case. Cannot the receipt be got? Trie that, for I would be glad Mrs Clarke had speedily some easy, safe and effectual remedie, which possibly this may be.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke March ye 6th 1696/7

I thank you for your concern for my swelled leggs but I know not how I shall get ridd of them, nor what course to take in order to it, my family is so uncettled at present by resen of Dorcusses and Nans going away and new ones to come, that I cannot leave it; the last spring it was the same case just at this time when I had thoughts to go to Exeter, Mounsr and Babett and Jone was to take their flite.

I have thought fit to inclose one that came to John Spreat by the last post from his deare wife, which I desire you will returne to me agen, though I beleve it not at all proper for him all things considered to take notiss he have receved any such, methinkes that which is most observable is her desireing him to send up her childrens clothes, and she sess when the buisness is over she will send him a token and not before; and I tell John he can expectt that it shall be nothing less than a child; and for that reson she has sent for some cloths to put it in; she sess she rests his discontented wife and I think ever was and ever will be; and I beleve he would have had much more content if he had never known her.

Edward (Ward) Clarke to Mary Clarke London March ye 6th 1696/7

Honrd Mother,

I saw my sister Nanny three or four days agoe. She is now perfectly recover'd of her illness yt she goes abroad into ye open air without any likelihood of a relapse; what between her continu'd feaver and her being forc'd to keep her bed about twelve or fifteen days together, she was much weakened, but is now restored to her former strength; I needed noe thanks for ye frequent visits I made her, for I therein only followed my inclinations and discharg'd my duty. Had I neglected so doeing I shou'd ever afterwards have esteem'd myself to have been a very unnatural brother; I have nothing more to say of her at present, save only yt she gives her duty to you, and joyns with me as often as we meet, in her longing and earnest desire of seeing you here in some short time.

I am told yt Babett, (being guided by her fickle and unsettle'd temper) hath been induc'd to enter into service of severall different persons since she left yours, and I'm inform'd she lives now with her Mistress Gallener; inconstancy and shiftlessness are property's belonging to all her country-women, and soe particularly to her, that I expect she'll soon be removed, however there we leave her, but for how long time I know not.

As to what relates to Mr Grassemare, all yt I can say of him is this, yt he now lives with one Mr Scudamore in Herefordshire, but I hear by my father yt hee is already weary of yt place, being prejudic'd by levity, (that innate and natural property of the French) for he hath lately wrote a letter to my father desiring him to try to get him some place if possible under our Plenipotentiarys, but above all intimating how glad he shou'd be to serve him and you again; so yt I find by his changeing, he hath only made himselfe uneasy, and now wou'd fain return to you again. He consider'd not ye nature of the world till he felt it and all blowes fall on him ye heavier, because they light on him so contrary to his expectation. Perhaps since fortune hath deny'd him in bettering himselfe as he did imagine, it may work a reformation upon him, and make him grow OLDER AND WISER, but generally those yt are of his temper are people that are not easily reform'd, because they are so little perswaded of the inconvenience yt

attends that sort of humour. May all yt are of his temper be so serv'd, is ye wish of, Your ever dutiful son, Edw Clarke

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke March ye 8th 1696

My deare,

I received yours by the last post and have delevered the inclosed as directed and that letter has explained the meaning of madams to her husband by the post before, and hope yt you will lett me know your thoughts thearein; some of the childrens things which was bought when they was first married and some before I beleve he has pd for since her departure, and whether he has indevered to make some of the mony of them agen I know not; and some of the old things I think I heard him say he gave to the nurss etc; so how he will do in this matter I know not.

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 8th March 1696/7

Dear Sir,

You will see by the two annexed letters what I think is to be done in Mrs Clarke's case. To her I have given some particular directions suited to the method proposed in my letter to you. But how they will suit her humour, or stomach, or other circumstances, it is impossible at this distance to know. And therefore as to the particular medicines, I have set them down rather to please her than that I think that the safest way of proceeding, only the garlic I should expect much from, if she be inclined to use it. But for her diet, exercise and going very early to bed, and lying abed most of her time, I think I cannot mistake in. The diet drink I have prescribed for her ordinary drink will do her good if she keep to it alone. For if she takes it it will do her good; if she dislikes the taste and drinks but little of it, the drinking but little is one of the best remedies for her. But if you will have my opinion her life is not to be ventured upon directions at this distance, and therefore I think it necessary to consult some physician upon the place, who may adapt his method and medicines to all the whole collection of symptoms he shall observe in her.

I have writ my opinion to you as I have done, that if you think it may be of any use to her you may send it to any physician in those parts which she and you shall think fit to make use of, or make what other use of it you please. If there be anything else I can do for her or you in the case, you are but to let me know it, and I shall do the best I can. As to your Sherborne apothecary's medicine recommended by Mr Phillips, I can say nothing to it unless I know it. I think people not used to the practice of physick so apt to mistake and confound cases, and I think so little of the art of medicine lies in secret remedies and receipts, that I should no more use an unknown medicine upon unskilful people's recommendation than venture to let anyone bleed in the dark. If the case were desperate and nothing else would do, it is reasonable to try anything. But that, God be thanked, is not Mrs Clarke's case. It may grow to a dropsy if not looked after and prevented, but I hope there is no difficulty in it to make anyone doubt of its cure.

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 8th March 1696/7

Her last great disease soe weakened her blood that it has never since recovered its former strength. And hence it has come to passe that her nourishment has never been turned into good and perfect blood, but a great part

of it has remained indigested and crude, and soe has been apt (as happens in such cases) to get out of the sanguinary vessels into the habit espetically into the legs, and this is the cause of their swelling. This load of crude and watery humours, stagnating in the legs and not circulateing as it should in the veins and arteries, grows cold there, and thereby increases the weakeness of the bloud, when it is reassumed as it is every night, all or a good part of it, into the bloud again, and thereby augments the disease. The way to cure this as I imagine is to get out this watery humour and prevent the generating of more.

Locke to Mary Clarke Oates 8th March 1696/7

I hope a little care and a few remedies used now at this advantageous time of the year, will put an end to the swelling of your legs, and then will restore you again to a perfect state of health. To this purpose the first thing you should have a care of is your diet; whereby I mean the whole course of your way of living. First, then, I would have you go to bed constantly very early and lye pretty long in the morning; the first of these will prevent the uneasy swelling of your legs which alwayes comes on and increases most at night, the other will help to dissipate and carry off the superfluous humours in your body by warmth and perspiration. In the next place you should eat two or three times a day, always good nourishment and of easy digestion, and never make a quite full meal, but leave off with some kind of appetite. By this means your meate will digest the better, and be all turned into strong and good nourishment, and crudities will be avoided, which increase the cold and undigested humours which fall into your legs. And there is nothing better for food in your case than to eat good store of well-baked light bread with your meate or alone; and one little glass of good warm wine at your dinner will not be amisse. And takeing the air every day when it is fair on horseback or in your coach will doe you good. To warm and strengthen your blood, green ginger, or preserved, or candied elecampane roots, taken now and then, a little in the morning and afternoon, I think you will find benefit by. Though in your case I know nothing soe good if you will take it as garlicke. Cut a clove of garlicke in two or three or more pieces, and wrap it up in butter, or any other thing that you like, swallow it every morning, and soe likewise in the afternoon, will be very effectual I doubt not. I believe you are not thirsty, because you doe not complain of it. But for your drink make such a sort of small ale as you will find on the other side, and let that be your ordinary drink; only if you find the taste of the ingredients too strong, you may mix with it some of your ordinary small ale or beer when you drinke it. But drinke none of your other drink without a good proportion of this diet drink mixed with it. Pray send me word in your next how your water is coloured and what quantityes you make of it, and what alteration you find in yourself upon the use of these things. I wish you a quick recovery of your former strength and health in all the parts of it.

My wife I see has quite forgot me, but pray tell her I remember her.

*Take Century*  
*Wormwood*  
*Broom tops*  
*Harts tongue*  
*Sage*  
*Liverwort*

*Agrimony*  
*wormwood sage, of each 2 handfuls*  
*Horseradish roots scraped*  
*Dwarf elder root slices, of each 4 ounces*  
*Saucus or wild carrot seeds bruised, 3 ounces*  
*the yellow pill of half-a-dozen Seville oranges*  
*Put these ingredients into 2 gallons of small ale wort instead of hops, and let it*  
*work with them in it If any of these ingredients cannot be got, make it with the*  
*remainder of them.*

Anne (Nanny) Clarke to Edward Clarke **March the 11**

**Honrd father**

**I hope that you got well home a Sunday night and I should be very glad to see you ofner if your business will permit; I desire you will be pleas when you write to send me a quire of paper as for my dancing master Mr Young you may enquire for him at the Buselhead tavern in Wesmester I entreat you to send my mother my sisters letters in to the countrey by the first post be pleas to accept my humble duty from Honrd father, your dutyfull daughter A Clarke  
Madam Beckford gives her servis to you.**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke **Aprill ye 10th 1697**

**I returne you my thanks for letting Jack sitt for his picture which I hope Virrells will take care to do like; I understand Ward is desined for the Temple and I wish him good suckcess in all his undertakens, pray lett me know in your next which Temple it is, and how Nanny doss gather her stranth after her illness, I thank God I am indiffrent well, and have taken my dyett drinks and followed all other directions except the garlic and that I have not yet taken any of nor dont know how to begin, and besides I do really think I must have some thing to purge me some times or else these things will nott do of themselves.**

**Jenny have bin a little indisposed this day or 2 with those swellings in her face, as you have seen her have, but eats her meat very well and is up and down the house and I give her ruburbe and beare which I hope will carry of the humor as it use to do. I understood by the newespapers that Sr Hugh Parker was lattly dead and now your letter confirms it I think he has done very well to remember Taunton a place that he and I use to hold many a dialouge about, the poynt is now desided betwen my lady and him who should live longest and I doupt not but he has left her a rich widow, and I phancey she may marry agen; the butler and his wife that lived theare have lost a very good master in him, though I doupt not but he has left them good lagaseys att his death.**

**Pray when you write to your daughter Betty next tell her that you hope she is very industrose in teaching her brothers and that you doupt not but you shall find when you come home they have made a good progress, for in truth I find her to be very lasey and they larne little or nothing which I think is not theyr falts I am sure not Jepps.**

**I have taken of the tee you mentioned but once; because Dr Musgrave did advise me to take as little likwid things as possobly I could and eat as little waterrish meat as I could and my circomstances considered I phancey he is in the right.**

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke **London Apr ye 15th 1697**

I am much rejoiced to heare that you find some amendment upon takeing the dyett drinke Mr Lock directed for you, I could wish yr stomach would beare takeing the garlick constantly allsoe I am confident by what I have hear'd Mr Lock say of it, that you would receive great benefitt and advantage thereby, however I cannot but thinke, as you doe , that some Purgeing-physick now and then would bee verie proper for you, but why I beseech you doe you not thinke fitt, either to send for Doctor Musgrave and follow his directions, or take Doctor Parson his advise, who you say is soe much of Mr Lock's opinion in yr case, but wonders you should entertain such swell'd leggs soe long, wch implyes that hee thinkes they might bee easily cured, I am sure tis what I most heartily wish, desire, and pray for, and am therefore beg there may bee noe further time neglected in it.

I am sorry to heare poore Jenney hath been soe much indisposed, but am verie glad to find there is noe danger in her case, I pray God to restore her speedily to her former health; as to the tea I mentioned to be made on the Inner Bark of Elder, I beleive you are in the right in not takeing it, upon the reason of Dr Musgrave's advise to you, to take as few liquid things as possible, but you may have the vertue of the elder by adding it to the ingredients of yr dyett drink, if you thinke fitt.

I blesse God Nanny is as well in health as ever I saw her in my life, and expects new-clothes from head to foot agst the Ball at whitsuntide; and I am to desire yr consent and directions therein; the Black-sylke apron you writt for Mrs Smithsby has promised to buy for mee, soe that I hope to send that, together with the stockens and slippers you ordered by the next waggon or coach that goes hence for Taunton.

I am sorry to heare the Comrs are soe much offended at the additional 12d in the pound upon land, espetially since twas given to ease the Nation of a Tax upon the Woollen-manufacturing, wch would have been much more vexatious and burthensome upon the whole kingdom, but the session being to end tomorrow, there will bee noe cause of further complaints agst the Parlaimt; I am your truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke

Edward did not tell Mary that his concern to protect the domestic textile industry had brought him into conflict with the Court. The King was displeased with Edward and Sir Walter for opposing the bill to increase duties on wine and textiles. Clarke in particular had "*all along opposed the duty and shown the house unanswerably that it would be no supply and yet endanger the ruin of our woollen manufacture*". The King urged their removal from office but Somers, who was almost like a Prime Minister at this time, defended them arguing for a distinction "*between persons who had done wrong only once, through ignorance, and those who, in the whole course of business, were continually opposed*". The King received this coldly, and Shrewsbury felt he must support the pair, stressing "*we are obliged, (I am sure I think myself so) to stand by them*". They were retained in their posts.

Edward Clarke to Locke London 22nd April 1697

Dear Sir,

I write now cheifely to desire a particular favour of you, which is to lend mee two hundred pounds, for which togethar with the money I now owe you upon account, you shall have any security from me that you can desire for the

repayment thereof at six months end, with interest at 6 per cent. And I hope if you have, or can command so much, you will oblige me with it, in regard I have a particular occasion for it at this time.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke April ye 26th 1697

Wensday last I went to Holcombe on horss back and it proved so wett an afternoon that my cozen Blewett would not let me come home till Fryday last, by which means the letter you writt Wensday came to me theare and I was so tired when I came home Fryday that I ordered John Spreat to excuse my not writing by Satterdays post, I thank you for sending my slippers which I will take care to send for, and will also send your things to hook up your brichess by Mr Ned Bickley when he returnes if I light of no other safe hand in the meantime, methinks my swelled legg are a counterpart of my cozen Blewetts only of late he has a red spot come, about the bigness of shilling on his ankle and now is grown as brode as my hand, it lookes dry and scurfey and itches so intollerable that he is hardly able to bare it, and the least thing that is, is redy to crack the skin and if that should be, I phancey the consequence of it may be worss than they emagen.

Edward (Ward) Clarke to Mary Clarke London Aprill ye 27th 1697

Honrd mother

I wou'd have answer'd your last obleigeing letter before now, had not my removal into ye Temple prevented me. Indeed it has cast me so far behind hand with you, not only for what civility requires, but for what duty forceth me to, that had I not an assurance of your goodness in easy pardoning greater offences than my silence, I shou'd labour under greater difficultye in making my excuse and in humbly craving your pardon yt I came thus late to doe it.

Be pleas'd to know yt my Father by much pains and industry has got me a chamber in ye Temple, a place so convenient for study yt it exceeds most lodgings in town for yt purpose; he has likewise got me (by all yt I can perceive as yet) a very honest and sober partner. His care has so far overcome me as to exceed my expressions for ye same, as I am ye more obliged to him for it, because it was at a time when a constant hurry of business lay heavy and dayly increased upon him; I shall endeavour to use my utmost diligence in answering both your expectations which will be all ye recompence I can make for what is expended for me, and I hope I shall behave myself so prudently as not to incur ye displeasure or censure of any person whatsoever; as to ye tutor you spoke of for my little brothers and sisters t'is but laying your commands upon me in your next, and I'll endeavour to find out one; you may assure your self my Father will never be against so necessarye a proposal.

Edward Clarke to Locke London 29th April 1697

I heartily thank you for your very kind and obliging letter by the last post, and particularly for your great readiness to supply me with £200 as I desired. In order to which I shall use my utmost endeavours to set in the several sums mentioned in your letter to be due to you.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke May ye 1st 1697

I told you in my last that Dr Passons called heare this week to see Jenney and ses he thinks that which Mr Locke has now ordered much better and was in hopes by this time I should have received much beniffitt by it, and indeed so was I

too, for my leggs have not bin so much swelled since the time that I writt to Mr Locke and you, which was as I remember about 2 months since, till now for a week passed they have bin more swelled agen and uneasy towards night and that leg which I once broke has looked a little red from the ankle to the calfe of my legg and felt a little hott, but I hope it will come to no more and methinkes for this week in a morning I seeme all over full and as if I was a little swelled or growen fatt and if the latter I hope I shall be the better able to bare purging and if the other I beleve it will be very nessesary; for I beleve it is in vaine to flatter you or myself with the hopes that these gentle remidydes will prove effectuall for I do really beleve theare must be a more severer corce taken, and by purging and after that it may be these bitter corses may anware expecttation, and that you may find me strong agen when your business will give you leave to come into the countrey; if not and we can so contrive it and it is convenient I must go up with you when you do returne, and live in hopes and depend upon providence no longer but trye all other meanes; those purges Dr Musgrove gave me in my illness agreed very well with me and brought away a very great deal of greenish water though they was not ment anything for a dropsey; I wish I may be perfectly well against your comeing that I may not be forst to put you nor myself nither to the troble or charge of going hence wheare I am censible I am of much more use to you and your family heare then anywhere else.

If I am so fortunate as to be permitted by my health to stay heare I could wish that we could think of some frend or other that Betty could spend some time with in London, not but that I should want her company heare wheare I am so censible she looses her time very much for want of seeing more company and having better conversation than this part of the countrey afords for now she is like a peece of soft ware that will take any impression good or bad, she is large limmed and fatt, has a good countrey coler and I feare will be apt to have such little heats in hers face as you are with little yellow heads, she has but a small stomack, her greatest falt is that I can perceve she is a little slothfull unless it be when she is in a humor herself to be otherways, and that I beleve will be allways when she has a house and reall buisness of her own, for she has a great deal of cence and good judgment, and I am so vaine to beleve is as capable of managing a house and family or anything els that she shall have occation to get herself about as one of twice or thrice her age, and have much more corage to go throw it then I and thearefore when there is any difficult poynts do happen between me and my maids I leave it to her to decide them, twould make you laugh to be heare sometimes, Molly setts up for a woman too and by her good will would do nothing but what her sister Betty does, and is very uneasy when any thing else is expected of her; I could wish that we had any scoole heare fit for Jepp and Sammy or else that you could find out somebody fit to be in the house to teach them; for they are fine boys and it is a thousand pittyes they should not better improve theyr time; if Jepp had a master I beleve he would lerne anything that he was taught ( but he is like all the rest anybody else I feare will do but little good with him).

I thank you for promiseing to supley Nannyes wants, I could tell you of as many or more from hence but am loth to ad to your trobles and thearefore shall subpley as many as I can heare for the present.

I writt this on Thursday when my leg was at the worst before I received Wards and yours which was Thursday and this morning by the use of Hungrey

water and rest I find the redness is now quite gone and the swelling much abated; what the occasion of this should be unless it was walking too much or omitting the use of the dyett drink when I was at Holcombe or either I know not; it is talked hereabouts since my knybour came home that this malt tax lyes wholly at your dore; and that the good gentellman was utterly against it but seeing it would be carried came out of towne sounner, it is aded that this tax brings advantage to your office and thearefore you should be for it, but it is thought such men will not be chosen agen; I am privatly told the aforesaid gentellman was at the Swan in Wellington Thursday last wheare there was a high consultation and that the same notion is indevered to be blone abroad as was on the clipped mony on everything that is found uneasy to the countrey that you are for, and he against, as the leather tax and such like; but of this we shall heare more or less on while I sopose the people please and as it reaches my eares you shall know further how the countrey stands effected.

*Annotated by E.C. (Mrs Clarke with an account of her illness and about the children and the reports spread by my neighbour Sanford).*

## DIVORCE

May 1697 - December 1697

*The Spreat's law suit - Dorcas and Nan leave - Isaac too weak to stand - How can Mary go to London? - robbers are everywhere - Edward is confident Eleanor could cope - Robert King tries to dun Edward - Isaac creeping on crutches - Mrs Burgess falls off her horse - Humphrey Bishop gets smallpox -*

On 4 May 1697 came the end of the Spreat marriage, when separation from bed and board, a mensa et thoro, was granted for cruelty.

After noting that the couple married on 21 October 1691 according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England in the parish church of Runton and that the marriage was consummated, the judgment went on to say that "*the said John Spreatt not having the fear of God before his eyes but being seduced and instigated by the Devill and contrary to his conjugall vow did in the months of November and December in the year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred and ninety four strike and beat the said Grace Spreat with his fist in a most violent and barbarous manner without any manner of provocation and with the force of such his blow bruised her face and head which made it black and blew at the same time calling her whore and bitch and other names---*" and in "*the months of January and February one thousand six hundred ninety four five comeing home in drink fell into a great rage and passion with the said Grace Spreatt and declared that he had often beat her and that he would beat her worse than ever he had beat her yet whereupon the said Grace Spreatt to escape his fury and being in fear of her life ran away and it was beleived by the persons present that he would have killed her or done her a mischief if she had not run away*" and that "*in the months of Aprill and May following John Spreat continueing his cruelties towards the said Grace Spreatt his wife, they being in naked bed together fell into a great rage and passion and beat and abused her with his fist and kickt and threw her out of bedd, she being then bigg with child and within a month of her time, whereupon she cryed or called her servant to her assistance, who comeing with a lighted candle found her out of the bead naked and was afraid she would have miscarried notwithstanding which he the said John Spreat would not permit her into the bead again*".

In June, after she was brought to bed, he "punched and beat her upon the armes so that he made them black and blew and beat and abused her", and she running down the stairs, he "*followed her beat her with his fists and struck her down to the ground and abused her in that barbarous and inhuman manner that she was forced to keepe her bed four or five days after*" and that "*she was in soe bad a condition and swelld that she was forced to apply herselfe to a Doctor of physick for his advice and was in great danger of her life.*"

Grace's supporters said that at the time of her marriage she had as her portion in real estate, ready money, plate and linnen goods to the value of £2000 or at least £1000, and that John Spreat "*by his profession is an Attorney at Law and Steward to the Bishop of Bath and Wells and to Mr Clarke, and by such earns £500 or at least £300 per annum.*"

Friends of Spreatt testified that he had probably received between £400 and £800 from his wife's portion, and that since his marriage "*she hath by her ill management*

*and extravagance run him in debt".* Grace had separately followed her trade as sergemaker and contracted several debts; it was felt that because of her extravagance and ill behaviour the "*said Spreatt by his solliciting does not gett his bread*".

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

Heare has bin no letter come from his wife since the divorce between them but I heare it is sed in the knayborwood that she has cast him in Drs Commons and is comeing downe to him to demand her sallary, and then she is resouled to go to common law with him for 2 hundred and fifty pound, I beleve she do keep corrispondence by way of letter with some heareabouts that do give themselves the troble to give her an account of his whole course of life heare, and she has hitherto writt very swaggering letters to everybody of her acquaintance what she would do to him, perticularly in that last letter which she directted to him at Chipley, in that she told him he must prepare to send her mony to pay what she owed for diett and lodging, and to discharge the charge she had bin att in the law sute, and notwithstanding you and he thought his troble would now be at an end, yet it should be but the begining, and that if he did not take her home agen, he should find she had and would be a more chargable wife by farr abroad yn at home; now I know she is a woman of that sperrett and changeableness of discourse that there is nothing to be depended upon that she sess and thearefore if John should hold any corrispondance by way of letter with her it would run him into some great inconvenience and perhaps incorage her to come heare and be very troblesome to him; the great part of her things that she had sent up being I beleve alreedy gon; for the carrier told Gabraell that she openned the box that had her childrens cloths at the warehouse and showed it to all theyr porters wife and offered to sell her any of it; but if she wrights to John I think it adviseable for him to make her such an answare as you direct and so put an end to all further corrispondance if he can; pray in your next lett me know if he be liable to pay all the depts she has contracted before or since she went away and what charge she has bin att in her law sute, which I must needs think has bin considerable and I cannot emagen how or by whom she has bin subpleyed with mony.

Now as to my own buisness, the last two servants that gave me warning together went away both together which was Dorcuss and Nan and methinkes we have had much more quiettness and the work have bin done with more cheerfulness since and I hope twill continue to be so as long as I am heare at least; but if I should remove I feare it would return to its old corse agen, the very thoughts of it doss sink my sperretts, it being what I am sure I could not go throw agen, but if I am forst to come to London before you come home (at which time indeed I can now see no prospect of) I desire to know how you propose it should be, whether in the stage cotch or our own, for our horses in the state and condishion they are now in are not able to perform the journey, and Isake is but just able to hop from his bead chamber which is within the little hall to the kitchen, the Dr sess it is a fitt of the gout that he has but what it is I know not; but this I know, that either that or Dorcusses absence makes him look very simpley.

I am glad to heare Ward is eased of his paine but I feare he is subjectt to some disorder more then ordinary in his head, he being subjectt to these paines some times.

Locke to Mary Clarke Oates 7th May 1697

Madam

I am very sorry to find by yours of May 1st that the diet drink I directed failed to do you that good which you thought for some time you found in the use of. I should have been very glad that without any other prescriptions would have recovered you. But since you find it does not do, and you think a severe course must be taken in the case, I know not how wholly to dissent from you, that something more effectual should be done, but the question is what? you seem in your letter to Mr Clarke to think purging would be useful. I do not know but it may. But this I know, that at this distance to tell in what manner, how much and how often, is impossible in a constitution and case like yours, and that which I cannot venture upon. You commend particularly Dr Musgrave's purges. I cannot but thereupon ask you whether you have talked to him about them. For methinks that as well as other considerations should have been an encouragement to you to consult him in your present case. For this I think absolutely necessary, that you should have the advice of some able physician, not by letter and at a distance, but of one who, by being upon the place and talking with you, might by discourse, and sight, and everything, inform himself of all those many particulars, which are necessary to be known and considered to give all the light and certainty is to be had in such a case. Besides that I know not what farther to advise. And the more I am concerned for your health and recovery, the more unfit and unreasonable I find it for me to tamper in the dark, especially to venture on those which you call severer remedies, which are in danger to do as much harm when misapplied, as there is good to be expected from them where they are proper and fit. Give me leave, therefore, to press you again to have recourse to some able physician, who may see and talk with you, and be at hand to observe the effects of his prescriptions, and to change them quick upon any occasion. And when you are in such hands, if anything I can say or do may be of any service to you, there shall be nothing I shall more willingly do than whenever I can any way imagine would be for the recovery of an health which I am so much concerned for, and which I so earnestly desire.

Pray give my service to my dear wife, and tell her that by her civil but very cold letter to me, I begin to suspect her thoughts begin to look after another husband.

Edward Clarke to Locke London 13th May 1697

I have written to my wife in the best manner I can contrive to induce her coming to town with all the speed possible, and I hope it will prevayle with her, that there may be no means wanting to preserve her, whose life is of so much moment to mee and mine.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke May ye 17th 1697

My deare

I writt you a longe blotted letter by the last post wch I feare you will not be able to read and have nothing now to troble you with but that I find my leggs more free from swelling this morning then I have this halfe yeare, and thearefore doe hope the diett drinke will doe what was expected from it without any further troble which I should be very glad of for my owne sattisfacktion as well as every bodye else, but I had forgott to acquaint you with one observation that I have made on my selfe which is that I find my leggs to be more yn ordinary

swelled once a month just before the time that nature discharges it selfe, which I very much wonder att, haveing them very regularly and enough and much better colered within this halfe year than since I miscarried, all which impute to my diett drinke.

Isake is extreame lame still, he was up Satterday just to have his bead made but yesterday he could not come out of his bead he takes things from Dr Passons who thinkes his distemper to be the gout which for out I know may have mett with his wild distemper, he has bin able but just to hop up and downe the house this 4 months and that I beleve in a great deale of paine which I beleve he would have made more complaint of if he had not given warning to be gon before, he put the best foot a fore to goe to the assises, but ownes himselfe it was in a great deale of pain alsoe, God Almighty is just and showes us that in the midst of surliness and stranth he can sounse disable us agen. I hope you will take care of your selfe and not be out late alone for it was sed by an ale house keeper of Wellington that come lately from London to one that told me agen, that the brewers in London was soe angrey with you upon the account of this malt tax that they was resouled to doe you a mischiff, the persen that he sed it to asked him why he did not goe and acquaint you with it, he sed he would if he had knowne your lodgings which me thinkes he might sounse have found out if he had indevored it; it is a dangerose world methinkes that makes one weary to live in it but while we are heare we must indeavor to support ones selfe as well as one can for the sake of ones poor helpless children.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

May ye 18th 1697

I thank God my leggs are better then they was, and as long as they seem to mend I cannot think of the feteague of a jorney to London; for if I should it is impossoble for me to come up in our own cotch for Isake is so weak in his lower parts that he is not able to turn in his bead but was forst to be lifted out yesterday between to while his bead was made and could stand no more than Mr Stringer, but today was let blood and is something better, but God knows wheare ever he may be strong agen as he have bin, and if I must be forst to come to London it is impossoble I can leave this place and my children with the least sattisfacktion or safety, and bring Eling with me, for heare is a necessity of leaving somebody that we can depend upon that will always be within dores and take a stedy care of the children and dores to keep them fast night and day, for heare is newes of one house or other being robbed every day and sheep and calves and cockes hens ducks and cabbage plants stolen some from one knybour and some from another, but we have had the good luck to lose nothing of that kind yet, and notwithstanding my feebleness, yet I look upon my being hear to guard the house as much as ten men, for I am constantly at home except Sunday at Langford Church, and once then not long since we had information that thear was severall fellows in the wood in sermon time climeing for rockes, and sending downe, we took them in the fact and when I came home I had severall prisonners on theyr knees, who confessed they had set to, to watch when the cotch was gone, I threatened them hard but upon fair promises let them go, though I dont doupt but such rogues would as sounse rob ones house if they had a good opportunity, it is a very hard time for the poor, thats the truth of it, but yet they ought to be honest.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke    London May ye 18th 1697

In yr circumstances tis absolutely necessary there bee noe further delayes made but all possible application, and the best meanes used that can bee had for the restoreing yr former health, but since I find you soe much concern'd to leave our younger children, I doubt the uneasiness of yr mind will render the meanes used of little or noe effect on yr body, unlesse some expedient can bee found out for yr satisfaction in that particular, and therefore I thinke it necessary that Ellen, in whome I am sure you may repose an intire confidence, should stay with yr grandchildren (as you call our 3 youngest) and take care to provide for them in yr absence, and I beleive Mrs Burges, haveing relations here, will bee verie glad of soe good an opportunity to see them, and has soe true a freindshipp for you, that shee would not thinke much of being as usefull as shee could to you on the roade, and when you come here you may take a French-maid to wait on the girles, wch I beleive is what they verie much want, and I doubt cannot bee well gott elsewhere, and such a servant, together with ye helpe of Mrs Burges, and the mayd of the house where you lodge, may serve yr purpose whilst you stay here, which I hope will not bee long, being in greate expectation and hopes of yr speedy amendment here, and if soe (wch I heartily wish and pray for) wee shall all return to Chipley againe quickly; if you shall be necessitated, or otherwise inclyned to make any considerable stay here, we may easily send for the remainder of the children and Ellen to come with them.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke    London May ye 18th 1697

My deare

Yr verie kind and obleiging lettr of the two last posts dated ye 12th and ye 15th instant came both together to mee last night by the post and by the postmarke on the outside of them I find the first was delayed one post in the countrey by whose mismannagement is in my opinion verie well worth inquieri, for since these kind of accidents happen soe often to lettrs comeing out of the countrey to mee, there cannot bee to much care or paynes taken to find out where the fault lyes, that it may bee effectually prevented for the future, least one time or other it prove more prejudiciall then it has done hither to, the discontent and dissatisfaction about it if there were nothing further incovenient is sufficient to remedy such an evill if it bee possible.

What you wrote in yr first lettr touching John Spreates wife and her huffing and swaggering lettrs to her husband and everybody else is certainly the effect of that uncertain changeable turbulent temper and spiritt that governs all her actions, and has brought all the misfortunes that have happened to both herselfe and her husband upon them. And I thinke tis not a divorce nor anything else will mend her temper or disposition in any part, and therefore is allwayes to be as little regarded as possible; as to the debts shee contracted before shee left her husband, hee is certainly lyable to pay but for those shee has contracted since shee runn from him, I think if ever they can bee recovered of him, it will not bee without verie great difficulty by the partyes concerned; as for the costs of her law-suite in Doctors Commons lett whose will have supplied her with money for that I am sure they can never recover anything of that from him, but for her dyett and lodgeing before the allimony commenced, I doubt if John should bee sued for it, it may bee recovered of him, but of this more hereafter, wherein I shall advise for him wth the most knowing and best practisers in the law, how to defend himselfe agst any such suites, in case they should bee brought agst him,

and therein hee may depend upon all the advise, assistance and protection that I am capable of giving him.

There is nothing gives mee soe much satisfaction as the knowlidge of yr resolution to come to town, which has been soe long and soe earnestly desired by mee, hoping that the advise and assistance of the best physitions here will in a little time restore you to yr former health; as to the method you have putt yr affayres in, and the manner you have designed to leave or family in at Chipley, I cannot but approve of it extreemly well in every part, though I cannot but feare you will verie much want Ellen with you here, but considering our grand-children as you call them and all other circumstances I thinke you have resolved upon the most prudent and rationall course that can bee taken in that matter. And I think the condition that Isaac as well as yr horses are in at present will not admitt an attempt of yr coming up in yr own coach, but you must of necessity make yr journey in the stage coach and therefore I desire that you send John Spreat to hyre the whole coach for yrselfe that you may have the greater conveniency and take yr own time in yr passage hither.

I will make the best provision for yr reception and accommodation here that I can and shall ever remain, affectionately yrs E.C.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London May ye 20th 1697

I shall take the first opportunity I can gett, to communicate to Mr Lock the monthly circumstance mentioned in yr last letter relateing to yr health, which I take to bee a verie good circumstance and manifests the amendment of yr bloud.

As to the ale-house-keepers report of Wellington touching the brewers anger agst me here upon accott of the Malt-Tax, I can assure you there is not in reallity any ground or occasion at all for it, the brewers here verie well knowing that I neither proposed or in the least promoted the Duty upon Malt, but upon all occasions opposed it, and I take this Ale-house-keepers report to bee but another branch of my good neighbors \* kindnesses to mee, in order to have his former false inventions upon mee the better credited, but I heartily thanke you for yr kind intimation of it to mee, and will not bee wanting in a due care of myselfe as you desire; the hamper you sent mee by the Taunton Waggon I shall take care to have fetch'd thence to my lodgeings tomorrow, and I hope all things in it will come safe to mee.

Mr Robt King has lately by a letter or two and by Mr Nicholls applyed to mee for a debt of between 7 and 8 pounds wch he sayes was disbursed by my Lady his mother for lace or poynt for my cosen Bluet and has never been payd, hee sayes further that not long before my Ladys death, I did in his and his sisters presence offer to pay my Lady that money, wch my Lady at that time declyned receiving, and that they are both ready to testifie the same hath never been pay'd since; this demand of Mr Kings has occasion'd my lookeing over my old booke of accounts that I have here in town, but doe not find any memorandum of this matter, and I must begg you to recollect what you can of it, and if you know what the suma was and whither it was payd to my Lady or not, or whither I ever recd it of my cosen Bluett or not, that you will informe mee as fully as you can, that I may pay Mr King what is due to him, or that it has been allready payd, but bee pleased to write your letter soe as I may produce it to Mr King or his sister or to Mr Nicholls, if there bee occasion. Whither Mr King wants money more than ordinary, or upon what other reason I know not, but hee is verie pressing; I find tis well for mee that I constantly from time to time tooke and kept my Ladyes

rects for what I paid her for dyett and lodgeings, or perhaps a great part of that might bee demanded over againe likewise. Pray inform mee what you can, that I may have noe more to doe with this gentleman but rather pay him twice over than bee dunn'd by him or his sister.

\* Mr Sandford

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke                      May ye 29th 1697

I receved yours by the last post and do hope you had mine which acquainted you that I had bin at Holcombe wheare we had found the receipts for the mony that Mr King had demanded of you for the poynt; and with the misfortune Mrs Burgess had of falling of her horss and bruseing her self a little since which time she has kept her bead and her chamber, till today she came down stayrs wheare she makes so many faces and such a crinkling up and down that I begin to be a little backed in my undertaking of coming to London with her and Betty and Molly, for the present at least and Dr Passons was heare yesterday to see Isake who makes a shift to creep up and down by crutches but is able to do nothing nor I know not when he will for the Dr sess it is an odd sort of a distemper he has, that will not be cured quickly, if ever he is quite rid of it; he calls it a mixture of a sesatica gout and rumatisem, he has bin bled five or 6 times and taken severall papers of powders to sweett and has sweett very much and taken severall purgess, all which he finds relefe by for the present and then it returns agen, and thus I have acquainted you with what a crippled sort of a company you have of us heare that is not to be depended upon and thearfore cannott think it fitt for you to by any cotch horses till we are upon the place for if we come in our own cotch we can hire a man and pair of horses till we can fit ourselfes if we have occation.

That redness in my cozen Blewetts legg that I mentioned when I lay at Holcombe is theare still, and the like come in the other legg and increases and itches so extremly that he is not able to bare it with any patience when he is warm in bead, and what the end of it may be I know not.

I hope none of the bottles flew with the joging of the hamper on the rode theare was 2 bottles of our own sider that was made last year put in to fill up the hamper and that you might tast it they was not tyed down.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke      London June ye 5th 1697

I cannot but heartily wish you were here, that you might have the advise and asistance of the best physitions that are to bee had in England; but if Providence orders it soe that it cannot bee untill I can come to fetch you up, I will then bring Ward down with mee as you desire; hee is advised to weare a perriwigg as one meanes to prevent those frequent illnesses in his ear, and indeed his hayre is but meane and I beleive verie troublesome to him; but I cannot at present foresee the certaine time when I shall be able to come out of Town, and therefore could wish you would dispose yr affayres soe as to come up speedily if possible.

The Holcombe syder you sent mee up with ye old hammer'd money is much valued here, but the small-ale that you sent with it, is esteemed the best malt-drink that ever was tasted, I should be the more proud of it if I were assured that it was brewed at Chipley as well as sent from thence; therefore pray lett mee know that by a lyne in yr next, and if it were not brewed at home where you mett

with such incomparable good liquor, I assure you tis valued here beyond the best wine I can gett. I am glad the barrell of sugar and the things in it went safe to you. The price of nutmegs here are about ten shillings a pound.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

June ye 12th 1697

I am very constant in takeing my diett drink and garlicke, having found out a way to take it in a spoonefull of sacke as I use to do the Jesuites powder, which is much more easey to me than to take it in butter, which I could do but twice; my way is now to shove it in a spoonful of sacke, and so swallow it, and drink a spoonfull of sack after it, Mrs Burgess goes a little lame still and so doss Isake, but he is able now to lay the cloth agen and do those little small matters within dores that he use to do, and I beleve he puts the best foot forwards that I may not think of anybody els to drive me to London, if I should resolve to come up, but if I should, I think it will be more convenient to persue that way that you proposd of highering horss and cotchman from Saulsbury , but had much rather do that then you should come down if it be thought any ways inconvenient by you or any of your frends.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

June ye 20th 1697

Dr Passens was heare about a fortnight since to inquier how I did and I told him I was very well only the swelling of my leggs continued still but I hope not so bad, so we concluded to drink one barrell or 2 more of the diett drink and if that did not remove it, then he sed he thought it would be best to trie something else, I thank God I eat drink and sleep very well and do bussell about as much as I am able and I find riding out doss me a great deal of good, but towards night I find my leggs growes heavey, and going to bead earley agrees with them very well, I can still pitt them pretty much at night and most times in the morning I have great faith in this diett drink and garlick and as long as I am not worss I am loth to begin with Dr Passens espeshally if I should be forst to come to town in the autumn which I should be glad to be well to do, to see if Nanny be improved enough to be removed yet or not, but of this we will talk more of; if it be thought convenient for you to come down but how to advise as to that poynt for the present I cannot tell for my life; I pray God to direct for the best in all things is the prayer of your truley affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

My service to Mr Lock Mr Freak your self and all frends with my blessing to my children; everybody tells me I look much better within these 2 months then I did, and I hope I shall continue to improve.

Mary Clarke to Ursula Venner June ye 21 1697

Deare sister,

I was very glad to heare by your servant George that you got so well to town last night and I hope the remaining part of your journey will not prove so difficult as you aprehended and that you will find all the good by the bath that the Dr do propose which I should be very glad to see confirmed under ye own hand a line or two with derections wheare we shall derect to you; you shall not fail of heareing either from me or Betty or Mrs Burgess while we are heare and when we are in London we will write from thence, in the meantime pray accept our humble service and give the like to Mrs Pirce and all our frends at Taunton which concludes this from your affectionate sister and servant M Clarke

I have sent Gabrell on purpose to inquier how you do after sleeping out of your own head apprehending the first night to be the worst.

Edward Clarke to Ursula Venner      London June ye 29th 1697

Dear Sister

I recd your verie kind and obleiging letter by the last post from Bath, and am verie glad you performed yr journey thither soe well; I shall constantly and heartily pray, that the meanes used for restoring you to yr former health may have the desired effect upon you, and I doubt not but, by the blessing of God, the waters and bathing will have in a good measure the desired success; I am verie glad you have taken Mrs Peirce with you to the bath because I beleve she is capable of being more usefull to you there, then any other person you could have taken with you; pray remember me kindly to her, and as an encouragement for her to be carefull of you, let her know that I have prevailed with the Board to advance her son Lowdham to the station of a supervisor and that I hope to get her son Peirce to that station in the Excise as Mr Lowdham was in before his advancement.

Gustavus Venner to Ursula Venner      July ye 7th 1697

Deare mother

I received yr kind letter and should have answered it ere now but my uncle Venner was here who told me he designed to write to you and lett you know wee were all well as I thank God ever continues and are very glad to heare you are soe, and doe hope by yr next to heare you have recd benefitt by ye bath and that ye giddyness of yr head abates, which is the hearty prayers of yr most affectionate dutifull sonne Gust: Venner

Edward (Ward) Clarke to Ursula Venner      London July ye 15th 1697

I have been mightily grieved to hear by my father yt you have been of late soe much indisposed, wch forceth me to acquaint you in this letter how great a part I bear in all your afflictions, and how heartily I condole your late illness, and how much I am rejoiced to hear yt you are now at yr Bath for recovery of your health, but shou'd be much more pleas'd to hear you found any benifit there, that being ye welcome news you can send me thence; I hope my cozen Venner and his lady, to whome I desire to be kindly remember'd, are both well, for were they out of order, I should be afraid yt it might afford you so much discontent as to contribute to your present indisposition

Your most humble and affectionate nephew Edw Clarke

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke      Chipley July the 19th

Honrd Aunt,

I being apt to thinke that letters out of this country are not unwellcome to you, is the reason I trouble you thus often with these scralls, and to acquaint you how wee spend these long days, which I do assure you pass away at a very dull rate, especially now wee have lost so good a neighbour yourself I mean, wee sometimes see Joan, and often heare that they are all well at Gunham and Fitshead; hear is at present no news, more than that last Sunday Mr Prode preached att Langford, where he made a very good sermon and truley I could not chuse but lament that you was not there to hear it, for I remember you once took the pains to go to Oake and was so unfortunate as not to meet him; my

brothers and sisters has all had very great colds but are now better, and give you there dutys; Master Jepps cold has turned to a pain in his eare but it is broke and he pretty well and I am, Madam your affectionate neice and servant E Clarke

Since I writte this I also heare this peece of news, that Mr Poell's lady (he was nephew to Mrs Ellsdons first husband) is once again brought to bed of a daughter, for which they made a great gossiping, and Madam Betty Sanford was one godmother as for the other I do not know her name but Mr John Sanford was godfather.

Mary Clarke to Ursula Venner July 19th 1697

We should be all glad to know when you think of coming home, for we want your knaybourghwood heare very much and I feare now you have bin in soe much noyse and gallantry soe long that you will thinke this a dull part of the world; pray tell Mrs Peirce I expect abundance of newes from her who I presume will returne a perfect faishion munger and I hope will sett us all right if it is possible, for to be sure we shall make a very sad figure to you both, I am very glad to heare all my frends att Sutton are well and that Sarath and Dorcuss have bin soe civell to wait on you, methinkes Dorcus has not prefered herself much in going from hence to live with her sister.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

July 20 1697

My deare

I receved yours by the last post and have acquainted John Spreat with what you writt concerning the horses, who will wait upon you as you have apoynted with your black mare for your self and your old gray mare for your son and desire to ride the snipp hors himself in case you have any portmantua to be brought home, which I presume you must, with nessesities as it is impossable for you and your son to be without apeere decently among the sparkes of this countrey who vallew people more for theyr outsides then insides; I thank you for sending my letter to Mrs Levens and promising to pay the mony she shall lay out for me; I am told theare is a sort of stuff that is much worn by the Ladys of 3d ye yard in mantuas and pettycotes and sold by Mr Doyly, as also a stuff they call capitation, stuff for men that a whole sute comes to about forty shilling one of which I saw on Mr Beares back the other day at Holcombe and I asked him about the other also and he told me he had heard the ladys talk that he did sell a stuff that a mantua would come to about five shillings; and if theare be really such a thing and of severall sorts of colers I could wish you would send your son to Mr Doyly for some pattrens of it and send or bring them to me, and if you find among them either of them a pretty coler for your daughter Betty the charge will not be great if you by enough of it for a mantua and pettycote for her send down with the other things I have sent for, and the rest of the pattrens; I have always the fate of meeting company when I do go abroad though it is but seldom, and among which at Holcombe I mett your great fat colectter Mr Aram who cannott be sposed to look otherways then big at all times; but now notwithstanding I have seen him heare to or 3 times to wait on you yet he did not know me enough thear to take any notiss or to aske for you nither before nor after he heard me called by my name, or presented his duty or service to you when I came away, which I took perticular notiss of, that sort of people usually abounding in theyr complements of that kind.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke July ye 24th 1697

If your old gray mare had looked this time twelf month as she do now it would have saved you fifteen pound in your pockett, it is an old saying and a true that the masters eye makes the horss fatt and I beleve the same resen holds good for the mistresses eye making the mare fatt. And I could wish you would order you buisness so as not to hurry out of Taunton so as you did last that the gentlemen may have time to pay you all the respectt they have for you, and pray put on a cheerfull and femelier countinace and lett us order the matter so as to go together to Ninehead and the knayboring parrish churches and apeare before all the congregations and look them out of countinace after all their scandolouse reports, for an unconcerned easiness and innocence will putt the false and confident to the blush; I could say a great deal more on this subjectt to incorage you alowing your selfe some time to be easey and cheerefull among your frends and enimeys if it was possoble; but perhaps you will putt your usuall construction on it, that it is my naturall inclination to idleness and lazeyness that prompts me to it, but it is my thoughts that theare is a time for all things. I thank God the childrens colds are not so bad as they was.

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to Ursula Venner Chipley July the 25th 1697

I hope that nummness wch you spoke of, that was in your left foot and leg, will were of again and that you may att last find that good by the Bath which you did expect, I pray God you may, and that so good a person as your self madam, may not be wanting at least these twenty years, and during that time (at least) you may enjoy health and whatever else may tend towards your happiness.

Edward Clarke to Ursula Venner London July ye 27th 1697

Deare sister,

I return you my hearty thanks for yr verie kind and obleiging lettr by the last post, and intend, God willing, to visitt you at Bath some time the next week; I assume it will be Thursday night before I can possibly waite on you and then I hope to find yr health much improved by the use of the bath, and yr strength restored wch I doe constantly and heartily pray for; as to the Peace\* tis not yet proclaymed, but all persons beleive tis in a manner, if not perfectly, concluded; I pray God it may bee honourable and lasting, and then the money wch hath been spent in the Warr will not be ill disposed of.

\*Peace of Ryswick

Mary Clarke to Ursula Venner July ye 28th 1697

I sent Isake yesterday to Fifoot to inquier how they did who bringes me word they were both very well, and soe is all your family at Gundenham wheare your maids marry off soe fast you need not feare getting enough, George tells me theare is 2 or 3 have offered theyr service, and I am told by others theare is severall in waiting to put in for the place when you come home; and now the greatest newes heare is that this day Mrs Lambe of Milverton have a day of sale for all her livestock and outdore goods, she haveing lett her estate as they say to Mr Thomas Spreat who bids faire for the widdoe alsoe, Thomass drives on at a great rate certainly he must win the horse or loose the saddle I think; they say he

has given 8 score pound a yeare for the estate and 2 or 3 hundred pound for the corne in ground, I find I cannot earne this way of growing rich if Mr Clarke should leave me heare this 2 seven yeares which confirmes me in my old opinion that it is best to lett out ones estate to those that can maintain theyr families by it and pay me more a yeare for it then I can make if I keepe it in hand and mannage it by servants.

Edward Clarke to Ursula Venner London July ye 29th 1697

Dear Sister

I can now tell you that I have obtained leave to be absent from His Majesty's service for a few weekes, and being verie desirouss to see you, I have resolved to come down the Bath-Rode on purpose and have taken a place in the two dayes coach for Wensday next, soe that Thursday in the evening by the blessing of God, I hope to waite on you, and to find you much better than when you writt last to mee.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London July ye 31 1697

My deare,

Yr obleiging letter with the inclosed for my sister came safe to mee by the last post for which I thanke you, and am sorry yr desires touching those cheaper stuffs you therein mention had not come to mee sooner, for I yesterday pack'd up and sent hence by the Taunton waggon all the things you had before written for, soe that I am thereby totally deprived of the opportunity of sending the stuffe you write for now down with the other things if I had time to buy it, wch I doubt I shall not have, it being soe neare the time of my takeing my journey. The new head bought for you is in a pastboard box inclosed in a little-deale-box wherein are a few papers of mine, wch I desire may bee layd into my closett, and some other small things of mine putt in only to fill up the box; in another large-deale-box is the blew serge you writt for and ye wardrobe you desired mee to send down, amongst wch you will allsoe find a little pastboard-box in wch is a top-knott for Betty sent her by Mr Lock, and ye shade of hayre Mrs Levens bought. Pray lett not the old-wardrobe be exposed to raine.

Chipley account book - in Mary's hand writing

*pd Lock the dyer of Wellington for dying 24 yards of whomemade cloth at 8d the yard 16s which was to deare by 2d ye yard as all people ses and thearefore I shall imply ym no more*

*pd Strang the tucker of Willscombe for tucking and pressing the same peece of cloth 8s*

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London August ye 3rd 1697

I shall, God willing, begin my journey towards you tomorrow morning, and I hope to bee happy in yr company by the end of the next weeke at farthest; the inclosed is from Mr Lock to direct you how to take a certaine drinke wch hee has prepared on purpose for you to bee taken instead of the garlick, and hee proposes greate advantages to you by the takeing of it; it is put up carefully in a little-white-baskett in two quart bottles, and sent hence yesterday by Wm Millett the Taunton coachman, who will bee there Thursday next. Pray send for it with ye verie first opportunity, sett it in the coolest place in ye seller and take it as directed. I am perswaded you will find greate benefit by it, the coach-man is

**paid two shillings for the carriage of it by yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke**

Before he left London Edward noted in his day book that "*Mrs Spreate is paid her allemony due to ye 5 August 1697*"

In Mary's account book on 17 August she paid for "*8 chicken to a poore man of Milverton 00 07 08*" and "*Gave away since Mr Clark came home amongst the servants att Hunsham Holcombe Milverton and Fifoot and Taunton wheare we dined once att each place by invitation and 3 times att Holcombe £1 2s 6d besides what was given by him to the men servants*", and "*Gave to Mrs Sandfords butler and coachman when I made my last visitt -00 00 06d*".

Richard Cross to Mary Clarke Cullompton August the 23rd 1697  
**Most honoured Madum,**

**These are to inform you that wee have sent to you by the bearer hearof for the five bushells of wheat and have sent you the money according to our bargain and according for any more our proposal was to have it to a market price or according as wee can agree; therefore pray trouble us noe more in sending any more for wee owe you nothing these being all at present from your most humble servant Richard Cross**

Locke to Edward Clarke London, 2nd September 1697

As to Mrs Clarke, whose health makes the business of your letter, I am glad to hear that there remains no other symptoms of her illness than the swelling and piling of her legs. It is I confess, what is by no means to be neglected, but it is what I have great confidence will be mastered if she will continue to follow rules, as by the good success she has found of it I believe she has done hither to. I think it would be convenient she should return to the use of her garlic again whilst you are there, which I desire you and her to observe as nicely as you can and to discourse of one with another, that by this means when you come to town I may be able to judge which method of the two is best for her, or whether anything else may be ordered for her advantage.

My love to my wife, whom I easily believe the finest young woman in the country, not by virtue of the topknots you speak of, but of those good qualities and accomplishments which are her more visible ornaments. My service to your son, and to Mrs Burges if she be with you. Your son John was lately well. Mr Pawling saw and spoke with his landlady, and I have delivered your message to Mr Malpus, who is very well satisfied, and has promised me if the child should need his care in your absence he will not be wanting, and has promised me to let me know it if anything should ail him.

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to Locke Ivy church, 6th September 1697

**Sir,**

**I could not omit so good an opertunity of returning you my thanks for your last fine present. But that which I thought the greatest favour, was, considering the abundance of business that you have, that you should yet find a time to think on me. I also do assure you that I am extremely glad to hear of your health, and that you may long enjoy it, is the wish of, Sir, your most obliged humble servant, Eliz Clarke**

Edward Clarke to Locke Chipley 6th September 1697

Mrs Clarke joynes with mee in her particular thanks to you for your greate care and concern for her, and intends tomorrow, shee haveing taken the last of the bitter infusion this day, to return to the garlick course again, the effects of which I will observe as nicely as I can, and give you the most exact account I am capable of at my return to town. Since the writeing of my last to you, she has complayned of an unusuall fullnesse in her body, which creates an uneasinesse to her for an hower or two after her first sleepe, but goes off again in the morning before shee rises. I know not what the consequences of it may bee and therefore trouble you with the mentioning of it.

Locke to Edward Clarke London 9th September 1697

I am glad the change of medicines falls out whilst you are at home; that the severall effects of the different courses may be observed. The fulnesse you mention Mrs Clarke has of late felt after her first sleep, I hope upon the change she was going to make when you writ will go quite off and she will hear noe more of it. I look upon it to be of noe consequence, and so she need not trouble her thoughts about it.

I came just now from your son John at Little Chelsy\*. I desired Mr Malpus is anything should happen to him to acquaint me with it. A day or two since the mistress had sent to him to let him know the child had a cough and she feared a consumption, upon which Mr Malpus went thither and reported to me the symptoms. I went thither myself to day, and was glad to find the mistress's care had represented it to her more dangerous than I found it. He was abroad in the fields when I came; he looks well, eats well, and sleeps well, and coughed not once all the time I was there, nor had not as he told me coughed above once or twice since dinner. I think there is noe manner of danger in it. However, I have ordered him some things, and hope the next news I shall hear of him is that his cough is quite gon.

\* A hamlet in Chelsea where modern Beaufort Street joins Fulham Road.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London September ye 30th 1697

My Lords and Masters of the Treasury kept mee soe long upon business, wch had been kept back till my comeing to town, that what with the wearinesse of my journey, and the fatigue of the businesse I was imediately putt upon, I was hardly able to hold up my head whilst I writt that scrawl to you; Ward has bin this day to visitt Jack, and found him very brisk and well, and I am assured by Mrs Smithsby that Nanny is in perfect health alsoe, shee having been at Hackney to see her ye last weeke, and as soon as I can gett time (wch I hope will bee in a few days) I will visitt them both myselfe and give you a further accott of them. I recd yr kind letter by the last post, and am heartily sorry at anything that shall happen to bee the occation of any trouble to you in my absence; that wch I ordered to be done by John Bond to ye Peeres, notwithstanding John Barbers opinion, I am sure may bee verie safely and well done at this time in the manner I directed, wch I am confident John Bond and Humphry will take care shall bee done accordingly, and I beleive it will not bee above two or three dayes worke at most for John Bond to doe it, but if you thinke that takeing down the balls and covering the peeres with Ledd may bee the better way, I submitt to yr direction therein, tho methinkes when John Bond comes to doe it, it should bee done, for

the taking down the Balls and covering the Peeres with Ledd, will be halfe as much trouble as to new-sett soe much of the stone-worke as I directed, lett Humphrey bee careful to see the cornish, upon wch the pedestall and ball stands, bee covered with ledd when the stone is new sett, in the manner I directed, wch will effectually prevent the wett comeing in for the future, and I shall follow yr advise in imploying as few as possible dureing my absence, and in all things study to make you easie, being sensible I have ye greatest obligations imaginable to you upon all accott whatsoever.

The King is detained beyond his expectation to see the Ratification of the Peace exchanged before he comes near soe that tis now thought Hee will not bee heere these 3 weekes.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

4 Oct 1697

My deare,

I receved yours by the last post and will take the best care I can in relation to the buisness with Mr Bond who I have heard nothing of, since J Barber went hence, nor of Mr Clutterbuck tho we have had 4 very fine days that he might have done your buisness in, but now it is very wet agen, but I hope the first oportunity we shall hear of them in the meantime let me beg of you to beleve that I do not think much of any troble than I am capable of going throw, that may be to the advantage of you or yours, and thearefore do hope you will not think that the resen that I diswade you from imploying any more heere then what is absolutely nessesary till you can be upon the place theare being nothing so uneasy to me as to see you abused by those you repose a confidence in; I have at last come to a resolution to go dine with Mr Maior and in order to it I have alredy sent him a side and hanch of a dow that was very pretty meat for the time the year, and a cople of fat geese and 3 brace of as fine carpes as I have seen a great while which we took out of the horse pond all which I thought the properest present for me I could think on, they being all good of the sort and all the fattest of my sheep sold and killed; I hear all the fine ladyes that was at Mr Dikes and all round the countrey are to be thear; and I fear I shall make but poor figure among them but if I should not go perhaps they might have thought I had bin slighted by Mr Maior and not invited. If I had thought the King had not have come home so soun I should have wished you would have stayed till after this time and have given them a generall meeting; the greatest newes John brought me yesterday from Taunton was that they was very buisey beating for follonteaes which makes the Jacobites perke up mightily and ask them what they think of a peace now; notwithstanding they pretend it is to fight against the Turk.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London Octobr ye 5th 1697

The conclusion of the Peace has broke all the Jacobite-Tory-Plotts and contrivances in the Kingdome, and the cheife heads of that Party are all hereabout since the certainty of the Peace Day comeing submitting themselves to the government, by swearing fidelity to it and begging pardon for not doing it sooner, and are endeavouring by all other wayes imaginable as well as these, to make their peace too with the Government, soe that the Peace seemes to have totally broke all their measures, and even their whole Party too in pieces for the present and I hope they will never bee able soe to unite againe or succeed in any

thing, as to prejudice the Kings person, or disturbe the tranquillity of his Government, but that all their plotts and contrivances will turn to their own confusion and distruction.

I thinke I have hitherto omitted telling you that I discoursed Mrs Stringer in such a manner as to discover her proposition for Betty to be Coll Hurst's sonn, who I am satisfied by the inquiry I made will have but a small estate and less sence, and therefore cannot thinke him at all a fitt match for Betty; I would have discoursed Mr Bulstrode upon the hint hee gave, but hee has been out of town almost ever since my arrivall here, soe that I have not been able to see him as yett, neither have I yett mett with Mr Buck, or Mr Levens or his lady, though I have been twice to waite on them. They are all verie well as I am assured by their servants at their house. Mr Bridges and his Lady are alsoe verie well those I have seen, and they give their hearty service to you, and soe does Mr Lock and Mr Freke, wch with my true love to you and my children concludes this from yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke  
Our children here are all well.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke **October ye 19th 1697**

I am mightily oblinded to Mr Bridges and his lady for all their favors to us and I may accept of their kindness one time or other, but att present I thinke tiss best for Betty to stay wheare she is till I call her (there being very good company) I have not sett the time yett nearer then betweene thiss and Crismass, for I have disused travelling soe longe that such a journey seems soe great a worke to me that methinkes I had rather live and dye heare then undertake it; but I must indevor to shake off this slothfull temper if I can and become more usefull in my generation but it is never the neare for me to thinke of coming to London till I heare Ward have some prospectt of getting a French servant fitt for me.

In October Edward had to defend his actions at the Excise, saying that the hearing of causes was quicker since he arrived there, and that he had organised a system of checking which excise officers had sworn allegiance to the Government. He was backed by Thomas Pelham who pointed out that it was chiefly Edward who had begun a reform process.

On 20 October the War of the League of Augsburg ended with the signing of the Treaty of Ryswick. It had really been won by the Whig financiers and William III was recognised as King of Great Britain by the House. But trouble was brewing again in Europe as the death of Charles of Spain without a son would result in quarrelling claimants to the throne. There was also division among the Whigs, even between Edward and Sir Walter, who disagreed about a standing army. Clarke remained loyal to the Court position, arguing that the militia and navy were not sufficient for defence against an invasion, for his fear of France was greater than his fear of arbitrary power. He felt the armed forces safeguarded rather than threatened Parliament.

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to Mary Clarke **Ivey church October 27 1697**

The stays my father sent me are very fitt at the breast but a little to big att the wast but I will not have them altered in the country. They are white silver tabby trimmed with gold they are very pretty.

Betty's clothes were expensive; in December Edward settled a bill of £11 for flowered silk for Betty and the silver tabby (a thick glossy and watered taffeta) lining cost £2.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke      **October ye 29th 1697**

Mr Clutterbooke was heare yesterday to make his excuse for not coming to finish his work all this while; but he has promised to be heare with John Bond Munday sennett next without fail but ses it will be a weekes worke or more to finish it, he is resolved to use his own soder saying that is all the profit he has and that he never made soder for any gentleman before you in his life and never will agen nor would not then if those pipes that you had had not lain upon his hands, it may well be called sodeare as my cozen Blewett ses, if they use an hundred pound about such a job and recon 9 or 10p a pound or more for it, but what shall one say there is a cheat in all trade and almost every thing, if one could bequeath any experiance to thos that one leaves behind one, it would be the best lagacey one could give, and was that I remember wished my Grandmother could have left me when she dyed tho she had not given me a farthing besides, tho I was not then so sensible of the conveniency of it as I am now by joyning with you in paying for our experiance.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke      **London November ye 5th 1697**

I am most heartily concern'd at the greate disappoyntment Humphrey's falling sick just at this nick of time hath occasion'd both to you and to mee, but I hope since he was soe timely removed\* there can bee noe manner of danger from his illness to either of the children, or to any body else of our family, and his sickness is now to bee look'd upon noe other wise than as if any other neighbour had the small pox with respect to any infection that could possibly come from him before hee was removed, and therefore I thinke yr journey ought not to bee any longer deferr'd upon that account espetially when yr own health, and the care that ought to bee had of it, renders yr coming up soe absolutely necessary, that there ought not upon any accott to bee any further delay made in it; as to the concern and feare that you were in for my children, I doubt when ever you leave them it will bee the same as now, and hope you will sett out with the first opportunity after this comes to yr handes, and question not by the blessing of God but that yr children will be preserved by his Providence, and the care that will be taken of them in yr absence, and therefore cannot but add my desire to the necessity there is for yr preservation to begin yr journey next weeke. I doe heartily wish I could see you at this time to discourse you more on this subject, but tis alltogether impossible for either of us to have that satisfaction; but for mannageing and ordering our children in the smallpox, in case either of them should have it, I have inclosed sent you Mr Lock's directions, how they are to bee managed from the beginning to ye end of the disease, and being soe ordered, I doubt not but they will be safe; all things were in readyness for yr reception here, viz; a good house to lodge and board in, in Lincolns Inn Fields there being not room to receive you at Mrs Henmans, and the French-maide that I have treated with for you, has had the smallpox, as you desired.

\*Although servants were “family”, if they became really ill they were removed to a different house in a way a real family member would not have been.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat    **London 9 November 1697**

**Pray be carefull that Mr Clutterbuck does well mend ye leake in ye lead wch lyes upon the wall just over my chamber windows. I gave Isaac and Humphrey a particular charge to take care therein as well as in other places that are faulty.**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke                      **November ye 17th 1697**

**My deare**

**I received your by the last post and returne you my thanks for the troble I have given you in procureing me lodgings and a servant fit for me, I am oblidge to Babett for offering her service but her humer was so very od when she lived with me last that I have not corage to adventure upon her till I have discorsed with you, thearefore if the first maid Mr Mure recommended will serve for the wages Babett did or 10s more if I find her fit for me and will come upon trial and to give a months warning or a months wages on either side if we do not like, I think I had best to try her first Babett being I find in a service out of which I would not have her put her self upon my account by any means, I find by your letter also that the better part of Mrs Henmans house is taken up, but if you think what remains empty is enough to receive me and my company, I shall be very well contended with it, she having very much oblidge me by taking Ward into her house when he had the small pox. I would do nothing to disoblidge her but if you think the lodgings in Lincolns Inn Fields be as convenient for us, the place is more pleasant and we may take this opertunity to try it. If we do not like we may remove to Mrs Henmans apartment afterwards if her old Ld be not gone though she use to tell me she would part with any lodger if she knew of my coming, but if that was not a complemint it will be time enough for her to do it if we find we do not like the other lodgings better when we have tryed them which I hope will be in a short time, for I desire to set out hence Tuesday next and I would by no means be in any house wheare I could not bord; when I come to Mr Stringers you shall know what stay I will make theare and in the meantime I hope to hear from you wheare I shall find you in London, or else I must come directly to the Colledge,\* wheare I hope to find you all well as I thank God we are at present.**

\*This seems to imply that the College had a specific meeting place; it could have been Richards Coffee house, run by Stephen College.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

**I must desire you by the assistance of Mr Trott to have the ground marked out and the worke begun upon as soon as possible; whither the masons work will bee best to be carryed on by the rope or by the day Mr Trott and you will best judg upon the place, as also what mason shall be employed therein, earnestly desireing it may be begun upon and soon as possible that the first pitch of cobbe may be up all round by the middle or the end of April.**

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke                      **November ye 24th 1697**

**I hope before this comes to your hands you will have mine which will inform you of the resen why I did not begin my journey from hence this day, as I fully**

intended, Humphrey is like to be extremely full of the smallpox but is very hearty and under very good circumstances yet and I hope will do well, and I thank God ye children and the rest of the family are all very well, which I pray God to continue; but you must emagen this accident just at this nick of time have confused and disquietted my thoughts a little at present but pray do not think it more then it is or make your self uneasy for I am used to disapoyntments and thearfore shall take the less notiss of this further then I hope to make the best use of it; my horses live at rack and manger and I beleve do wonder what is the matter, they are so fed and care taken of them and do nothing, Humphrey could never have had the small pox so inconveniently in all his whole service as now, which shall be a warning to me not to take any agen that have not had them, if they are the best servants in England for ought I know, but I hope the children and the rest will escape he being removed before there could be any manner of danger to the family heare, if they are so discreete as not to run up and down to him as I hope they will not .

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London November 1697

I am concernd at the disappoyntment Humphrey's falling sick of the small pox has occasioned but why that should obstruct yr Mistress intended journey designed for the recovery of her own health, I do not see; if any of the servants fall sick [sic] let there bee provision made for their removall out of the house lett the charge be what it will to me.

Poor Humphrey Bishop did not recover and was buried at Ninehead on the twenty seventh of November 1697.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke November ye 29th 1697

I hope he is happy, but we have lost a very good servant but must submit to that and all things else and since you have bin pleased to approve of my manngement since I have bin heare to make my observations and have given leave to bring your husbantrey in to a less compass and by that means lessed the considerable charge you was at which I am sattisfied would never have made you a rich man, and you haveing a great many children ought not to incorage that which is anyway needless or unprofittable to yourself for which in the end you rather purchess the scorn than the thanks of those you have to do with, I mean such as soun as you have made them able to live without your service etc; and since it hath pleased God to take away Humprey, who I have a great deal of resen to beleve would not have proved one of those, I desire that you and I may consider how to bring that buisness of the gardens in to a narroer compass and lessen that change also which seemes useless and phrefeluss before we put it into other hands; you now so posotively desire my coming to London, which since it must be so I hope will be for the good of me and my family, though I cannot say so intirely to my satisfaction having spent almost 4 years heare with a great deal of care to raise up these younger children who have grone almost taller and stronger since you was heare as you can emagen or think; and now not to be with them if this dangerous distemper should come among them would be a great troble to me which I pray God prevent not but that I know there would be as much care taken of them as those about them are capable off, but I know Eling has passions of all kinds and in any difficulty she is so unreasonably so that it is unaccountable and confusing and distracting to her self and those about her;

**John Spreat and she both I cannot say but that I beleve they would do anything as far as theyr lives do go to serve you or your children without consideration to theyr own intrest or thinking much of theyr paines but theyr bowles are like the rest of those of this countrey, I mean heads which very often wants a bias and a little more consideration to prevent doing any sudden thing which for want of, they are liable to; I ought not to be so vain to tell you that I fear the bias of most of the bowles of this family heare will be wanting when I am gone hence, and thearefore do hope and pray that any exterordinary thing may not happen to try theyr conduct in our absence, in confidence of which , according to you derections and desires if nothing exterordinary prevent I will, God willing, begin my journey towards you Tuesday or Wensday next and I pray God to go with me and prosper my journey and keep all in safety hear.**

On 3 December the 3rd session of the Third Parliament opened; five days later Edward was named to the committee that would consider provision for the poor by organising local schemes.

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London December ye 4th 1697

**My deare,**

**I hope this will find you safely arrived at Ivy-church and our freinds there in perfect health; pray God to conduct you safe to me, and I begg you to lett mee know by yr next what day you intend to sett out from thence, I hope you will compasse the journey from that place in three dayes, yr lodgeings shall bee ready prepared for yr reception, tis at Mrs Halsteds house at the two Pyne-apples\* about the middle of Holborn Row in Lincolns Inn Fields, where I shall waite to receive you, and if it were possible would come out of town a dayes journey or two to meete you, but since that cannot bee, I hope you will excuse mee in that particular; news I have none but what you will find in the Kings speech, and ye inclosed votes, wch with my true love to you, and my hearty service to all the good company at Ivy-church concludes this from yr truly affectionate and faithfull husband Edw Clarke**

\* Now the site of the Soane Museum.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Decembr ye 25 97

**J.S.**

**I only write at present to let you know that blessed bee God wee are now all well together here, and all desire to bee kindly remembred to ye children, to you and Ellen and all freinds in and about Chipley, wishing you together with them all health and happinesse. Wee had noe letter from thence by the last post , but wee hope all is well. I am yr reall freind, Edw Clarke**



*One of the Clarke children - Jepp?*

## TOGETHER IN LONDON.

January 1697/98 - May 1698

*Whitehall Palace burns down - all the maids seem to fall in love with the Spreat brothers - Babette is back with the Clarkes - M. La Roque hired to teach the little ones at Chipley - Edward and Mary suspect Betty has fallen in love - Locke and Lady Masham watch Betty's correspondence -*

### Edward Clarke to Locke **New-Year's Day 1697/98**

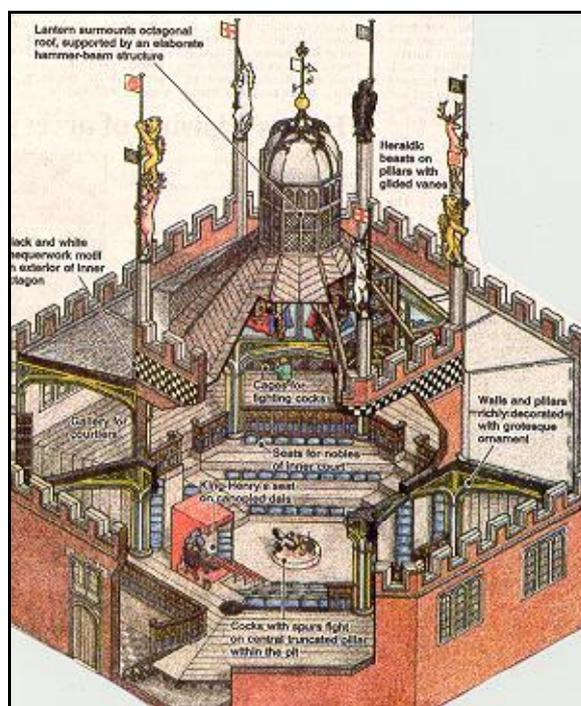
**Dear Sir,**

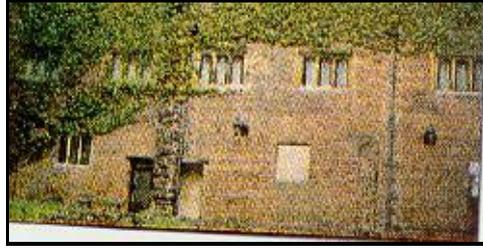
**I have only time to return you Mrs Clarke's, the Bachelor's and my hearty thanks for your obleiging letters by Sir Francis, which I received from him this morning at the Coffee House, and the enclosed were immediately delivered as directed.**

**I will doe all I can to make such a provision as you suggest for the cutting and destroying of all base, counterfeite, and unlawfully diminished money and for obleiging the Tellers in the Exchequer, and all other receivers of the King's revenues and taxes to receive and pay by weight as well as by tale, and doe hope for better success than in the severall attempts I have formerly made to the same purpose.**

**May your health and strength be renewed with the New Yeare.**

On 4 January 1697/8 at four in the afternoon, a Dutch maid lit a fire to dry some linen in one wing of Whitehall Palace, the panelling caught fire and the flames spread rapidly. With the Thames frozen over and water scarce, an attempt was made to contain the fire by blowing up some of the buildings, but by morning the Palace was ashes, only the Banqueting House having been saved. The Treasury offices that Edward knew so well had gone, and business moved over the road to the old Cockpit and gardens of the palace.





*The Cockpit gallery 1997*

On 27 January 1697 Edward paid £32 for 2 black horses.

Edward (Ward) Clarke to Mary Clarke London February ye 18th 1697/98

I am pleas'd to hear my brother Jepp's in breeches: I wish him health and joy in ye wearing of 'em. I wish also yt as all of us have deriv'd our personal likeness from our father and you, so we may have ye same propensity and inclinations to vertue; your being affraid of my poor sister Jeany's crookedness is I hope ye effects only of your great care and concern for her because I cannot but flatter my self with ye hopes of her outgrowing it in time. I'm glad to hear yt my Aunt Venner is upon ye mending hand; pray remember my humble service to her, and to all my acquaintance, and particularly to my cosen Bleuett and Mis Baynard, which with my duty to your self, and love to my brothers and sisters is all at present from your ever dutiful son Edw: Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Feb ye 22nd 1697/8  
J Spreat

I receved yours by the last post and am sorry to heare Nans distemper is returned agen I have acquainted Mr Clarke with what you writt and he tells me that her father and mother did both tell him that she have had the small pox, and he beleves you have no need to feare it but how ever you did well to lett her lye in Mrs Burgesses chamber till you did see what it was and by this time I hope you are satisfied there is no need of her being removed to the old house; I beleve I have a frend of yours heare that is able to give better cordialls than Mr Cockcoroone and a remove to be nearer him or him nearer her would be more agreeable to her though perhaps to the ruen of both, and I am apt to think its what she hopes her sickness will acation, theare is a strange fate upon my poor ammerose nussery maids so suckessively to fall in love with the Spritts from Sarath to Cattren and soe on to Nan I hope this will be the last for it is very troublesome in a family as well as to themselves and I beleve nothing but time and seperation can cure it; I dont perceive the young man lays it much to heart for he growes taller and bigger and lookes well upon it, for he must see heare is abundance of pritty young lasses as well as she and perhaps before he came to London he thought theare was not such another in the world, but now finds he was mistaken. Mr Clarke is so weary he cannot write by this post but sends his blessing with mine to all our children with our love and service to all our frends and knaybours which concludes this from your reall frend M Clarke  
Pray burn this as sounne as you have red it.

Edward Clarke to Locke London 1st March 1697/8

The Bachelor is with mee, and Mrs Clarke, your wife, and all the young fry at the Pine-Apples, yours and my Lady's humble servants, to whom wee all desire our service my bee presented.

The weather has been such hitherto until now, that Mrs Clarke hath not yet taken anything for her distemper, but is notwithstanding, I thanke God, indifferently well, and I hope will now bee advised etc

Mary Clarke to John Spreat March ye 10th 1697/8

J Spreat

I thanke you for your constant good intelligence from Chipley in relation to the children and others except Nan Trent who I hope will doe well enough agen if she would but in some mesure be her own phesion, but if she will not I am sorry for it and know not what is to be done for her more then have bin done allredy; I have written to her father twice to acquaint him of her illness, but have not seen nor heard of him since, I sopose he thinkes she is in good hands and wheare she will want for nothing, wheare she is able to doe any thinge or noe thats all one, and he knows tiss my custome to doe my part and I wish she would not indulge her selfe in this folly, as I phancey she doss, till perhaps she may repent it; I have noe newes to tell you but that I have given Rachell warning, she being noe ways fitt for me, she being a very ammorese young lass fond of the fellowes and good for little and for these resens not worth carriage, for I have had enough of that plague allredy and am not willing to pay any more for my experience if I can help it.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London March 29 1698

My request to you is that there may bee some verie good large stone rayسد at Burdenhill and unloaded as neare as may be to that end of the Bowling Alley in the Parler Garden as must be taken down and rebuilt, and when there is enough brought home for that worke you shall have further directions.



*Bowling alley*

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Aprill ye 2d 1698

I receved both your last letters and thanke you for putting soe proper a tune to my songe and Dorcuss I find joynes in the corruss I hope you have taken care to send my things by the next wagon after I writt for I want them; Babett is hitherto very diligent and none of her ill humors have returned I hope she will continue soe yt nither she nor I may have the troble of changing; I wonder Nan should discharge her old servant till she had gott another since she is not willing

to doe soe much for herselfe as warme her own bead, but I sopose it was as good a conveniency for Joann as for Nan to be entertained all the winter quarter till she could gett another place or be able to gett her vittles att least out of one; I have begun my phesick as you will find by Elings inclosed letter and have nothing to ad but that wee have att last hired a Frenchman to teach Jepp and Sammy and any of the rest when theare is occation, he has a good carectter and a promising countinace and I hope he will answare it he has not bin above a month or 6 weekes in Inland and speakes noe English yett, but all French and Latin, soe I have recommended him to you for conversation; he begins his journey from hence Munday morning next in the stage cotch and you are desired in persen to be theare the time of the cotches coming in because he can understand noe body else; if it be inconvenient for you to convay a horss with you to bringe him to Chipley you may order Dick Barber to be theare with one att the time you shall apoynt. I have given Eling full instrucktions how he is to be disposed of when he comes theare and thearefore will say noe more att present about it, Mrs Burgess is to come from her place next week and soe is Mrs Rose and have nither of them gott place noe more than Mr Grassmore or Margrett.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Aprill ye 5th 1698

Yesterday went hence by the Taunton-Coach one Monsr John de Laroque, whom I have taken to teach my children at Chipley. Hee speaks noe English, and therefore I thinke you must of necessity goe yr selfe to fetch him from Taunton to Chipley, which I hope you will doe with the first opportunity after you here the coach is arrived, wch will bee either Thursday or Fryday next, but wch of them I know not; I doubt not but you and Ellen will bee kind to him in regard hee is a perfect stranger and I beleive verie poore; I payd fifteen shillings in part of his coach-hyre here, the remaining fifteen shillings you must pay the coach-man in Taunton, wch is all that I have time to write at present, more than that I am Yr reall freind Edw: Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Aprill ye 29th 1698

I hope you had my 2 letters post in both which I had forgott to say any thinge relating to my bull calfe which I desire Goodman Dening may have before any body; it was in our bargen when he bought the hefer calfe that I should have it agen when ever I had a mind to it therefore if you thinke this a convenient time you may now exchange one for the other, giveing what the other is worth more in mony, but if you think this the proper time to by that of him, I doe not desire to part with my old one, but to keepe them both as longe as I shall thinke it convenient. Since I writt this I have receved the little box which they made Gabrell pay 5s for the carrage or else they would not part with it; if you pay as deare for all the things that doe down I thinke it is the worst way of carrage.

Edward Clarke to Locke London 3rd May 1698

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 29th of the last month came to my handes yesterday, for which I thanke you, and shall readily pay upon demand any byll you shall draw on mee for fourscore pounds. But a greater summe than that I cannot conveniently answere at present, my wife and family being in town, which occasions more than ordinary expense to mee, at this time.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat      London May ye 5th 1698

**J Spreat**

**I think I told you in my last that Jack was safe returned to scoole agen and what I have now further to add is that my Lady Masham have bin in towne a month past and Mr Clarke haveing bin very cirvisable to her in some law buisness to show her gratitude she did very much importune me to go down with her to Otes but I being in a perpetuall corse of phesick could not stirr at present for which resen she would not be denied takeing Betty, who went out of towne with her this morning, and I am now goeing to Chelsey to see a scoole for Molly which makes me conclude in hast, your reall frend M Clarke**

Her parents and Locke began to worry that Betty had fallen in love with someone unsuitable - probably the unsatisfactory son of the Stringers.

Locke to Edward Clarke      Oates 7th May 1698

**My Lady Masham has said something to me concerning my wife. Since she has been here she has been very reserved: if it be her usual temper it is well. If it be present thoughtfulness it is worth your consideration. How I shall carry myself to her you must instruct me, for I love her, and you know I am at your disposal to serve you.**

**She tells me she thinks Mrs Clarke mends. I am very glad to hear it, and am the apter to believe it because she says she is very observant of the Doctor's rules.**

Locke to Edward Clarke      Oates 13th May 1698

**I received your two of May the 10th just now, and have had time just to read them over and in haste to answer what relates to my wife. My Lady and I have as strict an eye as possible over that affair, but there is yet not the least appearance of a letter goeing or comeing. But we do not think your fears or our care discharged by that; if there shall be any such we presume they will not escape that care which is taken to discover them. If there were any amour begun which your letter makes me suspect, yet the breakeing of the correspondence soe early in an age like hers may at this distance probably make it die. This I say is probable, but not to be presumed on. There is never soe much cunning and opiniatry as in these cases where the affection is once engaged, and therefore I cannot blame your caution, nor bethinke my care and attention if I can doe you any service in it. For I should for her sake as well as yours be very much troubled if any such irremediable misfortune should befall her.**

Locke to Edward Clarke      Oates 20th May 1698

**Think not of your children too confidently for fear of negligence of them to their ruin; nor too suspitiously for fear of your owne needless trouble. The first part of this belongs to my Lady and me on whom you have now transferred that care, and we have and doe carefully put on your eyes, but have hitherto seen noething of what you suspected; and we have been soe watchful that if any letter had passed one way or the other I think it could not have scaped us. And therefore the later part of my first sentence I recommend now to you.**

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 23rd May 1698

Dear Sir,

I cannot neglect this opportunity by Sir Francis to assure you that we are here all well, and for aught I can say to the contrary just such as you would have us. There has not one letter passed one way or the other, which we have not with all care imaginable observed, and there has not, that we can find, been the least intention or endeavour to write or send any one secretly, and whatever have passed one way or other there has still care been taken that they should first come to my Lady's hands or mine. You will do well to observe, too, at your end (if the people are soe near) as well as you can.

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 30th May 1698

I have acquainted my Lady with the acknowledgments you make to her on occasion of your daughter, to which she replied that she is extremely glad of her company, and she hopes she shall enjoy it as long as you and her mother can spare her, and she takes it for a favour that you would use that freedom with her.

The last Friday the letters came not till after my wife had writ and sealed hers to you. Upon the opening and reading that which was directed to her by you the blood came suddenly into her face and she was in great disorder, and with a kind of rage broke open again the letter she had writ to you. This I have learnt since from one who saw and observed it. I name you the day that you may recollect what was in that letter to her, or in hers to you or her mother, and by either of these consider whether you can gather anything. If there were in the letter which she at that time received anything said to her about your removing your lodgings, or the like, you may possibly from thence have some further light into the matter you suspect.

On 8 June Peter King, grandson of Locke's uncle Peter, and son of Jerome King, an Exeter drysalter and grocer, was called to the Bar. In 1691, at the age of 22, he had published a book about the primitive church and although he was indolent by nature, Locke encouraged him to go to the University of Leyden and give up trade. Locke began to regard him as his heir.

## ISAAC HEATH COMMITS BIGAMY

June 1698 - January 1698/99

*Isaac marries Rose - Mrs Spreat lodges at the City of Norwich alehouse - Gabriel Spreat gets a footwalk - Molly goes to Priests school - Edward elected again - Betty visits Kensington Palace - a merry Twelfth Night - Mary thanks God she is not pregnant again -*

Mary Clarke to John Spreat 15 June 1698

Fryday last Isake arived safe to this place and the Sunday morning following was marryed to Mrs Rose Palmer now turned to Heath, as he assured me the last night for none of our family had the honor to be att the weding nor to know anythinge of it till it was all over he sess he will goe out of towne in a day or 2 to finish some worke that he had undertaken and she is to be left heare upon the same account. I asked him if he desired to live in London or in the countrey he sed he could not tell, for that she was unwilling to leave her frends and buisness heare; I told him if I was her I would not trust him to goe down without me for that he might marry another wife in the contrey as Mr Wine did, now his hand was in for I veryly beleve he is not certaine wheare his other wife be dead or alive but if she beant he sess he beleves they both love him to well to hange him. I told him he was very happy for some had but one wife all and that did not love for them; Mrs Burgess was att my lodgings yesterday within halfe an hower of meeting Isake but I had the misfortune of not being within and this morning I was told she was to returne agen to Mrs Allens at Mussell Hill, I am sorry to heare theare is such an ill feavor att Langford, I hope you are all very careful to avoid goeing theare or any wheare else that it is for your owne sakes as well as the childrens and mine that am Your reall frend M C

Isake was heare just now and Mr Clarke and I both ordered him to delever all that was in his charge to Eling cleane for that since he came away she could not find some of the things sett down on his note as the sherriffs things, but we did not use your name in ye matter, he sess he will stay a day or 2 theare to cleane and sise the Great Hall and other places that he use to doe; the malt mill and other iron things must be left clene.

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 20th June 1698

I am glad that you can recollect no cause of the melancholy I mentioned in my last to you. I think myself obliged to observe and give you notice of everything I can observe, that may give you light into the matter you are concerned about in that case. The less you can find in it the better I think it is. However I shall continue my eyes as open as I can for your service and satisfaction in the point. But I hope there is nothing to be seen. If any such thing appear, it is a kindness to her as well as to you that you should know it.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat June ye 23d 1698

I beleve she [Mrs Spreat] hopes to doe that by impertunity that you doe the contrary by your sillance I thinke the less you have to doe with her messenger or to say it is the saffer for you, for they say of a secret enemy a man cannott beware but yours is to publick for you ever to make that excuse, what ever makes her soe a bound in tokens unless it be to helpe to pay your deapts the souner yt she may sue you agen in Drs commons for more Allymony I know not

for I am apt to thinke she is not soe full of mony as Margrett reported her to be, nor is in noe service but rather lodges at the sine of the Citty of Norrage which I beleve to be an Alehouse, but I could sounne know but thinke it not worth my time to inquier. I sopose Isake has bin to make her a visitt (though he would not own it) as well as he did Cattren who has since made me a visit. I beleve them visits and to have a wife was his cheef buisness to towne and twas pittie he should loose his labour; pray lett me know when he has bin att Chipley and what order he has left things theare in; I am apt to thinke the foole thought we was soe fond of his service that we should have rather have kept him and his wife to then to have bin without it, but it was enough that we entertained him as a servant when he had but one wife, it would be worss than mad to keepe him now he has too; and I told him last Crismas twelwe month, when he gave warning that if our service was not sufficient to maintain soe good a servant as he without the help of our knyabors we must be content with one that was worss, for the libberty that he expectte of goeing abrode apainting we found soe incovenient that it would never more be given. He might have beleved me if he had pleased, and have stayed on those termes, or turned himself away without incombering himselfe with another wife which I beleve he will have his belly full of before he can gett rid of her agen, unless he showes her a paire of heeles as he did his other; I hope you read what I write about Isake and his spouse to Eling that she may know my mind in that matter and behave herselfe towards them accordingly if he should have the confidence to bringe her to Chipley, I know she has enough to come espetially if she goes to Madam Sandford for whose family they have both a profound respect soe much that when the girles asked them why they was not soe kind to invite them to weding Isake made answare then Madam Sandfords daughter would have taken it ill; which me thought sounds very strange they being a hundred and twenty mile off att that time.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat June ye 25th 1698

Though I have hardly time enough I must tell you that contrary to your desires I have perswaded Mr Clarke to turne the stranth of his intrest on Gabrell, instede of Mr Cary in whose behalfe you writt and I hope you will not be displeased when I tell you he has suckceded and I think I may say he has gott him one of the best gangers places in the revenew tis a foot walke as you desired and a very good buisness, I hope his sobriety industry and fedellity will innable him to performe it, as tis nessesary it should be performed in such a place as those that have bin in buisness twenty yeare hant lighted of such a won; I beleve it will be absolutly necessary for him to goe downe some day the next week and I will take care to subpley him with mony sutfitiant for his journey and soe I have discharged my part and I hope he will come to you in a whole skin and take care never to doe any thinge that may disoblige you or any of his best frends I am your reall frend M Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London July ye 5th 1698

Yrs by ye last post came safe; the Parliamt was this day prorogued to ye 2d of August and tis presumed a speedy dissolution will follow of wch you shall have further notice from yr reall freind Edw Clarke

Edward's seat was precarious and he had to keep local support to retain it. The Parliaments of 1695 -98 were succeeded by three Parliaments that had a Tory element

critical of the King and his Whig Ministers and which wanted to avoid long term military commitments. The army was reduced from 30,000 to 8,000 between December 1698 and December 1700.

While his family was in town there were entertainments to pay for. On February 20 and 23rd Edward's account book records payments for visits to the Play and on 30 June 1698 Edward paid for a visit to the Opera. He also paid Mr Priest and his wife an entrance fee to their school for Molly of £2 4s 0d and had to buy a sylver spoon for school costing 10s 0d.

John Freke wrote to Mary on 14 September with a "*fair and good proposal for your eldest daughter. But then you must not disease him again by showing an unwillingness to come to town on that occasion, for the man that I have in my eye is a man of business that can't have leisure to go into Somersetshire to seek or court a wife*". But meanwhile Mrs Stringer must have been hoping her son would marry Betty, for on 18 March 1699 Thomas Stringer wrote to Edward Clarke "*that his wife's proposal of his son for Clarke's daughter was without his knowledge and contrary to his opinion until he see him in a post advantageous to him*".

Mary Clarke to Ursula Venner July ye 14th 1698

I return you many thanks for your kind letters and am very glad to heare that you are arived safe at Bath and do heartily wish my health and circomstances would permitt me to come down that way to Chipley that I might wait on you theare wheare I wish you all the sucksess you can hope for or desire; but if Mr Clarkes time would give him leave to come that way I am so unfortunat as to be very latly proscribed the use of outward appleycations to my leggs after haveing bin in a corse of phesick allmost ever since I came to town some times in hopes of being better and sometimes not; though I thanke God I find my selfe stronger than I did, yett my leggs swell still and I know not when they will do otherways yett I must be content to waite theyr motion a little longer in the meantime I should be glad to heare of you and your health that am your most affectionate sister and servant M Clarke

Edward Clarke to Ursula Venner Chipley August ye 1st 1698

I have nothing of news to send you hence but that at Taunton I was opposed with all ye mallice and industry and by all ye ill practises that ye united strength and influence of all the gentlemen of these parts, appeareing personally with Mr Portman and joyning with that ungratefull and scandalous corporation could invent, or the Devill himself could suggest, but notwithstanding all, had not ye Mayor been perfectly overawed and frightened by the presence of soe many gentlemen, and allowed severall that had noe good right to vote for Mr Portman, and had I had justice done mee, I had infallibly carryed it agst him, whereas hee had the majority now by two and Mr Speke and myselfe haveing an equall number of rightfull voters viz: 300 each, the Mayor will return us both, soe that now the House of Comons must determine this election, where I hope justice will be done to the town and allsoe to, yr truly affectionate brother and faithfull friend and servant Edw Clarke

Edward and Speke were opposing Tory Sir Harry Portman in the election; it was so closely fought that Portman received 300 votes, Speke and Clarke 298 each. But it was complicated by the fact that the Mayor had returned Clarke with Portman, forcing Edward to defend himself against the Whig Speke, if he petitioned. If Speke petitioned against Edward, Edward would have to petition against Portman, which he was reluctant to do because Speke refused to shoulder any of the cost. In the event no petition was forthcoming by the end of the year but the tensions in the Whig camp were exploited by the Tories.

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to John Spreat London August the 9th  
Mr Spreat

I have not news enough to make a long letter therefore I make this bargain, before I write a line more, that if this proves very shorte you should not take it as a peece of unkindness but purely for want of a subject but however I will indeavour to make it as long as I can possible. Two days agoe, I was at Kensington to see the Kings and late Queens House, every thing is certainly as fine as can bee imagined, the rooms lofty and statly, the furniture magnificent and the gardens a perfect paradise, and amongst the rest of the fine things there is a noble present from the King of France, (since the peace) to King Wm, it is the largest looking-glass that ever was seen, wth a frame of glass inlay'd with blew and gold, and alsoe a table to stand under it, suteable to the frame of ye glass, the conveniency of the table is to read or write on, but as it is impossible for me to discribe ye fineness of every thing there, soe it is impossible for me to tell you, how dismall the poor Queens apartment looked for want of her to grace it, and by his Majesty's order (since her death) the house has been all turned and his coach goes in by another court, he not being able to bear the sight of any thing that belong'd to her lat Majesty. Above stairs alsoe a dore is nailed up between his and her apartment (that was). I believe I have tired you but I must tell you that Mrs Burgess Mr Grassemare and Margret are still discontented and roving. A punishment for people that wont know when they are well. Adieu I am Pom your reall friend E Clarke

Pray give my duty to my father and my true love and service to my brothers and sister and alsoe to all those in our neighbourhood whom you thinke my friends. Pray remember me kindly to all the servants at Chipley but in perticular to Mrs Ellin. My service to M La Roque, not forgotten Punch, Treloy and Kity. When you see your father and mother remember me most kindly to them.

I must add that every thing in the Queens apartment stands just as it did, and as she her self placed it and for fear their should bee any mistake, as soon as she dyed, it was all sett down in a book, where and in what manner it stood; the thoughts and consideration of which has make my mother soe melancholy that I believe nothing but the sight of my father can remove it. I hope Gabrill does well in his new office which he had soe much sett his heart upon, when you see him, pray tell him I wish him health and that hee may goe on and prosper etc. My mother had a letter from him but he did not say how she should dereect to him.

Since this is to bee inclosed in a letter of my mothers I do not (as you may perceive) mind in what form it is writt. I shall therefore tell you that this summer has been the most cold and raw one that ever was known, lett me heare whether the farmers in the country have been able to pick out such weather as to make a tolerable harvest. My brother and sister in town give you their service

and my brother and sister at Chealsey are mighty well and I thinke love each other as well as ever, I believe Jack is very good natured for he is more kind to me then any of the rest. I am sure according to our country compliment tis more his goodness.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat London August ye 6th 98

I receved yours for which I thanke you and alsoe for the complement you thearein made me, which I know to be such, being cencible that I am soe useless a body that I cannott be wanted any wheare espeshally att this time att Chipley, theare being nothings that agrees with me soe little as a hurry and yett has bin my fate often to be ingaged in, but now I am growne old and worren out can beare it worss then ever, but I have don my part, provided other to subpley my place won under another as they are wanted, I hope they will be fitt, I wish they may; that I may have nothing to doe nor to say in this troblesome world; but I doe att the same time as I write this though I am very full of the spleene thinke it imposoble to be in att that rate that am your reall frend M Clarke  
My blessing to my children and service to all my frends,  
the mony is left for your wife when she please to call for it

Mary Clarke to John Spreat August ye 23th 1698

I thanke you for your letters and for your newes and am very glad Isake came a day after the faire, and indeed if he had come sounner he could not expectt more from his Master then he has allredy done for him; who has gott soe fine and industrose a wife can want for nothings else now I thinke. My sister write that Mrs Betty Sandford with her sister hath made her a visitt but I heare nothing of the brothers being theare. As to my own health I can give no other account of it then that it is much as it was, and for 3 weekes after I wore the last bootes I thought my legs was much less but for this last fortnight they are much more swollen soe that I am now takeing some purging phesick agen and cannott sett the time of my coming home as yett, nor can I emagin what difficultyes you labour under that I can remove unless it be the name of the cheefe servant in the house which I thinke belongs to the Mistress when she is att home, for now you rise when you please and goe to bead and are never asked how you spend the day; perhapes you are refused some times by those you speake to and the buisness left undon, and the same fate have bin mine, and will be agen when I come I dont doupt; then what are you or I the better for this that I am sure I shall never be able to help when I am theare which is a little disharting to me, but if theare be any other difficultyes pray let me know it, that I may thinke how to arm myselfe with a defence against I come.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat London October ye 13th 1698

I thanke you for all your kind letters perticularly the last to Betty and me though it brought us a very malloncoly account of my sisters indisposition but I hope by this time the worst is over; Mr Clarke and Betty writt to her the last post and Betty desines to troble her often since it is soe agreeable; her father haveing furnished her with pens and inke and wax and I with paper and seale and she being able to make us of them theare is nothing that can hinder; I am glad to heare Mrs Buck and her sister and daughter got home safe as to my coming I know not the time at present but I beleve I shall make a yeare, for I now hate the feteage of travelling or anything else indeed, now I gow old; for

which resen if your remember I was allmost 4 yeare talking of coming to London and theare fore I wonder you should thinke it strange to be less then one in comeing from hence wheare my husband and the greatest number of my children are which I must leave amonge all strangers when I goe hence and those in the country with you I am satisfied are in good hands and indeed the care of provideing for every one heare in theyr turne takes up soe much of my time that I know not when I shall have a vacancey to leave them, in short my family is soe divided, that I know not how to devide or dispose of my selfe, for all my childrens good or my owne satisfacktion; if Gabrell did me justiss in giveing you a true account of my manner of liveing you will not wonder att what I wright that am Your reall frend M Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat October ye 22th 1698

J Spreat

I hope mine by the last post came safe to your hands and have sett your mind att rest by sattisfing you that I took all you writt in relation to Mrs An in as good part as you writt it, and am intirely of your opinion that if they was both well marryed it would be the best way of disposeing of them at this hight and bigness; but as I told you before good matches are hard to be found and we must dispare of any for ours since my neighbours daughters have stayed so longe whose names cannot be mentioned under 19 thousand pound apeece; but now we talke of matches I had forgott to tell you that Isake told me when he was in town that one Mr Worth of a place called Worth a young gentleman not far from thence had bin inquiring much after Betty and when we should come into the countrey, pray is there any such persen or have you heard anythinge like it for Isake have such a kind of droling way and have behaved himselfe att such a rate of late that I know not when or how to beleve any thinge he sess.

I am glad the little boyes excepted my letters soe kindly and that all my frends att Holcombe are well and to come to the old subiectt agen I phancey you are more right in everythinge then in Mrs Anes naturall temper which is much more open and free then any of the rest; the most reserved I phancey are Ward and Molly, for the rest of the helpless ones I cannott gess att yett, but by experience what ever you thinke I am satisfied the age of those that are now with me are the most helpless and requier more carefull and dilligent looking after then when 3 years old for att that age if they fall down and breake their forheads a little Hungary water and bitt of brown paper will cure it agen but now if they make one false step it may be of such consiquence to them and those that are concerned for them that nothinge can cure it, and it is allmost impossoble to convince those that are men and women in theyr own conceits but that they know much better then those that have lived longer in the world and have more experience.

Ursula Venner to Edward Clarke No ye 8th 1698

Dear Brother,

I thank God I have bin more eassey in my ears, teeth and gums this 3 days than I have bin since before Micallmas, but there still remains some simtoms of it, which keeps me in perpetuall fear of ye return of it again, which I pray God to prevent, I have taken this oppertunity (in my bed) to return you, my sister, master Edward and my cozen Betty my hartty thanks for all yr obliging kind letters and for all yr prayers.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Novembr ye 24th 1698

By the death of Richard Ewans, (late officer of Chard) I have made use of that opportunity to remove Mr Bovett from the Out-ride of Bruton to Chard in the place of Ewans, whereby yr former request in his behalfe of bringing him nearer his family is answered; and I have alsoe obtained from the Board, that Henry Michell present sup-numarary under Mr Thompson, bee made officer, and supply Mr Bovetts place in Castle Cary, by wch meanes yr desires are likewise answered in the making Michell an Officer in full pay, (though not in Ewans his place) and Mr Bovett verie well accomodated likewise, I know you will not fayle privately to make Bovett sensible of the kindness showed him in this poynt. As to Mr Rich Smiths intentions of complayning to ye Lds of the Treasury touching his being discharged the service, I can only say at present, that I wish hee would, but desire you what ever you heare, to say little about it, otherwise than by giveing mee an account thereof.

In one of my last lett last weeke I told you that upon yr request of mee, I had had the good fortune to make Thomas Champion an officer in full pay in Mr Panes collection.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Novembr ye 26th 1698

J Spreat

I received yours by the last post with one from Eling with a bitt of cloth in it, as I desired for which I thanke you; the K is not come yett who is in just such circomstances as you mention, but God be thanked he has busselled threw it very well hitherto and I hope will continue doe to do in spite of all his enimmeys.

And I wish to God I could bringe all my family and afaires together that it might be for the good and sattisfacktion of every body and the ease and quiett of my selfe, who some times am soe weake and disperritted with the feteage I am forst to putt my body and mind into for them all that I can hardly support my selfe and methinkes nothings could be a greater ease to me then to lye downe and give up the goust, but then the thoughts of what my children would doe without me makes me pull up my sperritt agen and indevor to rubb on as well as I can; I am just now the only one of my family att home, Betty being gone to the play with Mrs Levens and Nanny to the pastrey cookes and Mr Clarke to the funerall of one Mr Nelltrope soe that I thought to have had all this afternoone to my selfe but have bin pestered with impertinant visitters which hindred me.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Decembr ye 1st 1698

Sunday last I had the inclosed letter from Chelsey upon the receipt of which I sent to find out Mr Clarke wch att last by good fortune I did about candle light who then went to Mr Shipton to goe with me the next day but found him in his bead ill of the gout, soe was forst to imploy a new apothecary to goe with me upon which account with much difficulty I did then prevaile with Mr Clarke to goe too it being much more sattisfacktion to me as you may emagin being better able to resoule when I came theare how to steare my corse, we found her much out of order and the apothecary advised us to bringe her to towne which accordingly we did the next day he gave her a vommitt being Tuesday and this day she has taken a purge and I thanke God is much better I am cheefe nurss and haveing not won about me that I can depend upon in sickness if att any

other time, for Babett is noe changling and the others are younge though vast bigg and tall, thus you see how my cares increase and multiply for which resen I thinke I deserve your pittie rather than your envey though I hope never to be in a state to requier yours or any body elses if please God; I am mightily pleased with my new apothecary and beleve him to be a man of great judgment and care and I hope Molly will be well agen quickly which will be a great comfort and ease to me that am Your reall frend M Clarke

We have latly had a present of potted woodcockes from Mr Carwethan and another from Mr Aram but nither of them to compare wth Mr Tomsons by the last winter which was really very fine.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London 3 December 1698

Yr mistress telling me how much you are concerned for the Kings safe return I cannot but give you the satisfaction of knowing that his Majesty landed safe this morning.

The new Parliament met on 6 December, the opening having been postponed from 29 November because the King had been delayed by contrary winds.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Decembr ye 10th 1698

J Spreat

I have receved your letters and am glad to heare Jeppes ear is well agen and I hope Sammys cold is over by this time; Molly is perfectly recovered agen of her illness and have bin abrode thess 2 days but I find not very willing to goe to scoole agen before Chrismass; I am very glad that all the yeares of your life have bin soe pleasent that this last have bin ye fullest of black months, mine have allways bin soe and my circomstances are still such, for one resen or other, that I can have noe prospectt they should be otherways, but I must indevor as I have allways done to beare it with patience being sattisfied that the wise disposer of all things knowes what is best for us; I am sorry to heare my Cozen Bluett have bin soe indisposed of a cold and am very much oblidged to him for remembring me att soe great a distance by sending me some of his brane which I take very kindly, and expect every ower by the stage cotch which did not come in last night as you thought, but I hope will not be spoyled.

Since I writt this the brane is come safe and good and the box of peares came safe yesterday which is all in hast from Your reall frend M Clarke  
This day twelfe month I came to London

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Decembr ye 15th 1698

There is no petition yet delivered to the House agst me, and I am apt to think their hearts fayle them and they will not present any agst me now, if they doe I am pretty certaine it cannot come to tryall this season.

Thomas Baker, an ally in Taunton, wrote to Edward on 28 December 1698 saying " *There are many ill men there whose malice is against you for no reason they can give but because you have been kind to them and fair.*" When Speke stood for the county at a by-election in May 1699 however, the Taunton Whigs "*all forsook him*".

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Decembr ye 18th 1698

I receved yours and have taken this first oportunity to acquaint you that Mr Clarke and I would have you give to the poor of Ninehead and Langford just as you did the last yeare but not add one new one to the number in our absence but what was given to when we was theare to give to now, as you did the last yeare which was twelfe pence to the poore of Ninehead and sixpence to the poore of Langford as I remembr, I thanke God Molly and all the rest are well; I thinke I have forgott to tell you that Mrs Burgess now waits on one Mrs Tomson that married my lady Havershams sone she is about the high bigness and age of Molly her husband is more yn twenty and have chambers in the Temple and Mrs Burgess lyes with her Ladyship at my Lds house wheare they live in Golden Square, Mrs Burges complaines of great difficultyes in her place but I cannot tell how she can find any and if she quitts that I cannot beleve she will find one in London soe well to her purpose.

I am soe trobled with a giddiness in my head this fortnight that the least motion that can be makes everythinge run round.

Annotated by John Spreat *Ninehead £1 9 0* *Langford £1 5 6*

Edward Clarke to John Spreat 24 December 1698

The enemy have not adventured to present any petition against me, and they are now excluded in poynt of time by the Order of the House; I presume twas the regard they had to Mr Portman's election, an the consciousness of their own illegall, arbitrary and undue practises to procure him a majority of voyces and the apprehension of haveing it all exposed upon a Tryall to their utter shame and confusion that deterred them from it.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat St Johns Day 1698

I thanke you for your last letter of newes and for your perticuler inquierry after the gentleman I once mentioned the persen that spoke to me of him was Mrs Jennings the last summer, and told me if Mr Clarke did approve of it she would propose it to her kinsman Mr Trevelion when we did come downe into the countrey and order it soe that he might come to Chipley. I told her I would acquaint Mr Clarke with it but that Betty was young though big and tall of her age; soe Mrs Jennings went out of towne and we staid heare and yt was all that was ever sed or done in the buisness; but how ever I thought it it lay in your way at any time I had a mind to know his estate and carrecter from some other hands, if I should heare any more of it when I doe come in the countrey and I find what you heare to be the same that she sed, but if it be such a dismall place and countrey a woman is just buried alive and would be more happy to marry a shopkeeper heare then a gentleman theareabouts but how ever we that have a great many children must not expectt to marry them all just as we would, and they must indevor to make the best of theyr lott, and I must confess I should be glad to see them well settled in houses of theyr own. The account you give of Isake and his wife is what I expectedt though not soe sounne for I allways thought it would be a very unhappy match, my resen was because I thought he married her thinking she had much more mony then she had, and I know one of his covetous temper would be very uneasy if it should soe fall out. They was both in hast he coming to town but Fryday night and they was married Sunday morning, but now they may have time to repent att leasure.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Decembr ye 31th 1698

I am very glad to heare Sam is soe devout this Christmas time, and that ye poore people was pleased; pray lett me know in your next what the sum came to that was given to the poore of Ninehead and Langford on Crismass Eve, I am sure it is much the easiest way for the family I know not wheare it be the cheapest or not. I am glad to heare Isake is gone too comfort his spouse att last, though my cozen V have lost a companion by it; I wonder he should show soe much countenance to a servant that have bin soe ungratfull to his unkle, but Isake is good att daubin and I sopose longe since knew his blind side; I am glad to heare Mounsr and his pewples live soe pleasantly and make improvement to, I wish he and all else may be soe wise as to know when they are well, and I think he may thanke God he has the use of the gray mare, I know not wheare he will have a better, indeed you are in the right when you say I dont love complaints for I have taken a surfit of them long since; if our old cow still gives milke enough for the house what need we of a hefer to be spoyled by Mr Dick; pray how many gentlemen of that trade have we now imployed in the gardens; I will wright Mounsr and his pewpells very quickly.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Janry ye 3rd 1698/9

Yesterday Sr Edw Seamore haveing a mind to put (if possible) a florish on last cause of his brothers party in ye Town of Taunton, offer'd a petition to the House from Mr Speke agst my election there, wch he well knew, by the standing rules and ordrs of the House, could not bee received, yett their mallice was such, that they hoped thereby to have cast a blemish on mee and my election, though they did well know they could receive no benefitt thereby, but Sr Edward fayled so much of obtaineing what he designed agst mee that his motion was rejected and his attempt served only to expose himself and his party thereby. Give my true love to my children and all my freinds and bee assured that I am yr reall freind Edw Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Janry ye 5th 1698/9

Yrs by the last post came safe to mee wch I thanke you for tho it brought me the surprising news of Mr Friends haveing already recd sixty pounds of you, and his opinion that sixty pounds more will bee of absolute necessity to be expended, tis a great sum, and much more than I could have imagined my freinds would ever have suffered to have been expended by mee, considering all the publiqua and particular services I have done for that ungratefull Town in generall, and almost all the chief and leading men of the town in particular; but it seems those services are now forgotten, and I am now to be punished instead of being thank'd for them and that I am now to have so considerable a sum of money taken out of my pockett for having been at so great an expence allready of money and time in their service; these things if considered by men that would be industriously and well and faithfully serv'd hereafter in Parliament, and not betrayed by such as will allways be ready to buy their favor and sell their liberty and all else thats valuable to them would not be putt upon me to such a weighty degree as tis and I hope the prudent conduct of Mr Friend and the rest of myfreinds in that town, may yett upon 2d thoughts prevent the greatness of the expence designed to be putt upon mee and all the inconveniences and prejudices that will inevitably follow, and in the consequence, will be brought upon them as well as upon me in

this particular, but ( as matters stand) I am now in their power and must submit to their conduct, and cannot go back from what I have already directed, but hope I shall not be put to so great an expence if they will but bethink themselves. Pray offer the substance of what I have written to Mr Frennd, or any others you think fitt, but let it be done wth all the necessary caution the nature of the thing requires, and mention it to no body, but where you think twill be of service to me, and offer it, rather as matter arising from yr selfe, than from me at least at first till you see how they relish it; let nobody see this letter of mine, and pray write nothing touching this expence forc'd upon me by my frendship of Taunton to my wife, tis mortification enough to me already without haveing her diseased by it also.

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to John Spreat London Jan ye 6th 1698/9

Mr Spreat,

I wonder how you can be so obligingly good natured as to ask my pardon for not writting to mee in so long a time, when you know my thanks has been indepted to you about this month for a long, long, letter indeed I am ashamed of it, but (to trust you with a secret) I have had work of great consequence on my hands (I mean) by way of flesh bags, wch you know are nescesary things, and this is truly what has prevented me ; I am apt to think there having bin so many festivalls about the country it must still smell strong of roast beefe, plome porrige and minced pyes, wch without jesting, would be no uncomfortable odour, to us Londoners, but you know the old proverb enough etc, and that I am sure we can bragg off, however that you may not thinke we passed the whole Christmas away without any of its devertions, know that last night\* being the concluding one of the abovesaid good time, we had an excellent great cake out of wch we drew King and Queen, it was my mothers lott to bee F---ll & mine to be Knave, there was amongst us a French ambassador, who when he made his entry, played us all a French trick, without excepting King or Queen, the poor knave was also served in his own king, however afterwards we put ye best leg foremost and concluded the whole wth Duke Trinkilos comfort, a bottle of wine at the charge of his Majesty, who happened to be a good old lady yt lodges in this house & a country dance; now I must tell you that in my life I never laughed so heartily as at your story of Monsieur and haveing a letter that post from him wth very elevated compliments could not beat it out of my head, but that he must have composed yt letter as he was astride his wooden horse, for certainly he could never have thought of such forced compliments had he not been raised higher than any other mortalls in short it is an impertinent letter I have to answer, but I know tis for my advantage to writt French. By the way, I am to tell you that above this fortnight I have had torment of a very great cough, wch I fear will suddenly bring me into a consumption, I desire your advice concerning it, but I fancy you are a docter who have but one remedy for all desseases yt attend out family, yt it the country aire ; I dreamt last night I was in it, and truly this morning I could almost wish my self with you, for I sadly want some none such pens, my brother Ward makes the worst yt ever was, I dispair for do what I can, tis almost impossible to make legiable yt wch I writt, but I will use my utmost indeavour to make this so, that you shall ever be, Pom, to your reall friend at command Eliz Clarke

I confess I wondered to see so many letters, but I believe you'l not be answered this year, nay perhaps not the next. Pray do not forgett to say many pretty things

**for me to my dear little brethren those charming scribes let not Madam Jane be forgott nither, pray remember me most kindly to Mrs Ellin and all the family at Chipley; I wish you all a happy new year**

**Adieu Burn this if you think fitt**

\* Twelfth Night - Christmas started with the Holy Day, then there was a festive New Year's Day, followed by a carnival at twelfth night. A large plum cake had hidden inside it a bean for the King, a pea for the Queen and a clove for the Knave; it was cut into pieces and put in a napkin, then everyone took a piece to find out which character they were for the festivities.

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to John Spreat **London Janry ye 12th 1698**

**J Spreat**

**I returne you many thanks for yr kind letter of ye 28th of ye last month - wherein you bestowe so many kind wishes upon me, as puzzels me how to acknowledge them as I ought to doe; I have nothing new to tell you but yt I beleive those gardens, walkes, hedges and trees, wch you now call poor forsaken things will noe longer be so but will soon enjoy ye presence of those whom you now seem to want, for my mother begins to talke of leaving ye town very speedily; I hope you have all spent yr Christmas with abundance of pleasure and myrth; I begg you to acquaint Mounsieur Delaroque yt ye books he writt about are bought, and my mother only waits for an opportunity to send em home ; thus with my love to my brothers and sister, and service to Mrs Ellen, and all ye rest of ye family, I am and shall continue your humble servant Eliz Clarke**

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

**January ye 14th 1698**

**J Spreat**

**I have receved all your letters and do hope this will find you safe returned from Wells I have no newes nor time to wright more att present then to assure you that the giddiness in my head doss not proseede from breeding, for I thanke God I am not with child; and I do wonder at anybody that can think one should gett more when one have so many allredy that one can hardly steppe for them and those so bigg that makes one allways walke in the shade to be with them; I have showed the world I am not barren and I am content.**

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

**London January ye 17th 1698/9**

**J.S.**

**Yrs by the last post giving an account of yr safe return home from Wells, and your successfull dispatch of yr business there, came safe and was verie welcome to mee, and I am verie well pleased that those who went up with you, came back so totally defeated and disappointed in their designe; I am also glad there is like to bee a good part of the last 60£ payd in to Mr Frend returned again to you, I wish it may prove soe, tho I much feare it.**

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

**London January ye 19th 1698/9**

**J.S.**

**Yrs by the last post came safe; yr notions of the Parliaments leaving the King and Kingdom with a guard of 7000 men only are right, and I pray God we do not soon see and feel the ill consequences of it.**

Edward Clarke to Mr Thomas Jacob (who had begged EC to arrange for him to be payd what was due to him for quartering the Prince of Orange's soldiers)

**Mr Jacob**

Upon ye letter you formerly writ to mee from Ireland presenting ye extraordinary hardship of yr case, I did with all ye interest I could make apply to ye Lds of ye Treasury and many other great men in yr favor, but after many days, weeks and months attendance and solicitation to get the mony pay wch is really and justly due to you, I had a positive answr from ye Treasury, that they had neither authority nor mony wherewith to pay yours or any other debts of that nature, of wch sort many hundred beside yrs have been for many years sollicitd without success, but notwithstanding all these and other former discouragements since ye rect of yr letter from Taunton I have made all possible intercessions againe to ye Lords of ye Treasury and layd before them ye great justice of yr case as well as ye extraordinary hardship, but I could obtayne nothing in yr favor, wch I am most heartily concern'd at, but know not what further to doe for you, if my own life lay at stake; if at any time I can make any further attempt for you, it will be industriously and affectionately pursued by yr reall freind and faithfull servant EC

## MONSIEUR'S ILL BEHAVIOUR

January 1698/99 - April 1699

*M. Laroque does not wish to be thought a servant - Babette leaves in a huff- Edward restores his political fortunes in Taunton - John Spreat and Laroque quarrel - Mrs Spreat's landlady asks Edward for help - throngs of men want places in Excise - Edward asks John Spreat to reassure Mary about repair work at Chipley - more creditors of Mrs Spreat accost Edward - Mr Watson the architect is asked to help -*

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      **London January ye 24 1698/9**

**As to the other part of yr letter relating to Mounsr's behavior, I thought myself obliged to communicate it to my wife, who taking compassion upon the weary and tyred condition I am in at present hath undertaken to write to you by this or the next post upon that subject; remember me kindly to my children, my sister and cosens, Ellen and the rest of my freinds and accept my kind love yrselfe from your reall freind Edw: Clarke**

Mary Clarke to John Spreat      **January ye 24th 1698/9**

**J Spreat**

**I received yours by the last post and am very glad to heare you are all well at Chipley and do desire that when you go to Taunton next you will call at Ms Fends for a little box with bookes in it for the children and a little parsell for Eling sealed up the bookes I desire you will give to Mounsr with the inclosed letter both wch should have bin sent long since; Mr Clarke shewed me a letter he had from you by the last post by which I find Mounsr comes on apace, I am sorry for it but if he dose well by the children some things must be indured; I meant that if he will not be thought a servant, though in effect he is so, let him be thought what he will, it is no great matter but for the childrens supping with him that I dont think at all proper no more than a hot supper to be dressed a purpose for his worshipp it being that which I havent for my self when alone and I sopose when there is anything for dinner that is proper to be sett by of it for his supper she doss it which is all he can in resen expect and if he is unreasonable and expects such thing it doss not agree with our circomstances to allow his remedy is in his own hands, though I confess one would bare all one could in resen with those sort of people because it puts the children so much back to change; I am apt to think somebody or other as Isake or some such underhand illnatured body put him upon these frolickes yt nither wishes well to him or us or else he could not be thus changed in so short time.**

Locke to Edward Clarke      **Oates 27th January 1698**

**Pray return my thanks to your wife for her kind letter, and to my wife for hers. I am glad to hear from her upon any occasion, though that of making excuses for your not writing you need not employ her in. That matter is settled, and it is too much to expect letters from a man that has scarce time to eat or sleep. I wish your pains may be successful for the public good.**

Mary Clarke to John Spreat      **January ye 28th 1698/9**

**In my last I acquainted you that the french and I could not agree noe more heare then you could there, and now I can tell you that Babet and I am parted a second time, she behaveing herself much at the old rate I was forst to give her a months warning and she being soe horred mad to find that I resolved not to**

carry her into the countrey with me, had not patience to stay out her month, or till she had gott another place, but went away in a great huff yesterday morning, I told her I had bin foole enough to take her a second time but I would never take her a third, I wish her a better place but I am sure I cant have a more illnated servant.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London January ye 28th 1698

Yrs by the last post came safe to mee, and am glad you were treated better in Taunton than you used to bee, but am not at all exalted by the Mayor and Aldermens drinking my health soe plentifully as you mention, though tis remarkeable the scene is much altered; and Mr Newman (of the Fountain) who was one of my most inveterate enemyes is now here begging forgiveness for the injuryes he has done me and in the humblest manner imaginable, imploring my assistance to preserve him from prison by the prosecution of the King for the French wines that were lately taken in Mr Whitmarch his waggons etc; the judgment is just upon him, but I that never delighted in revenge, will not make use of the opportunity to use him soe, as he and the rest of his crew used me.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat      January ye 30th 1698

I receved yours by the last post and do give you thanks for your advice to take the countrey aire for the giddiness in my heat which I thanke God is better since I was purged for I beleve I had defered purging to longe but however I am very redy to go into the countrey or with the East India Company or anywhere that may be for the good of my family, being sattisfied that my state and condition will be much the same every wheare it may be wors upon severall accounts, and theare are some sircomstances that I am very sure will never be mended, but I have and will make the most and the best of them that was or is possible for any body to do as long as the flesh and sperrett can hold out.

The first occation of the former discourse between Mrs Jenings and me was her recommending a young lady for a wife for Ward, but I told her that he much to younge and that it was both Mr Clarkes and my desires to marry our 2 eldest daughters first for that I thanked God our circomstances was such that he was able to give them such fortunes as was fitt for his daughters without being forst to marry his sone first and then she mentioned the gentleman family talked of which I perceve you have a good likeing to; and now you know the whole story from the beginning to the ending as much as I do myselfe.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London Febr ye 4th 1698/9

Yrs by the last post came safe I think I forgott to tell you in my last that ye byll for makeing ye river navigable was that day read a 3d time and after a long debate on a clause offerred to be added to it, to exempt Sr Wm Kyle, his heirs and assignes, for paying any toll, and severall amendments offerred to impower the corporation to dispose of the charity money, and to inspect and auditt the conservators accompts, and being upon debate all rejected, there was great opposition by the same party of men to the byll itself, it may be easily guess'd at whose instigation but it was all in vayn, and I carryed ye byll by a great majority agst them, and yesterday carryed it up to the Lords for their concurrence, and by my particular interest there, got the Byll immediately read and ordered a 2d reading this morning, wch was done accordingly, and the Byll

was committed and had it not been for the Bsp of Winchester, I beleive, I should have got it through that House also, by the middle of the next, but the Bsp being as I suppose, writt to from his beloved corporation of Taunton has put what delay he can upon it, so that by order of the House the committee cannot proceed on that Byll till Monday sennight next, at wch time I am assured there will all the same attempts and many in favor of Sr Wm Kyle and the corporation of Taunton, as well in the House of Commons, and the delay is made for that purpose only, the difficultyes will be great but I must contend with them as well as I can.

Edward had presented the Navigation Bill for the River Tone which his constituents wanted and ensured that it passed its third reading by a great majority. Clarke then carried it up to the Lords for their concurrence and got the bill immediately read and ordered a second reading. He finally emerged triumphant when it passed through the upper house. The bells rang in Taunton as it received the Royal Assent. He had restored his political fortunes in his own town, even as the Whig fortunes were fading in the capital.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

Feb ye 4th 1698/9

I would not have you be concerned at Babetts sudden departure for she was grone so troblesome in her humor this 2 or 3 months that the kindest thing she could do was to go away, and I find myself so easey since she was gone that I beleve I shall with much difficulty be perswadd to take another, if at all, I have the offer of severall that has great carrectters but have taken such a surfitt of maids that the very name makes me sick, I beleve I shall now take the advice that I remember Eling have formerly given me to keep no maids but all of the other sex, for I am sattissfied if I should light of one good humored she will be good for nothing and if she be good for anything she will be so imperious and ill natured that it will be insupportable for this, this has bin my fate hither to and I cannott expectt now it would alter, and the greatest pleasure I have is when one goes away to order the matter so as to live without takeing any in theyr place, but if theare is a nessessaty of takeing one in Shaddockes place I desire it may not be into the house but so as we may be rid of him in a short time if I dont like him for I allways chuse people you know by theyr fiz as well as theyr carrecter; at this distance you know it is impossoble thearefore must leave the manngement of the matter wholly to you and so doss Mr Clarke I am your reall frend M Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat February ye 7th 1698

I have payd yr wife another quarters alimony due yesterday by a waterman that she sent wth a rect to mee for it.

Edward Clarke to M Laroque Feb the 9th 1698

Mr Laroque

I recd yrs by the last post and am sorry to find that those few I have left in my family have not government enough of their pasions to live quiett together for their own sakes as well as mine; I confess letters of this nature I have not been used to meet with from home, to interrupt my business there, and there fore am at a loss how to give you better satisfaction in any thing that I have done already;

as for the order of my family I have put them in the best method I could dispose to myself and am sorry that you and John Spreat who I hoped would have set all good examples of quietness and everything else should show so much the contrary, and that he should take upon him to lend my horses without my leave or knowledge and having no authority to lend them to any body, I haveing left now but what is barely sufficient for my own affairs. To prevent any trouble of this kind for the future (which I could not foresee) I have written to John Spreat by this post to make up yr acct and a particular of what money has been laid out for you or you have already had and have ordered him to pay no more of my money nor lend my horses or any other of my goods to anybody without my direction and therefore where there is any now of yr sallary due to you, if you have any occasion to have it paid here in town, if you please to write yr orders in English I will take care it shall be done without your troubling or endangering you self to ride to Taunton or any where else; and if you want any of yr money in the countrey or a horse upon any reasonable occations, if you write to me for it, I shall give my orders accordingly, but I dont allow John Spreat to lend my horses without my knowledge or to pay my money without my particular order and therefore I think he ought to beg my pardon for that as well as God for any insolent expressions that may be taken from him in passion. What you meant by his ordering you to eat yr supper in the kitchen of the house with the servants I do not understand, for when I and my wife are in the countrey, we eat the same with the servants, indeed we eat first and they eat what is left and I supposed you have the same and if you are not in the way at that time Ellen has my order to sett by what she thought convenient for your supper without any confining you to the kitchen and therefore that which they formerly called Isaacs room, or the little Hall which are the rooms we use ourselves when at home, and certainly you do not expect a cloth laid and a hot supper to be ordered on purpose for one person, and if you do, tis what I never did nor will; I thought yr business was to take care of and to improve my children, as I doubt not but you have and will do as you say like an honest gentleman, according to the carectter that induced me to take you into my family; at first I thought upon all duties you were very easy and well satisfied, and if you make yourself proficient in English for nothing else but to carry on quarrells, I think you had been better not to have made progress but I hope you are one of better principles than to lett the sun go down upon yr wrath, and by this time you are all friends again, and that you will live in love and charity one with another that you may be the better able to do your duty towards God and Man. In the meantime pray lett me hear now more of cutting throats in my family, it being what is very uneasy and unacceptable, and will be the highest disobligation you can put upon yr friend and servant Edw: Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London Febr ye 9th 1698/9

Pray remember me kindly to Edw Weekson ye Mason and lett him know that I have ye same respect and kindnesse for him as ever, and shall willingly imploy him in cureing the defects in the stonework of my house, and therefore desire you treat particulary wth him about it, and send mee his proposalls wth ye first convenient opportunity, give my true love to my children and Ellen and all freinds, and accept ye same yourselfe from yr reall freind E.C.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London Febr ye 11th 1698/9  
J.S.

Yrs by the last post came to me with that by ye former post relating to Mounsr's ill behavior, and I had another letter from him by the same post upon the same subject, to wch I return'd an answer by the last, and my wife therein sent you a copy of what I writt to him, the sight of wch upon consideration I know will be a sufficient direction to you how to behave yr self in all things relating to him, without my writeing any particular directions to you on that subject, wch indeed I am not able having neither time nor opportunity to do it, being almost worryed out of my life with business of one kind and another, and therefore I submit that matter to yr prudent conduct for the future, and by good manangement I doubt not all mischief will be prevented, at least till I can get another to teach my children, that will behave himself with more modesty, civilyty and morality than he does.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London Febr 14th 1698/9

I have great reason to beleive that ginneas will be forthwith reduced to 21s 6d a peice and therefore advise yr immediate parting with what you have of mine by you, and to take no more for me at that rate unless it be where you thain the debt in danger.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London Febr ye 16th 1698

Yrs by the last post wth yr accott of what hath been payd and disbursed by you for Monsr's use came safe to me, wch is all that I have time to write at present more than that I am yr reall freind Edw Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat      Feb ye 18th 1698/9

I am glad to heare you and Mounsr are reconciled agen upon the receipt of Mr Clarkes letter for now theare is peace abroad tis pittty theare should be civill warrs at home; I am certaine Mounsr could never make all this stir of himself if he was not incoraged by somebody or another thearefore pray observe who it is he holds most corrispondance with in and out of the family, and ask Eling if she did mind any perticuler body that he seemed to consult upon the receipt of Mr Clarkes letter or show it too, and if one could find any one that had seen or that he had advised with upon it one might make some guess; I can say no more at present haveing taken phesick today though I beleve to little purpose for my leggs are never but swelled, that am in hast, your reall freind, M Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London Febr 23 1698/9

The Taunton Byll I have now got through both houses, there remaines nothing now but the Royall Assent to make it a compleat Act and that I doubt not of obtaining the next time His Majesty passes any Acts, and I question not but it will prove a verie great advantage to all parts of the countrey as well as to the Town of Taunton, and the Parls next adjacent; pray remember me kindly to my children and all my freinds and be assured that I am theire and yr reall freind Edw: Clarke

Amidst all this business, there was some time for entertainment, as on 20 and 23 February Edward paid for trips to the play.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat      Febr ye 25th 1698/9

It is come into my head to tell what happened the other day heere came a middle aged woman who looked like one of the middle sort to inquier for Mr Clarke, but he not being to be found heere she marched to the Excise Office and there she asked him if he had not a married man in his family whose name was Stroud, he sed noe, but he had one whose name was Spreat that was divorced from his wife she sed she beleved that was him and that his wife had bin for some time with her and owed her a pretty deal of mony but now she was gone, she could not tell wheare, and desired Mr Clarke if he could tell her wheare she was and how she should come by her mony, he told her truley he could tell nither, she sed she had told her when she lodged in her house that he owed her a good deal and that she had a thousand pound to her portion and that she had mett with very sad usage and such sorrofull storreyes that the woman had not only bin so kind to receve her into her house but had lett her have severall of her things, and at last she whedled her so that she had let her have her weding ring which she pawned before she left her, the woman was in a very sad case and beged of Mr Clarke to let her know wheare she was or how she could come by her mony, he told her he was very sorry she had bin so cheated by her for that he owed her nothing nor did he know wheare she was but that he new her hand and when she writ for her mony and sent a receipt with it he paid her for her husband and it was about 5£ a quarter and when the next quarter was due if she came with her he would pay her in her presents and then she might get the mony which was all he could do to help her, she sed she hoped her husband would pay her but Mr Clarke told her she must not think of that for she had run her husband so much in dept that he had nothing but his favor to live upon before he was divorced from her and it was as much as he could do to pay her the allimony that the Cort had given her; so the woman looked very silly and what she will do to help herself I know not, but I perceve your spouse go on her old way, of cheating and deceiving people and I beleve will do while she can find any to trust her heere, and when she failes of that she will make you a vissitt and try her frends in the countrey agen, if they will be fooles enough to beleve all the London storreyes she will tell them; for my part I beleve she has not her fellow agen for every thing she out doss the German princes, I think I have writt more then you will have patience to read and thearefore will now subscribe your reall frend M C

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

Febr ye 28th 1698/9

I receved you last letter and communicated it to Mr Clarke who orderes me to tell you that he would have you dispose of the sheep you mention to the first good chapman for that he is grone so fond of my company that he knowes not when he shall part with me, and he shall be very well content with the best mutton that is to be bought for monny when he comes into the countrey; as to what you writt concerning Mounsr confirmes me more that he has some advisers not much to his advantage abrode or that he holds corrispondance with Isake by way of letter, I am sure he writes good English enough to doe it, and Isake is never full enough to carry on the corrispondance with ill desires which is all at present in hast from your reall frend M Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat  
J.S.

London Febr ye 28th 1698

There is hardly any lett'r you write to me that I can (without prevaricating or downright denying the truth) avoyd shewing my wife; neither is there indeed any lett'r whatever wch I desire should bee concealed from her, or kept from her knowlidge; yett since shee is pleased to enter into the consideration of my affayres in generall, and to give me her kind advise and assistance in the conduct of them, my request therefore to you is, that to the end she may be the better able to judge right in anything that is materiall for the future to be directed you will write as fully on the subject, whatever it shall be, as you can; and I desire you particularly to represent (as fully as you can) the necessity of a care of those defects in the stoneworks of the house represented in yr late letr to me upon that subject, in order to preserve the whole, and this I desire to be done to no other end, but that my wife may be the better satisfied in undergoing the trouble that will be necessarily occasioned in the cureing thereof, and to the end there may be no other interpretation hereafter put on this lett'r of mine (in case it should fall into any other hands then yours) than is really intended by me I desire when you have read it over, and digested my true meaning herein, wch I presume you will easily collect, without my using more words, I desire you to burn it and take no notice at all of what I have written on this subject to any body living : I am yr reall freind Edw Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat  
J Spreat

London March ye 4th 1698/9

I have receved all yours as that with ye petition, which petition I have returned to you agen, you lying under a gret mistake when you think that the great throngs of excise men are provided for now theare are a suckcesion of them continually waiting at the office for places that are instructed more by half then will ever have places for I have heard Mr Clarke say that theare is but 8 hundred of that sort to be imployed and he beleves there is allways 16 redy, and they are so importunett and troblesome to the commishiners that they have mad an order of the bord that evry commisshioner shall put in but 2 in a quarter and Mr Clarke has put in his 2 allredy and has morgaged his word for 3 quarters to come so that there is no hopes for this pettioner who ever he be, and besides if theare was he writes such a horred hand that I should not have confidence to speake for him, besides I have heard Mr Clarke say also that he beleves his frends in Somerssettsheere thinks he has none to put in but what they recommend they speak for so many; when he is forst to deny his acquaintance from all parts, he beleves no less then twenty parliament men in a day speakes to him for some or other that they have to recommend so that tis impossoble to answare all peaples expecttation but he bid me tell you he have as much regard to your frends and acquaintance as to any and have put in as many upon that account but to put in men that are all together strangers and never like to be provided for if they was instructed is no kindness to them, but to give others troble and make them lye about in expecttation and waiting for what they will never have till they have spent all they have and so be ruened and undon.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London March ye 7th 1698

Yrs by the last post came safe to mee, with Mr Wigson's draught, which I will consider of, but in the meane time would bee glad to know from him, how much hee designs the stone cornish on the topp of the wall in ye South, East and West front, shall project over ye walls in case I shall determine to have it sett

up of stone with a computation (as neare as may bee) what ye whole charge thereof may bee, and allsoe a computation of what the charge of the rest of the masons-worke proposed to bee done by him to secure ye heads of ye windows agst ye weather may amount to and that hee will allsoe compute what ye charge of caseing the upper story of the West front with free-stone, and putting in the Quina stones of the same will amount to. And I allsoe desire you to consult Mr Goslin or some other able carpenter, what ye charge of running a timber-cornish along ye South, East and West fronts of ye house on the topp of the walls of that nature of that proposed by Mr Wigson to bee done in stoneworke, may amount to; and how much, and what sorts of timber will bee necessary for the doeing thereof; I am verie certaine that a timber-cornish may bee much easier sett on and fastened to ye roofe on ye topp of ye walls then a stone-cornish can bee and I beleive will bee done much cheaper, and that it may bee made bolder and project more over the walls than if it bee done in stone-worke and I am satisfied it will bee done in much lesse time in timber than it can bee done in stone, and I beleive when tis well painted will bee altogether as ornamentall.

And in the meanetime I desire you and Mr Trott to make as good a bargaine with Abraham Turner for what stone I shall have occasion for by the load, and leave the rest as you can. As for the quantity, I know not my selfe as yett how much it will bee, and for the manner of drawing ye stones, it will bee his interest and advantage as well as mine that it bee drawn by Trustram Turner, or who ever else does it in such manner as there may be as little waste as possible, some must bee in blocks fitt for Quina stones, and some for Playne-Ashlare and some for other uses as there shall be occasion. It will certainly bee a considerable quantity that I shall want, and therefore I hope Mr Trott and you will bee able to bargaine with him at a moderate rate by ye loade, to bee rayed to such scantlings as shall be directed by the mason, and to account forty hundred weight to ye load; and give my true love to Mr Trott, and all my freinds, and I am yr reall freind Edw: Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London March ye 14th 1698

Yrs by the last post I recd, but have not yet had time to discourse Mr Bulstrode, touching his having turn'd you over to Mr Lovibond of Cliffords Inn, but will do it wth ye first opportunity, and give you an acct of the result, I am glad Mr Trott and you have agreed for the stone, I hope you pursued my former instructions, touching 40 hundred weight to be accounted a load and ye stone's being to be rayed in such blocks and to such scantlings as I directed.

As to the getting caryage, I hope when Mr Trott and you have consulted together about it there will be some way or other found out that may be convenient for it; if there be ever a good Ox plow kept in Bradford or thereabouts, methinks the ownere thereof should be willing to undertake it, or if Will Mare has ever a good waggon now in use, methinkes he should be glad of such a jobb so neare home, these things I mention only as they occur, but must leave it to Mr Trott's and yr conduct, hoping that you will be able to find some good way or other for it.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      London March ye 16th 1698

Yrs by the last post came safe wth the inclosed for Mr Bulstrode, wch I sealed and delivered to him this day my selfe; Mr Lovibond, into whose hands Mr Bulstrode hath put all his country clyents business, was one of his clerkes now

out of his tyme, is a sober carefull young man, and one who Mr Bulstrode will advise and assist in all his business and therefore I hope nothing of yrs will be neglected or miscarry in his hands.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat 18 March 1698/99

J.S.

Yrs by the last post came safe to me and I would desire you in yr next for reasons mentioned in one of my former letters to you, to write to ye effect following to me viz:

That there is an absolute necessity of haveing the defect in ye house cured, or else the whole will be dayly more and more dammaged, and in a few yeares totally ruined and destroyed; that tho it will be a great trouble, and a considerable expense, yett to preserve the whole tis my interest to have it done wth all the speed that may be, and that when tis over you are confident twill be verie much for my future content and satisfaction; something of this kind may possibly induce my wife to be the more easy in consenting to what is proposed to be done, wch I really think to be of absolute necessity, tis my misfortune there are these defects, but it would be next to madness in me not to have them cured; I hope I have said enough to be understood by you in this poynt.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London March ye 21th 1698/9

J.S.

Yrs by the last post came safe to me, and I am glad to find you and Mr Trott are in so likely a way of being furnished wth stone and carriage from Hele etc

As to severall heads of Mr Wigsons estimate of the charge that the work proposed to be done will amount to, I shall say nothing to at present, but shall consider of it; and if you have in ye mean time an opportunity of discourseing John Bond upon the same particulars, pray take his judgmt thereupon bothe in relation to the manner proposed for the cure of the defects, as well as the charge of doing the worke etc; gett all the information and light you can in the matter from him (or anybody else that hath skill) and I shall be thereby the bettr inabled to bargain for doing the work; I hope you will in a little time have mett wth Mr Gosling, and taken his proposall for making a cornish in timber, and an estimate of what the charge thereof will be; but if Goslin be not to be met withall, then I would have you speak with the carpenter that did Mr Beres workes, I think his name is James Taylor, I take him to be an honest and skilfull carpenter, Mr Bere will give you a further acct of him.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London March ye 25th 1699

I thank you for yr lettr by the last post from Taunton Assizes, which hath allready in a good measure had the desired effect towards rendring my wife easy under the trouble, difficulty and charge of cureing the defects in ye house, and the necessity of doing the worke will I hope prevayle with her, to permit me to go through with it without repyning or uneasiness, and then I hope it will be effected to satisfaction; pray continue to write in ye same strayne, whenever you have occasion to write to me again on that subject, for I see it will contribute much towards attaining those good ends and effects we both so heartily wish and desire for rendring Mrs Clarke easy; I hope by the next post to give you directions for felling timber etc in the mean time conclude with my true love to my children and all my freinds and rest yr reall freind Edw: Clarke

His Maj hath been pleased to favor my request so farr as yesterday to pass the Taunton Byll as a Publique Act, whereby it will remain wth greater authority and credit to posterity.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London March ye 28th 1699

Yrs by the last post came safe, and I think you have done well to ascertain the load of stone in ye manner you have agreed with Wm Turner, wch I hope will prevent future trouble in that poynt; since my last I have consulted the men of skill and experience here, and they all tell me that a timber cornish will be safest and best to be placed on the topp of ye walls, but they all assure me, that green elm is not at all proper or fit to be used for any part of it, so that I have no further thoughts of felling elm for that purpose, at least not now the spring is so farr advanced, and ye sapp so much up in ye timber as it is, but shall turn my thoughts how to be supplied wth proper materiall other ways if possible, of wch you shall have a further account from me as opportunity offers.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat London March 30 1699

I have no newes to tell you but upon the old subject that some days since heare came a man to speak with Mr Clarke and waited at the dore till he came downe; his buisness was to inquire if he had not such a servant as you, he sed your wife had lodged some time at his house and pd him nothing that she owed him five pound or more and that he could not tell how to get the mony, and she had left a bond in his hand of five hundred pound upon her husband, for his security so Mr Clarke walked on and the man followed him, and shewed him the bond and he saw it was the same bond that your wife shewed him in the countrey, so stoping at the end of the garden to give him the bond he told him that he would not give him a farthing for it, for that it was worth nothing she runing you so much in debt before she left you, so as they talked to this purpose another fellow that followed after stood still allso to heare what they sed but sed nothing so Mr Clarke asked him what his buisness was, if it was to follow gentleman in the street to heare what they sed to be in wittness to and called him rascall and held up his cane and looked so angrey that the fellow together with the other fellow that had the bond took up theyr heeles and away they run, so what to make of these fellowes I know not whether they came in theyr one errant or whether they was sent by your wife to wittness what judgment he gave upon the matter and what he sed to it; I told Mr Clarke that 2 to one was ods at football and that I woudered he would run the hasard of holding up his cane so earley in the morning when nobody was stirring hardly in the street; but they hindred him of trotting on and he did not consider what might have bin the consequence .

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London Aprill ye 4th 1699

J.S.

I thanke you for yr journey to Exeter and ye information you gave mee upon yr return from John Bond, and am strongly inclyned to consult Mr John Watson, ye Architect recommended by him upon the character he gives of him, touching all the defects in my house intended to be remedyed, and to take his opinion and advise of the best way and method of cureing each of them respectively, and therefore doe hereby desire you to write a civill letter to him, as by my direction, and acquaint him, that I earnestly desire, (if his other occasions

will permitt) that he will take my house in his way from Fulford to Trent, and view the defects intended to been remedied, and take in writeing, as particularly and fully in every poynt as possible, his advise touching the manner and method of amending of them effectually; and to lett him know that hee shall be satisfied for this trouble in coming over to Chipley and for his advise and assistance to mee in this matter; and if the matter can bee soe ordered as that John Bond can come to Chipley with him it will bee soe much the better; I must recommend the conduct of this affayre to your care, I beleive you must find out a proper messenger to send what letter you shall write to Mr Watson and write a few lynes to John by the same messenger if possible, lett them order the matter soe as to come together for I intend to imploy John Bond in the stone worke together with Nedd Wiggson and therefore would bee verie glad John Bond could meete Mr Watson there or come along with him thither, and write your letter soe, as by the return of the messenger you may know whether Mr Watson can come or not and ye certaine time when he will bee there, that you may bee sure to bee at home and make some reasonable provision to receive him and to discourse him as fully as may bee in every poynt if he comes.

I have the same ill opinion of Goslin as you write of him and therefore shall not I beleive imploy him; and I have the same good opinion of James Butterfield (tho I miscalled him Taylor)\* that I am inclyned to imploy him, if to bee had, before any other carpenter that I yett know or have heard of in the West for makeing and setting up the cornish or ye topp of the walls; and desire you particularly to consult Mr Watson if hee comes to Chipley what materially will bee necessary to bee gott and provided for that service, as to the reward to be given him for comeing over it must bee suitable to ye charge and trouble he is at in comeing soe much out of his way, and the time he spends at Chipley when there; I hope he will not bee unreasonable but will frankly tell you what he expects for comeing over now and for the time hee spends there what he will further expect to see that put in execution wch he shall thinke necessary to bee done for cureing the defects in ye stone worke and windows of the house if I desire his assistance there; I have allmost writt myselve into confusion of thought on this subject and therefore will breake off with my true love to my children and all my friends and rest yr reall freind Edw Clarke

\* John Watson architect (? - 1707) enlarged and adorned Melbury House Dorset in 1692 for Thomas Strangways; his portrait is preserved there.

\* James Butterfield had worked at Escot as a carpenter under William Taylor the architect; he had been apprenticed to Taylor in the Carpenters Company in May 1668.



*John Watson, architect*

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

**Aprill ye 8th 1699**

**J Spreat**

I have receved all yours and am sorry to hear that there is a disease come among the piggs if the bore should have so many reprevs to dy mad att last it would be a sad buisness; I am glad to hear the sidder is bottled off and I should have bin as glad to hear Mrs Lucasses box is come safe to her hands; and now I must tell you that I very much wonder that unnaturall peece as you call her should ceese her clamors of this kind which you must allways expectt as long as she and you do live, and I think it is a great providence to you that she is so far off that she do not come clammering about your eares as she once did when we had company you know, which would put you out of your buisness and do her no manner of good, therefore you may be content to heare of her at a distance and thank god tis no worss; the High Sheriff men you say made a fine figure but pray how was the horses and trappens I sopose Mr Sandford put himself to the charge of sending to men because he would not do less for the honer of his frend then Mr Clarke did for his; pray in your next say which of his men came to that to be sent; I have no newes to tell you but that all the horses in town allmost are ill of great coldes and some they say dye abundance of storeys goes about them but I beleve not half true our horsses are not very bad yett but the cotch man have bin very ill this week off a fever but tiss hoped he will do well agen I am forst to hire another to drive me and look to my horsses; who I beleve would be glad to wear that which we call dead folkes shoes there being a great many of them sort of people out off place pray lett me know in your next if Isakes wife is breeding or not.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

**London Apr ye 13th 1699**

I am sorry Monsr is so indiscreet as to continue to spend his sallary before tis due to him; I was in hope what I had said and done would have prevented his

journey to Exeter, and the expense that will attend it, but I think nothing will make him wiser; you did well to avoyd any dispute or debate wth him about his sallary, but to supply him wth ye 50 shillings as so much money payd him upon account.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat London Aprill 15th 1699

I wish Mr Kitt a good journey if he be going our horses are very well agen they never being so ill as to keep me within for theyr saks, the cotchman is past danger to he being able to crall about but not to look after his horses or drive the cotch; tis very troublesome and chargable both to them and me to have such crasey sort of servants; I am glad to hear Mounsr is returned from Exeter agen in a whole skin, I sopose his stay there was much the shorter for hiring a hors for himselfe; my service to all my frends and my blessing to my children concludes this from your reall frend M Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat Aprill ye 18th 1699

J Spreat

I receved yours by the last post and am very sorry to hear of the misfortune my sister have had in breakeing her arm, but doe hope it being well sett it will do well agen in a short time I have written to her by this post and given her thanks for her kind tokens to the children; I am glad you had anything to send to Holcombe worth acceptance, and am glad to heare my old cow have a hefer calfe which I would not have disposed off.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London April ye 20th 1699

I am sorry Monsr has so little discretion, judgement or gratitude, but time and my return into the country will I hope produce a cure one way or other of what is amiss, and therefore I would have you keep things as quiet as you can in the meane time.

John Spreate to Edward Clarke Chipley Aprill 22nd 99

Honrd Sir

I hope you and my Mrs with the good family are all in good health tho heare came no letter at all from you or my Mrs ye last post.

Here came no Mr Watson nor John Bond nor Mr Barber at the time mentioned in my last (as Mr Barber sent me a letter saying they all would) nor at any time since which I wonder at, and now that I have not seen or heard of Mr Barber since, but I presume a few days will cleare the doubt, in the meantime I have nothing to trouble you with from heare but an acctt of the distemper among the horses all over the countey from which your horses cannot escape but I hope will do well again.

My little Mad and Mis here are I thank God in good health with Mrs Ellen and the rest of this family and we all joyne in the present of most humble duty and service to yr self my Mrs and all the good family where with my continued prayers for your health and safety in all duty concludes this from Honrd Sir yr most faithfully obliged and obedient servant Jn Spreat

Since Mr Leigh has opened and new bound Madam Venners arm she is in a great deal more paine in it than before but presents you with her humble service.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

**Aprill ye 27th 1699**

**I would have the old coves hefer calfe breed and not sold to the bucher nor anybody else and that will take off a great deal of milk so that I must not expectt so much butter and cheese but what can be made I sopose will; I am sorry to hear my sister is in more paine in her arm then she was but I hope all will do well agen, for theare must be paine expectted in those cases. I am sorry to hear Mr Barber have received so much hurt by a fall from his horss.**

## WARD'S ILLNESS

April 1699 - July 1699

*Ward mentally ill - Edward debates Mr Watson's advice re Chipley - Ward goes to Mile End to recuperate - redundancies amongst Excise men - Chipley will not be forsaken - Mary and Edward return to their younger children - Edward asks John Spreat not to tell people in Taunton that he is coming home -*

Locke to Mary Clarke Oates, 28th April 1699

Madam,

I am sorry the remains of any indisposition needs diet drinks or anything else. I had much rather congratulate to you your perfect recovery than talke to you of medicines in order to it. The diet drink you have sent me the prescription of I thinke a very good one, and you will do well to continue the use of it, only if you like the taste of orange pills\* you may for variety put in the yellow thin pareing of three or four oranges. I find not by your letter that you make use of the pills prescribed by Dr Pitt. I think they would be of advantage to you if you now and then tooke a dose of them when you finde your legs most swelled and uneasy. To which give me leave to add one thing which I formerly thought of moment to your health and do so still, and therefore take the liberty to repeat it again, and that is that you would constantly goe to bed early, and if you lie abed pretty late in the morning it will be noe harm to you. You know what an excuse custom and concern make for the liberty I here take. I long to have you perfectly well. I hope the weather and my lungs will consent in a little while to my waiting on you in town, though it be yet cold and winterly weather here, and I write this by the fireside. In the meantime I cannot but approve of your resolution to avoid those things which you find prejudicial to your health. I have but too much experience that without it other things here are but of little value. And therefore I always count the preservation of health the best piece of husbandry.

\* pills - an obsolete word meaning peel.

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 28th April 1699

Dear Sir,

It was very kindly done to send me the welcome news of your safe arivall by the next post after you came to town, though I can excuse a friend from such civilities who is every day tired out with businesse. I hear you were ill again with your cold upon your return to the air and fatigues of London. If you continue soe, come hither again. It was that which Sir Francis, my Lady and everyone here said, as soon as they heard it. Remember doeing of businesse will end in the grave, and before, too, if you neglect your health. Therefore, I seriously presse it on you to come to Oates again if you are disordered where you are. I shall not tire you with long remonstrance in the case. My advice is friendly and good, and you were best follow it.

The above was written, as you will easily guess, before the receipt of yours of the 25th, and I know not anything in my whole life that hath more sensibly stricken me than the news you send me in it. Upon consideration of what you there say I thus reason. Melancholy is either from the mind or the body. That from the mind must have its foundation in some affliction, some weighty cross or other. There being no such here I conclude it oweing to the body, and

that therefore applications must be made to that part. My advice therefore is that Dr Pitt, or anyone else whom you can be informed is most skilled in such kind of distempers be presently consulted, and he immediately put into such course as shall be directed. For if according to your discourse with me when you were here there be noe secret cause of discontent, as I imagine there is not, I conclude you will in vain endeavour to direct his mind by travel or anything else when the cloud it receives is from the humors of his body. This is what seems to me fit to be done. If anything else occurs upon ruminating again upon this case you shall be sure to have it from me, for I am, dear Sir, yours perfectly J.L. Pray return my thanks to your son John for his civill and excellently well writ letter.

*(Mr Locke, touching my son's indisposition etc. Received the 1st of May 1699. Answered fully the 2nd.)*

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London May ye 2nd 1699

Yrs by the last post with Mr Watsons proposalls for cureing the defects of my house, came safe to mee, they seem to me to be right and rationall, but you shall have my thoughts more fully thereupon hereafter.

I had an acct two posts since of John Barber's misfortune by Sr Walter Yonge, wch I am heartily concern'd at, but trust in God he will recover, and do well againe; I rejoyce to hear that my children and the rest of the family at Chipley continue their health, and that my sisters arm is in so prosperouse a way of a speedy and perfect recovery, which blessing I pray God to continue to us all, and desire to bee affectionately remembered to them all.

I approve of yr intended journey to Sydcott, and wish you a good journey and a safe return home again, and good success there; I am yr reall freind Edw Clarke

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 5th May 1699

Dear Sir,

Haveing since my last to you thought again and again on your son's case, and beleiving it then wholly founded in his body, as I doe still thinke it in part, I looking backward step by step as far as I know anything of him, place the original of it in the terrible disease he had when a child at my Lady King's. I am glad to finde by yours of the second that you have found the immediate cause of this last dejection to be from some desponding thoughts of himself. But what is the cause of that despondency in this one of all your children, when all the rest have vigorous and active minds? Must not that have its rise in the body, and be oweing to something out of order there. I say not this that you should presently put him into a course of physick, but to give you occasion to think. In the meantime apply all the quickening you can to his minde, ease and raise that all you can, and trie how far it will work: this is the easiest, safest and best way upon many consideration if it will doe. There is nothing now that presses for the other, the step that is made that gives us time to look about. I write this confusedly and in much haste, our letters coming not to-day till late in the afternoon and giving me not time to explain myself at large. For when I hear from you again I thinke I shall be able to satisfie you that, if you shall think there is any need of physick, it must not be in the ordinary method that is in use in cases of melancholy. Therefore, if he should, upon the unsuccessfulness of all the ease and comfort you and his mother can give to his minde, fall back again,

(which I hope will not be) and that you should think physick necessary, I would be glad you should hear me upon that subject before he take anything or be put into anybody's hands. But I wish he may need noe other physitions but you and his mother and other well-advised and well-advising friends. I am, Dear Sir, your most affectionate humble servant, J. Locke

My service to Madam and all the young folks, particularly with great kindness to your son.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat May ye 6th 1699

J.S.

My lettr to my sister by the last post gave an acct of the Parliament being prorogued to ye 1st of June next; I have by this post sent her the votes of that day, and herein send you the Kings speech at the conclusion of the session, wch I think justly deserves admiration, and I hope will convince all men of the errors that they have comitted in this last session, that so they may be retracted if possible in the next, which I most heartily wish.

Locke to Edward Clarke Oates 8th May 1699

Yours of the 2nd I answered last post, and hope that the success of yours and Mrs Clarke's applications to your son's mind makes it not necessary to think of any of another kind. I shall be very glad that that may prove effectual. According as I hear from you in your next you will have my further opinion, and I shall be very much pleased if I can be serviceable in the case.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

May ye 16th 1699

J Spreat,

I receved yours and am glad to heare you are all well att Chipley, and could wish Mounsr had held on as he began, but theare is nothing certain in this world; his desires of preaching he had communicated to Mr Clarke, which you will see by the inclosed, which I gott leave of Mr Clarke to send with his answare that you may the better know how to steere your corse, but I must desire that you will carefully returne the one and seale the other with all privecy, and then deliver it to Mounsr as I inclosed to you for that purpose, only pray mannage so that Mounsr may never know the letter came open to you, I wish the troble of packing up and coming home was over, but I am allways doing in order to it and can never have done for my desire is to leave those that stay behind clene and whole and carry those that goe with me so to but I now begin to thinke it impossoble for as sounne as I have done with one it is time to begin with the other; what you say about Sammys hair makes me think it the best way to cutt it close to his head agenn I am sorry you have lost my cow calfe.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London May ye 18th 1699

As to Mr Watson's proposalls for setting up a timber cornish round my house, and cureing the defects in ye windows and other parts of the house, I have duly considered them and also taken the opinions of the learned here in things of that nature; some parts of what he proposes are approved of, but others not, and I thinke tis impossoble it should be ever adjusted or settled as it ought to be by letter, if I did know where to direct to him, wch I do not, but would be glad to be informed, as also when he is to be again in Devonshire next, that I may write to

him, as I can get opportunity, though I think it impossible to settle matters absolutely without his meeting upon the place, which I feare will be verie difficult, by reason of my affayres here, wch makes the time of my being at Chipley so uncertain etc; as for the stone work proposed to be wrought and set over each window in the manner Mr Watson suggested I have resolved to declyne being satisfied the defects in and about the windows may be cured wth much less charge and trouble then that will amount so that I think there will be no need of yr taking any care for procuring stone for that purpose, but blocks of good stone for ye quine stone designed to be put in ye West front must be cutt and scabbled out of ye Quarry at Hele either by Mr Weekson or John Bond's directions that so they may be had to Chipley as there is opportunity whilst the ways and weather are good; my inclynations are to do up the front with Ashlar stone, but if there be really danger as Mr Watson seems to apprehend by what he has said to you on that poynt, I must not do it. Pray God to direct us all for the best in all things, I am sure I am much pusselled in this and therefore will write no more on this subject at this time.

It seems extraordinary that no mention of Ward's illness was made in letters to Chipley for a month after Edward told Locke about it; perhaps Ward had attempted suicide and his parents felt they must keep this a secret as it was a criminal as well as spiritual offence, and only told John Spreat of his illness when it could be rightly described as a fever.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London May ye 25th 1699

I have nothing to send you hence but what is verie melancholly, my eldest sonn being extreme ill of a feavor, wch hath allready so violently seised his head that I question verie much what the consequence may be, my poor wife and the rest of his relations here are under the highest affliction and concern for him imaginable, our hopes are only in Gods goodness who has formerly rescued him out of the mouth of death and I hope will yett preserve him, my true love to my sister and cosens and children with my prayers for you all concludes this from yr reall freind Edw: Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat May ye 27th 1699 .

Yr lettrs of the 22th and 24th instant came both together by the last post, my sonn continues still extreamely ill and ye feaver has seised his head in that extraordinary violent manner, that I fear death, or that wch I think worse, loss of memory and understanding must be the consequence.

You will imagine what a condition such a misfortune may put us all into but a due consideration that Almighty God who gave us all life and understanding, ought without our murmuring or repyning dispose of bothe his pleasure and do what else with us He thinks fitt and I hope and trust in Him that He will support us all under this terrible heavy affliction.

John Spreat to Edward Clarke Chipley May 29 1699

Honrd Sir,

Yr melancholly and surprising letter by the last post came safe and hath filled us all with the deepest affliction at the most unwelcome news of my dear young masters illness, which seems by yrs to be very violent and extream, the considerations arising from it are sorely afflicting and nothing can remaine to us

at this unhappy distance but or hopes that Eternall providence who has hitherto preserved him will yett restore him and raise him up, and comfort and support you, my Mrs and all yrs (in which number we here beg leave to be included) under the greatest trouble and concern for him that we must all needs labour, Madam Venner is in the same circumstances as you will imagine.

We all here and Gunham I thanke God continue indifferently well and joyne in the present of our most humble duty and service to yr selfe, my Mrs and all the good family in our continuall prayers for comfort and support to my deare young Mas.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      **London June ye 1st 1699**  
**J.S.**

Yr letter by the last post came safe to mee, and I am truly thankful to my sister and all my freinds for their great concern and hearty prayers for my sonn, who lyes still indeed in a verie deplorable condition, but the physitions are all of opinion, that his life is not at present in danger though ye feaver continues still verie much in his head, and what ye consequences of that may bee upon his memory and understanding is verie much fear'd and apprehended, but I hope God in his mercy will in his due time restore him again perfect to mee, which wee all heare most earnestly and heartily pray for, as wee do for yr continuance of my sisters, my cosens, my childrens and of ye rest of or good freinds health's, and with our true love and service to them all, and our kind remembrance to every one of the family at Chipley, and my prayers for a blessing upon them all, I rest theirs, and yr reall freind, Edw Clarke

Pray give mine and my wifes particular service to my dear sister, and excuse my not writing to her, it being more that I can well do to write this, wch I hope will be communicated to her.

Edward's day book records numerous visits from Dr Pitt and Dr Tyson; on 3 June men had to be paid for watching Ward until he went to stay with a Mrs Clarke in Mile End. He had been due to go abroad with Mr Moll \*and so Edward had to recompense Mr Moll with £21 10s as well as paying doctors' expenses.

25 May    *Dr Pitt for his advice for my sonn Edward one guinea    £1 01 06*  
 27 May    *My sonn was placed at Mrs Clarke at Mile End Saturday ye Whitsun Eve*  
 3 June    *men to watch Ward before he was removed*  
 7 June    *removing Wards things from lodging in Fleet St to Mr Freke*

6 September *Dr Tyson for looking after Ward and diet    18 01 00*

12 00

<i>servants at Mile End</i>	<i>1 00 00</i>
<i>Mr Moll</i>	<i>21 10 00</i>

8

\* An entry in Edward's day book says Mr Francis Moll at Mrs Fulhams house over agst ye glaziers in Charterhouse new building.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      **London June ye 3rd 1699**

Yrs by ye last post came safe to me, and I heartily thank all my freinds, as well as yr selfe, for their greate concern at my sonns illness, I bless God he is

something better, and I beleive pass'd danger as to his life for this time, but the feavor has layne in so extraordinary a manner in his head, and continues still so much there, that I cannot feel without dismall apprehensions of what the consequence thereof will be upon his memory and understanding; Tis or duty to submitt with patience and humility to the Greate Disposer of all things, which I shall endeavor to perform, and constantly pray for His assistance, as I do for ye continuance of ye health of the rest of my children and freinds to all whom lett me be kindly remembred wth all tenderness and affection to them, and assure them that I am affectionately theires and yr reall freind Edw: Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

June ye 6th 1699

Tis so longe since I writt to you last that I know not what subjectt it was on but the account Mr Clark has given you by every post since has to well informed you of the resen and thearefore I neede make no excuse, nor inlarge more then in short to tell you that the cares and feares since I came to London deserves your pittty more then your envey, but I hope time and patience will over come what att present I labour under; the Drs say that my sones life is att this present put of danger but they thinke he will be some time getting up and what a relaps may doe is very uncertaine but we hope the best and I labour to be content in all conditions and to submitt my will to the wise disposer of all things; and as you say in the midst of all my trobles tiss a great comfort to heare my poore children in the countrey are well which blessing I pray God to continue to them, I thank God all heare but Ward are well, and I hope improve, I think Nanny is as much improved since she came from Hackney as she was while she was theare. I sopose by this time Mounsr is a redy preacher, but I hope he doss not neglect the children; I am sorry to heare Mrs Mary Younge with all her discretion has bin preached into marrying herselfe to a nonconformist passon that is worth little or nothings and without the knowledge or consent of Sr Walter.

Edward was often accused of being a dissenter but he was not; he did, however, have a low church outlook. In 1698 he had felt that the “unnecessary superstitious rebuilding of the local church had been designed only *“for the pride and glory of the priest”*”.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London June ye 6th 1699

My eldest here, blessed be God, mends tho but slowly and twill be long, if ever, ere he be restored to perfect health and strength again. Tis or duty to waite the Almighty's dispensations with patience, and with a submissive resignation to his pleasure endeavor to bear all afflictions and disappoyntments as become those that adore ye hand from whence they come. I bless God all the rest of my children here and at Chelsey are well, but my wife and I have been under verie great difficultyes to support ourselves during our sonns extremity, but that great and good God, who hath hitherto preserved us, will I hope in his due time, once more bring us all happily together againe, which is the hearty prayer of yr reall freind.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London June ye 8th 1699

Yr letters by ye last post came safe to mee and upon consideration of the whole matter offerd by you in relation to my setting out a horse in ye Militia, or applying to Mr Palmer to do it for me, I cannot but conclude with you all

circumstances considered, that it is my best way to prepare for ye setting out Rich: Barber on yr spotted horse agst the time that shall be appoynted for ye Muster, and must desire yr particular care in seeing all the furniture both for man and horse be cleane and in good order so that no fault may be found wth any of it, for tis to be expected that my man's horse and armes are to be more narrowly examined and inspected then any other . If Rich has not allready a good payre of bootes fit for ye service, I must desire you to get a good payre made for him and that forthwith, that they may be in areadyness and take all ye care you can they be not made too little for him, for then they will be utterly spoyled, and of no use at all to him.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London June ye 10th 1699

Yrs by ye last post came safe and you will find by mine inclosed to Monsr (wch I desire you to peruse, seale and deliver to him) what ye substance of his to me was; when he was last payd by you ( I thinke it was about the time he went to Exeter) I sent you down to ye best of my remembrance ye state of his agreement wth me, and his accott thereupon by wch, and what he hath since recd of you if anything, it will appear what is due or shall grow due to him, which from time to time I desire you to pay him as he shall request.

Mr Clutterbuck came to me yesterday morning, and pressed me so earnestly for three pounds part of the money due to him that I could not avoyd paying it to him to gett ridd of him, of wch I give you this notice, that he may not gett any more money out of you on this or any other pretence.

I bless God my sonn growes better tho he mends verie slowly.

Enclosed

M de Laroque to Edward Clarke att Chipley 7 June 1699

Sir,

I most humbly thank you for ye favour you did grant me by your last letter, I made as yet no use of it, and I warrant you yt when I shall, it will be very soberly and not so often as you gave me leave, ye business though distinct from yours will never hinder me to give to your children education and instruction ye same time and care as before and longer time according their growing in strength and learning, having more then sufficient time after their going to bed till their getting up to mind what concerns me for my going abroad, yt being such days as be allowed to every body to go to church and no body to teach, I do think you will have little case enough to call it so much out of your bissiness. For ye rideing of your horses I nether want nor expect it ye only things I desire you tis your protection and freindship and to give orders to Mr Spreat to pay me what of my sallary may be due to me now, and when I shall want it. I am very sensible at Mr Edward Sickness, but I pray to God and hope for his recovery, your children here continue in very good health and to learn very willingly and well, they give their dutys to you and Madam Clarke and their services to their brothers and sisters in London and I who am with a deep respect Sir

Your most humble and most obedient servant De Laroque

Enclosed

Edward Clarke to M de Laroque

Yr letter by ye last post came safe to me and I am verie glad to find thereby that my children learn so willingly and well of you and I doe not question ye continuance of yr care over them, soe I assure you of the continuance of my

freindshipp in yr proceedings in their education and instruction and I have by this post given Jo Spreat directions to pay you yr sallary by the same shall become due to you. I am yr reall freind and servant Edw Clarke

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

June ye 13th 1699

We hope Ward is better though he has such an intermitting fevor that I know not what to make of it, but do live in hopes for the best; Molly was fevorish for 2 or 3 days at Chelsey but now I thank God she is pretty well agen and all the rest are well which concludes this in hast from your reall frend M Clarke  
My blessing to my children

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London June ye 15th 1699

As to what you write touching yr brother Gabrael, you may depend upon it, I will do all that lies in my power for him, but indeed there are so great a number of supervisors, on ye determination of ye Malt-Duty, that must be reduced to officers, and in common justice plac'd in foot walkes, I foresee it will be the greatest difficulty imaginable for me to continue him in a foot-walke as now he is, but I will do my best, not only to preserve him from being amongst the number of those that must fall with ye Malt-Duty, but will keep him in a foot-walk if possible; as to what you say touching Mr Lyfords account of Officers in his collection, he hath return'd yr brother to ye Board as one of his best officers, wch in this juncture, was the greatest kindness Mr Lyford could do him, and therefore I would have you and yr brother both to acknowledge his kindness therein to thank him for it which is the way to make him in reallity yr brothers freind, wch perhaps he is now only so upon my score, as knowing he obliges me therein.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London June ye 17th 1699

Mr Rich Hill was reduced upon proof to ye Board, that his business was much out of order, severall of his casks not stock'd, wch were brewed and tun'd since his last survey, by wch and other neglects the King sustaines greate loss; he would upon this have been absolutely discharged, but out of respect to Mr Gray who recommended him, I obtained so much favor from ye Board as to prevent his absolute discharge, and he was only reduced to Assistant Officer, wch if he does not accept of, that place will be absolutely sunke, so that Mr Hare cannot be admitted into it, and indeed the multitude of Officers that must be reduced on ye expiration of the Malt-Duty, and by order of the Board are to be employed againe, as vacancies happen, before any New-ones can be admitted, will render it next to impossible to bring any new man into the imploy, whether Mr Hare or any body else, yett for a long time; this I write only to show you a little how difficult it will be to answer any of the vast number of applycations that are made to ye Office for bringing more men into the Revenue, at a time when near 300 Officers must be discharged on the expiration of ye Dutyes on Malt and Leather

My sonn continues still verie weake and mends verie slowly, but I hope in time, with Gods blessing on ye means used, and the utmost care, he may be restored; the rest of my children in and near this place are I bless in God in good health and my wife and I are indifferently well considering the great concern and fatigue we have been under since Ward's illness.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

June ye 17th 1699

I receved yours by the last post and cannot tell what stronger hopes to give you of my comeing out of towne then I have done and do wonder you should so often give the name of forsaken family to that part wheare you are, since it has pleased God to bless you all with helth and all due care taken for every thing that is wanted; I wish it was possible for me to divide my persen as equally as my affection is among them all, so as to be usefull to them but it is impossible and I think that part which I shall leave heare may more truly deserve that title being all under severall rooffs and among strangers, and I think in some thinges as helpless as those with you; Molly was very fevorish the last week but I hope it was nothing but wormes she being yesterday when I was to see her pretty well agen, Jack and all the rest are well, and Ward dos mend but slowly, I hope Eling do inquier after a maid for the kitchen, for I do give you my word I will come out of towne as sounne as you yourself would think it possible if you weare heare and thearefore beleve me that am your reall frend M Clarke

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London June ye 22th 1699

Pray give my true love and service particularly to my sister and cosens and excuse my not writeing to them, indeed I find myself every day less able to go through the fatigues and labor under than formerly wch I hope will excuse me to all my freinds

*22 June 1699 Note of my woollen things*

*2 new flannel shirts*

*2 other flannel shirts*

*2 old flannel wastcoats*

*3 pr strong stockens*

*2 pr gray stockens*

*2 pr other col stockens*

*2 pr woollen socks*

*Linnen*

*6 napkins hockapack*

*6 course napkin*

*2 fustian wastcoat*

*5 shirts*

*4 nightcaps*

*4 night neckcloths*

*7 pr socks*

*7 pr little sleeves*

*9 stock necks*

*5 colord hatband*

*10 plain muslin turnoverts 5 necks to them*

*1 laced turnover 1 neck to it*

*3 pr little laced cuffs*

*2 long night neckcloths*

*2 pr holland sheets*

*1 pr coarse sheets*

*1 pr fine Holland sheets*

*2 pr cotton socks*  
*Rates to be pd for washing*  
*1 payr sheet 4d*  
*1 shirt 2d*

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      **London June ye 24th 1699**

**Pray take an opportunity of inquiry when there are good coales to be had and where most conveniently that I may make use of the first opportunity proper for laying in as many as will be necessary to be spent the next wynter etc; and which way I may get the carryage cheapest now this summer time.**

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      **June ye 27th 1699**

**In answer to what you formerly and by ye last post writt touching scabbling out a sufficient number of Quina stones that will be wanted at Chipley at the Quarry at Hele, twill certainly be the best way to imploy Mr Wigson therein, and for ye workeing and setting them up I will agree wth him when I come home wch I hope will be in a few weekes and as soon as they are scabbled out gett them carryed to Chipley, and unloaded in the park on ye back part of ye linnage belonging to ye Wood Court for I would loose the benifitt of this dry season for carryage of so much of ye stone as I shall certainly use for Quinas, or other stones that are rotten and defective, for so much I would not loose this season of getting home by any meanes, if it can be conveniently gott done.**

**You judge right in beleiving my sonnes illness made me forgett writeing to you before on this subject, indeed I have suffer'd exceedingly by reason thereof, but I hope God in his mercy and goodness will restore him and me again to our former strength, when I hope to be better able to write and direct you than I am at present, therefore pray do in everything what you think most for ye advantage of yr reall freind Edw: Clarke**

Edward Clarke to John Spreat      **London June ye 27th 1699**

**To show you that Chipley is not intended to be forsaken, there was sent hence Saturday last by Mr Whitemarch his waggon, 4 deale-cases, 4 deale-boxes and a little runlett, in all nine parcells, directed to my selfe, and numbered 1,2,3 and so on, the deal box No 5 writt upon, Glasses must be taken particular care of, and so must Number 8.**

**When upon inquiry you find all the parcells are come safe to Taunton, they must be fetch'd home in ye waggon altogether, and carryed into the Great Parlour at Chipley, and my dear wife who has pack'd them all up with her own handes, will I hope by the blessing of God be there in some reasonable time at ye unpacking of them; she setts out hence with my two eldest daughters towards Ivy-Church\* tomorrow morning and intends to spend some dayes there untill my business and other circumstances will permitt my leaveing this place, and going to her in order to return home together.**

\* 28 June 1699 to Mr Knight for sett of horses to carry my wife to Ivychurch in her own coach £5 00 00

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London June ye 29th

My wife and daughters went hence yesterday towards Ivy Church, and I hope are by this time are safe thither. I have sent ye news prints to them by this post, wch is the reason you have them not inclosed.

Poor Ward recovers verie slowly, and I feare it will be a long time before he will recover his former health. But I hope God in mercy will restore him againe in his due time, and support me under this and all other afflictions he shall think good to lay on me; indeed his dangerous illness has greatly reduced and dispirited me, but as he recovers I hope I shall regain my former health and strength likewise.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

Ivy church June ye 30th 1699

I sopose you will now beleve that I desire to come to Chipley once more being got so far as Ivey church towards it wheare I am to stay till Mr Clarke comes to me, he told me he would come out of towne when I did he wanting the countrey ayre, but his buisness prevented him, and when I was packing up my things he told me I must send his to Mr Freakes wheare he removed when I came away; I left my sone 4 or 5 miles out of towne wheare he removed a fortnight before, for the Aire being very weeke and not likely to be able to undertake such a journey as I come a considerable time yett, I sopose it will not be long before Mr Clarke will follow me hither if his sone continues to gett strankth and his other buisness gives him leave but I know not the certain time till I see him.

Betty and Nanny are heare with me; and I left Jack and Molly both well att scoole att Chelsey; thus you see how my family is scattered about, but Gods will must be done in all things and I hope he will inable us to submitt to it; I am glad to heare Eling has heard of a maid I hope she will answare expecttations.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London July ye 1st 1699

As to ye increase of ye fawnes, I can only say tis absolutely necessary that most of them should be eaten when most in season, but how to take them, and not injure the rest of ye deer, will I fear be difficult, but if that can be easily done I would have you send one good one ( when best in season ) to Holcombe, one other to Mr Dyke, one other to Mr Musgrave at Nettlecombe, and I hope my wife and I may be at home time enough to eat some of the rest of ye faunes, and to reduce the number of bucks also, for I am verie sensible that hay will fall verie short the next winter not only at Chipley, but in most other parts of England.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

London July ye 4th 1699

. Yrs by ye last post came safe to mee, but as to ye certaine time of my wife going from Salisbury to Chipley I cannot yett tell you, and do beleive she is not yet determind therein but presume it will be in a few dayes after I get down thither and my intentions are if not hindred by any extraordinary accident to begin my journey thither Munday next, and from there you shall heare further from me.

I bless God Jack and Molly are well, but poore Ward continues still verie weake.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

July ye 5th 1699

I receved a letter from you from Chipley Sunday morning and another from London Munday by which I find you and Eling heares of severall maides and by the carrectter you have of that Grace if Eling likes her and thinkes she will doe

my buisness I would have her agree with her and troble herselfe noe farther as I remember she was a lusty strong wench and I like her the better because she dont take tobaccoe.

Mary Clarke to John Spreat

July ye 7th 1699

J Spreat

I hope Eling and you received my letters in answare to the maides choyce of which I must leave in a great mesure to you that are upon the place and also that of waishing or sizing the hall as you and she shall find most convenient and I would have Eling to make before I come home sum duch biskett and some cracknells and some little cakes in the tinne pans, and I would have the pallett bed put in my chamber for Jepp and Sammy to lye in as they use to do and I would have the bead in the nursery made up for the girles and Eling and Nan Trent to lye in Elings chamber that which Mrs Burgess lay in, and Jenney to lye in the little bead that Molly lay in in the same roome, all which I think is much as I ordered it in case I had come home the last summer and is all I can now thinke on to give orders about; more then that I would have Nan Trent to gett all the things clean and in order as Isake use to do, in redyness to lay the cloth when we shall come home.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat

Ivy Church July ye 12th 1699

These are only to acquaint you that last night I gott hither, and intend to sett out hence towards home Tuesday morning next, with hopes to gett to Chipley the day following, I desire you to take care there bee a sufficient quantity of Oates provided, and gett a bushell of horse beanes from Taunton, if there bee none to bee had nearer, and gett some good old hay, for these things I have promised the coach-man for his horses, who is to bring us hence to Chipley; and as soon as you can conveniently after this comes to yr handes, I desire you to come up hither, to accompany us down from hence, the sooner you are here the better and more convenient it will be for us, and if my black-mare bee in a condition to come this journey, pray bring her with you, with my best saddle and furniture that I may ride wth you down from hence, or goe in the coach, as my circumstances of health, and the weather will render it most easy, and convenient to me, but if she bee not in a condition, you must come without her, and I must be content to bee confnyed to the coach home; pray do not come through Taunton least you give an alarm there of the time of my return, wch I would avoyd for many reasons wch you may easily guess.

APART AGAIN

August 1699 - February 1699/1700

- *Edward in Tunbridge - Ward goes abroad - Gustavus is drinking too much - Mary looks after the poor at Christmas - Jepp and Sammy look after Mary -*

Locke to Mary Clarke      **London 19th August 1699**

The town is grown so thin of company that those few that are left in it live and visit after the same manner as if they were in the country. The mischeif is that I am sure country air is not to be got here, how much soever in other things it may at this season counterfeit the country. This makes me joyn with you in your wishes that Chipley were as near as Oates. I know not what advantage you might make of it, to me, I know it would be a great one. For I should often enjoy your company there, and am very apt to think we should not want something to say to one another.

I am very sorry to find by yours and Mr Clarke's letters (for I have his also of the 6th) that the country air has not yet done him so much good as I wished and expected. I know not what to say more on that occasion at this distance. I beg him and you to beleive that nobody is more concerned for it than I am. And I hope the next from Chipley will bring me better news.

I am indebted to my dear wife for her civil and kind letter. Pray let her know how sensible I am of the favour till I have an opportunity to return her my thanks in a letter on purpose. My service to the rest of the yonge folks there that know me.

Mrs E Clarke to Edward Clarke      (Ward's landlady) **Mile End Sep the 8**  
**Honored Sr**

As soon as you were gon I sat downe to cast up my money and found it a ginea short I remember I recd but sixteen ginea and it should have bin seaventeen soe I sent our man immediatly to Mr Molls house but you were gon in hopes you knew what gold you had in your pocket that you might be satisfied it was a mistake I humbly aske your pardon for this trouble, I am Sr  
Your most obliged humble servant Eliz Clarke

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke      **Sept ye 9th 1699**  
**My deare,**

I thanke you for your last long letter which I will indevor to pursue to the best of my skills and shall do that and everything else with all the cheerfulness and sattisfacktion in the world if you will but be easey and injoy yourself and Mr Freak and the rest of your frends as you use to do, and I begg of you never to have a painefull thought about anything heare wheare I will take all the care possibley I can that am your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke  
I beleve I shall not be able to send the box with the childrens mesures till after you come from Tunbridge\*; my blessing to my children all heare are much your humble servants and we drink your health dayly.

\* Edward's visit to Tunbridge for three weeks cost £4 18 6 in expenses.

Edward (Ward) Clarke to Mary Clarke 9 September 1699

Being now perfectly recovered of my late dangerous illness I thinke myself obliged in ye first place to bless God for restoring me to my health and then to own ye grateful sence I have of yrs and my fathers goodness and care of me in putting me into so successful a method by which I am now in a condition to pursue ye design of travaileing abroad which my illness interrupted.

Edward Clarke to Mrs E Clarke London September ye 11 1699

Mrs Clarke

Since my rect of yr letter Saturday last, I have inspected the papers of our accompt, and examined my money as nicely as I can, and have endeavoured to recollect, whither there were any such mistake as my paying but 16 instead of 17 ginneas committed by mee or not, but cannot find by my money, or any otherwise, that there was any such mistake on my part. However, I have soe good an opinion of you, that if you have strictly examined the money you received from mee and are absolutely certaine that I payd you one ginnea short of what I ought to have done, tho I cannot find it by my money or otherwise recollect it, yet that you may be very sure to receive noe losse by mee I have with all the readynesse and satisfaction imaginable sent you the ginnea demanded, with my thanks to you for rectifying a mistake I was perfectly ignorant of, and shall always remaine, yr obleiged humble servant Edw Clarke

<i>To ye Doctor</i>	8
<i>Chang'd</i>	2
<i>To Mrs Clarke</i>	17
<i>To Mr Moll</i>	10
<i>To Ward</i>	1
<i>Hand</i>	8

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Sept ye 11th 1699

My deare,

All the company are still with me and I am now very buisey in sending the cotch for my sister to Taunton by whom I send this letter to assure you of all our healths and I hope this will find you at Tunbridge in order to yours, which I begg of you to take care of above all things in this word and thearein you will for ever oblidge your truley affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

My cozen Strachey and Betty are riding out this morning also to a place called Yartey to visitt Mr Lartons daughter who is married theare and John Spreat must wait on them to shew them the way the rest of the company stays heare till theyr return and how long after I am not certain, but however nothing shall prevent my writing to you.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Sept ye 13th 1699

The good company are still with me and give theyr service to you. I indevor to provide for them and devert them as well as I can which takes up the most part of my time, but what I have I do not think better spent then in writing to you being never so much pleased as when I do anything whearein I give you the least satisfacktion and content, which I hope you will indevor to procure to yourself

**also in being eases with everything that it is reasonable to be so and therein you will infinitely oblige your affectionate wife M Clarke**

Locke to Edward Clarke London 16th September 1699

**I was glad to hear by the Bachelor that you got so well and in so good time to Tunbridge. I hope the good air, water, and company of the place will have powerful effects upon you for the re-establishing of your health.**

**The great news in town these two days hath been of the Scots leaving Darien.\* It all arises from one letter of the Governor of Jamaica to Mr Secretary Vernon. His account being founded only upon the report of the master of the vessel, who met three canoes at sea wherein were three Spaniards that gave the account.**

\* The Darien scheme was started by William Paterson, a Scotsman and founder of the Bank of England in 1695, to form a settlement on the Isthmus of Darien (Panama) to control trade between the East and West. William III was not in favour of the idea but national enthusiasm carried it through. In 1698 1200 Scottish colonists sailed from Leith to Panama and built a fort. The Spaniards proved hostile and the colonists unfitted to endure the hardships of the climate, war and disease. The survivors returned home in 1699. So much of Scotland's money was lost in the scheme that it led eventually to the Union with England.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Sept ye 25th 1699

**My deare**

**I received yours by the last post and am very glad to hear the waters agree with you and that you resolve to continue the drinking of them, taking care to restore and preserve your health which is what is most valuable to everybody in this world; I am very glad to hear that Ward was got so far well and I hope will go on so and that those at Chelsey are so, as I thank God these are heard, and give you their duty and service as doth your affectionate and faithful wife M Clarke**

**I hope you received all my letters safe at Tunbridge where I have written to you by every post but one.**

Edward Clarke to John Spreat Tunbridge Wells 30th of 7br 1699

**I recd yrs of ye 25th and all yr former letters here, and shall return to London again Thursday next having already over-stayed all the company here, I am yr real friend Edw: Clarke**

**I do not wonder at ye choice the Corporation of Taunton have made of new members to their body.**

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London October 10th 1699

**My deare,**

**I thank you for yr obliging letter by the last post, and am glad to hear that John Spreat found Sr Walter Yonge and his son so well againe, and my Lady got safe to Escott to take care of them; I am allsoe verie glad to hear that Mr Musgrave and his son are so well; and tis no small satisfaction to me to hear that my children with you are in health, I can assure you that Jack and Molly are so at Chelsey, and I doubt not but Ward is well abroad as I am here, wch is all that I have time to write at present, more then to continue my prayers for the preservation of you all, and remaine for ever, yr truly affectionate and faithful husband Edw: Clarke**

**My true love to you and my children and my service to my sister**

Benjamin Furly to Locke 20 October 1699

Mr Clarke\* and his good guide, understanding I was there, tooke the most pertinent directions that could be where to find me, (which they might have done 5 times every day) understanding that my wife and I were bound for Cleve with Dr Overbeke and his wife a worthy Gentleman of that place, stayd not one night in Rotterdam but by the night boat, as my son advised me, went over Tergou\* to come to me, that we might go to Loo together, I hearing of this went to Utrecht, to the English ordinary to enquire for them, but finding them not come, concluded they went over Amsterdam and stayd there; but about an hour after they came, and Finding I had been there, (as they now inform me) concluded I was gone to Cleve and so never lookt after Feesbergen, where we were 10 days after, and they the same time at Utrecht, beleaguerd with ill weather, - they are now gone to Loo, and at their returne will be going for Brabant where I shall furnish them with the required credit.\*

\*Ward

\*Gouda

\* an entry in Edward's day book is for £ 50 00 00

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke November ye 1st 1699

I receved yours by the last post for which I thank you and also for the troble we have given you of bying our things, and also for the libberty of keeping our Crimass wheare I please, which you may very well do I being allway best pleased to be wheare I think it is for the intrest of you and your family, and it is my opinion, that is to be heare as your circomstances now stand, and I am sure much less troble to me than to be running up and down the countrey at this time of the year thought I must confess I beleve I should have bin prevailed on to have humoured the girls so far as to have gone to Sutton, they being so very pressin, if I had not found by them that they was to act a play, and they had bin so indiscreet to undertake to act mens parts, which I think was an undertaking sutable to theyr age and bigness, but not so proper for me to like, and I beleve impossoble for me to hinder if we should go unless I spoyled the play, and theareby make myself apear sower and morose, and I think it is time enough for them to think of wearing the britches yet, much more to put them on or any other dress that might become such a part in a strange place in this censorious age; but however I am not out of hopes but that they may have an oportunity to turne to men in time for they both grow very fat and big; I have delevered your letter to Mounsr and am very glad you answered it word for word because I find his French difficult to understand. I understood by the post scripp that he was to have the little hall to himself to teach the children in, till I did assure him that you writt in my letter it was to be the room within the little hall yet which was formerly called Isakes, now Nans, so then he was satisfied.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke November ye 6th 1699

My sister had a letter from you which came very sesonably she having bin very much out of order this week and more, being trobled with the mother spleen and vapors which I beleve is raised with vexing about her son, who indeed behaves himself very odly but she would not have me know the least of it, though

all the countrey talks of it, yet I plead ignorance because I know it is agrable to her; poor woman she will not see nor beleve anything but saves all for one that will make it fly fast enough when she is gone, for he is perpetually drinking at home or abrode with all sorts of clownes that he can get, and I was told at Holcombe that they heard he had made a resolution never to keep a gentleman company more; but this must never be sed at Gundenham for your sister cannott bare to hear the truth and those that had corage to speake it must allways be esteemed enimyes.

We receved the box Satterday night last very safe to the great joy of your boyes who I beleve could never be more glad if anyone should give them 20 years hence a thousand pound a year a peece. I also return you my thanks for the troble I gave you in bying my things; and I hope you receved the little box with the lineing for Mollys mantuas; if Mrs Broune ever can match it exactly I think it may not be amiss if she bout a yard of new fox to new robe it and new face the sleeves. Pray in your next let me know when you heard from Ward and wheare you have heard from Mr Moll; my service to Mr Freak and many thanks to him for his pens this is the first I have used of them and do hope they will last me a great while that am your affectionate and faithfull wife M Clarke

Elizabeth (Betty) Clarke to Edward Clarke Chipley Novem ye 11th 1699

Honrd father

I received your last very kind letter (as usually) with more joy yn I am able to express and for wch tis impossible for mee to return you my thanks as I ought; but I beg you Sir to accept of my most humble Duty and bee assured tho I am not capable in word to demonstrate my sence of ye least of yr favours, yett my action to ye utmost of my power shall ever consist with my sincere profession of being Your dutifull and obedient daughter Eliz Clarke

Some of ye gunns etc yt you mentioned were already cleaned and put in order, by John Gardener the rest has since been done, and hee promises shall be constantly kept soe.

I beg yr acceptance of all our humble duty's here and be pleased to give my true love to my Bro: Jack and Sis: Molly, and my humble service Pray Sir to Mr Freke to whom I am indebted many speeches for his great compliment. The familys of Holcombe, Gunham and Fitshead injoy health. I have abundance of services to present you from Mr Dike, his lady and mother, I waited on them all yesterday at Tetton.

If you have a vacancy in yr next letter to my brother Ward I beg you to fill it with my love and best wishes.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke November ye 19th 1699

My deare

I have receved all your kind letters and do begg your pardon for not wrighting the last 2 posts but poor Sammys indisposition which I beleve was occationed by a touch of his old distemper hindred me but now I thank God he is prety well agen; I am sorry I did acquaint you with the increse of my distemper since it occations you any troble, for I hope time and patience will work it out for I found very little good by what the Doctor did for me; my sister is somewhat indisposed with vexing about her son and daughter who indeed live a very discontented life and what the end of it will be I know not; I have as little to do

with them as possible I can being not willing to disoblidge either but to sleep in a whole skin; I beleve there is not a spot of ground in the nation wheare there is so many unhappy men and theyr wives as heare abouts, but all dont make the young ones very willing to have husbands if they knew how to get them. I did once ask you who it was that Mr Freake thought of for Betty but you did not tell me; I could wish she was well married for that free way she gives herself with the men servants when we have no company I fear will be to her prejudice and is impossible to helpe.

Mary (Molly) Clarke to Edward Clarke December 14 1699

These few lines comes to invite you to our breaking up and to desire you to send me 10s for musick and candels for they have all given but me pray send my petycot and wastcote\* by Thursday this is all at present from your dutyfull daughter till death Mary Clarke

\* In March 1700 Edward paid Mrs Levens £50 for buying things for Molly

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke

I received yours and am very glad to hear the boxes went safe to your hands and was acceptable I wish they may all prove as I could have them and if so I shall be glad my little boore had a reprieve he made just 6 collers one of which I sent to Holcombe one to Fifoot 3 to you and one I kept for my selfe. I phancey Molly is mightily pleased with Mrs Levens favor to her; pray in your next let me heare wheare Ward be got into France yet or not and wheare Jack spends his time at Chelsey this Crissmass or elsewheare; the inclosed is for Mr Freake whearein I have thought of a way that Betty may come to London with less troble for you if there be occation for her to come in a short time but if the man be not in hast or like to be lost it may be for the better the longer she stays for I have observed that she has allways a short kind of a cough in London in the winter and in the countrey she has none, but I would have no consideration of that kind loose a good husband for they are scarce. I heare Mr Sandford and his eldest daughters are desining for London in a short time, we all met full of charity at the sacrement Sunday last.

Satterday I disposed of near a hundred loaves and about forty peeces of beefe and now I am in expectation of 5 or 6 and thirty of the poor knaighbours and theyr wives some that have bin and some that are workemen to the house and when all is over I beleve I must lye a bead a weeke to recover myselfe agen, my 2 daughters was very buisey all day yesterday in makeing of pyes and my 2 sones are in great expectation of some Crissmass plays at night, but I beleve I shall go to bead and leave them. We have made this year 7 hogsheads of sider of our own aples and 3 of Aish apples and tasting what was left yesterday to tap the worst for my guests this day I find one of them by chance as good sider as ever I tasted, perfectly fine good colored pleasant and of a good body and I am much inclined to bottle it off now it is in its prime if you approve of it and think it will not break the bottles for it cannott be better and it may be worss it is not at all upon the frett but seemes to be as composed as a glass of good canary.

Edward Clarke to John Spreat London January ye 11th 1699

Upon yr earnest desire to me I have appeared in ye defence of yr freind Thomas Champion to ye utmost of my power and have gone much further in it than I should have done upon any other acct lesse then yr importunity, but to show you how willing I shall be upon all occasions to gratifie you, or any friend of yrs, wth anything in my powere I must acquaint you that Thomas Champion is charged by Mr Penn his collector, as well as by his supervisor for haveing accounted to the King but for one half of the money he recd of a victualer for the Excise of By-Ale, and for makeing a false survey of syder, and Mr Penn says he hath been fully hear'd to it, and hath nothing to say in his defence, but that he was in drink when those things were done; if this be really true, Champion deserves not yr freindship, nor my favor, for if he really recd more money than he hath accounted for, then tis manifest either he wrong'd the King, or the Party, that according to his own defence in yr letter, he made pay more than the duty amounted to, this and a false survey are crimes wch the Board will not forgive if true, and therefore all that I could say in his favor was that this whole matter might be impartially re-examined by Mr Drover, one of the General surveyors, when he comes next to Bristoll, of wch Champion will have notice, and to suspend all proceeding agst him in ye mean time, indeed the great favor that hath allready been more than once shewn to Champion on yr accott, when many other honest diligent and faithfull officers are left out of ye service, is I feare much more than he deserves; however, his ill behavior shall not discourage me from doing what I can for Mr Tremaine on whose behalf you writt so largely to me by the last post; I am, quite tyred, yr reall freind Edw: Clarke

Edward Clarke to Mary Clarke London January ye 25th 1699/1700

My deare,

Whilst I was writing my letter by the last post to you, I was call'd away soe of a suddayne to waite on my Lord Chancellor, that I fear I seal'd up my letter without making an end of it, and therefore now desire that when John Spreat goes next to Taunton he may demand the 3s again of Mr Tanner wch was payd him for a letter of mine to Betty that was Frank'd, the Post Master telling me they have ordered him to repay the same againe in the countrey, instead of repaying me ye 3s here, as in one of my former lettrs I told you they had promised me, so that whither ye 3s be returned to me here, or repayd by Mr Tanner in ye countrey, it shall be equall to me, and therefore I would have John Spreats call upon Mr Tanner for it.

[undated]

My true love to you and my children. In one of my last lettrs I told you that I should receive ye 3s again at ye Post Office here that was payd at Taunton for ye Poem sent down by Mrs Levens, or to that effect; since that instead of the Post Masters giving me ye 3s againe here, as they promised, they have ordered the Post Master of Taunton to repay the 3s again wch was paid for that letter in the countrey.

These last words should have been added to what is above written before my letter had been sealed up or sent to you, but being called away on a suddaine, and my lettrs afterwards seald up in a hurry, they were forgot to be added by me, wch left ye sence imperfect and for wch I beg yr pardon, but I hope the 3s is repayd in ye countrey and then tis well enough.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke January ye 31 1699/1700

My deare

I receved yours by the last post and am sorry to heare Mr Freaques coller of brane was not boyled enough but it was what I feared but do wish I had boyled it over agen as I did ye bigg one and do thinke if Mrs Watts did sow it up very tite in a cloth and boyle it 2 or 3 howers agen it would be the better; she must put a little straw in the bottom of the pot and boyle it in water with a little salt in it and put a wait upon the coller to press it down and not put it into the pot till ye water boyles.

I thank you for your good wishes to be able to assist me in my afaires heare, but I am afraid you have more upon your hands wheare you are then is easey to performe, but as long as I heare you and your sone are well and content with my poor indevers it is a suffishiont satisfacktion to me; the sider I bottled off as sounne as I had your letter and I hope it will not break the botles it was some that was made of the apples heare at home all sorts together I know not what sorts; Molly is very unlucky that her coming to towne should occation Mrs Levenses so much troble I wish it had happened otherways but I am glad to hear she is well agen, I dont remember that ever Jack have had them unless that which he had at scoole was which Mrs Mortass sed was not, I wish them both well and you as little troble as possible.

Locke to Edward Clarke

Oates 9th February 1699/1700

Having so lately writ to you, I should not so soon waste any of your precious time with another letter but that by the last post I received a letter from Dr Guenellon of Amsterdam, where to what he said formerly concerning your son John he now further adds that at his arrival he will receive him in his house, and will himself take care of place of him and what else concerns him. I have here enclosed returned him your and my thanks, and desire you it may be sent away by the post tomorrow.

Mary Clarke to Edward Clarke Feb ye 10th 1699/1700

I thank God the pains is pretty well gone but apt to returne agen upon the least occation, indeed it was so severe that it almost took away my breath and forst me to make such a groning that it waked both my poore little boys that lay by mee who showed more concern and tenderness for me than I could expect from theyr years or ever receive from any of theyr predicessers; I could not perswade them to go to sleep agen that night one lying and crying, the other saying he thought it was not fit for him to sleep when his mama was so ill; indeed the finding the children so affected and the consideration of what ill consequence my illness might be to them was a little mortifying to me, who do think my life so usefull to none as to them, poor little creatures; I heartily rejoyce that in the midst of the great fevear you have had your health so well to go throw it, I pray God you may allways enjoy that blessing both in body and mind.

I am sorry the gentleman mentioned still labors under the ill efect of the rumatissam but though it be tedious yett I think it is a distemper that seldom kills anybody; if Betty was well marryed I think Nanny if she can be so contented may stay something longer, she being two or three years behind her.