Love and Madness 1786:

Letter LI: Pages 186-191:

Letter LI, refers to one of a sequence of imaginary letters between James Hackman, a soldier who became a clergyman, & Martha Ray, who was the mistress of the earl of Sandwich. She was shot by Hackman (her lover) as she was leaving Covent Garden in 1779. Letter LI is a long letter, which stretches from p.140 to p.272 in Love and Madness. I have broken the letter down into sets of pages containing key items. At the bottom of each set of pages is a link to take you to the next set of pages in sequence, or you can click the link below and return to the Croft contents page.

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Chatterton contents: Letter LI: Five pages: 186-191

p.186 : <u>View</u> Croft points us to the Gentleman's Magazine for September 1778 where, on page 403,

he defends himself against 'inconsistency.': View QE! : A letter on the same page, dated the day before the Catcott signed letter,

contains a mini bio of Chatterton and demonstrates why Chatterton couldn't have written Rowley's works. It is signed *Bristoliensis*, but is undoubtedly a Catcott concoction, but even here he gets the date of Chatterton's death wrong.

• p.187 : <u>View</u> Croft uses logic to show Chatterton is the author of Rowley. Croft mentions the Monthly Review for May, 1777, again, which contains a letter from

p.188/9 : <u>View</u>

Catcott: View

Croft points the reader to Warton's *The History of English Poetry*, 1778, v2, p.159 : <u>View</u>

• p.190/1 : <u>View</u> Croft lists the magazines and books referencing Chatterton & Rowley.

He introduces the first letter from Chatterton to his mother: 'Dear Mother, Here I am, safe, and in high spirits' QE!: The above letter is treated in the next set of pages. pp.191-193: View

Page 186: Letter LI

LETTER LL 186

> year of his age, in which he mentions most of the poems which have fince appeared as being then in his possession,

two years are gained; an interval of time which might give colour of probability to the (I must say) otherwise very improbable supposition of Chatterton's being the author of the works ascribed to Rowley." In the Gentleman's Magazine for September, 1778, Mr. Catcott writes thus to the Printer, and talks rather differently about this interval of time, and its consequence. 66 I lately received a letter from London, charging me with an inconsistency in my account of the time in which I first became acquainted with young Chatterton. In mine of last month, I said it commenced the beginning of the year: I now recollect it was about three weeks, or perhaps a month, subsequent to the publication in Felix Farley's Briffol Journal, dated the 1st of October, 1768, respecting the ceremonies used in opening the old bridge; confequently, it could not have been till the latter end of the year: but, in my opinion, it is matter of little moment as to the precise time in which we became acquainted, as it will not add a fingle minute to his life, and, of course, not the leaft degree of credibility to the supposition of his being the author of the poems attributed to Rowley." So that, supposing Catcott to tell the truth at last (and his "perhaps a month" may be perhaps two months; and probably 66 about Page 187

LETTER

" about three weeks, or perhaps a month," intervened between the first acquaintance, and the communication of the poems), Chatterton, instead of being a lad of 15 when he produced the first of Rowley's poems, was, on the 20th of the month subsequent to the publication in Farley's Journal, 16; for he

LI.

was born in November, 1752. They, at least, who tell us of Chatterton's shocking impositions, should not themselves impose upon us about Chatterton. It is pleasant enough that every thing like argument in Catcott rests on Rowley's own evidence of his own existence. These are Rowley's poems, because Rowley, "in a manuscript of " his own writing," produced by Chatterton, fays that he deposited poems in the chest, out of which Chatterton faid that he had thefe poems. These poems were written three hundred years ago, because the ode to Ælla, produced by Chatterton, is written in long lines. like a profe composition, as was usual three hundred years ago, when parchment was. scarce. (Monthly Review, May, 1777.) But if Chatterton invented Rowley's poems, he invented also the other manuscripts in which those poems are mentioned. If Page 188 LETTER LI. 188 If Chatterton composed the ode to Ælla, it was furely less difficult to write it on parchment, " in lines not kept distinct, in the manner of prose," as was usual in. Rowley's age, than to be the author of it! But, fays Mr. Catcott-With respect to the antiquity of these poems, its needs only to be observed, that Mr. Canynge, the er great friend and patron of Rowley, died in the year 1474; and by his will, directed that these, together se with a wast collection of other writings, sufficient to fill three or four large chests, should be deposited in Redclist

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conclusive. But how stands the matter, if there should not be a single syllable of truth in the whole passage? - Every word, except perhaps the date of his death, is false. Rowley's

HELD." (Monthly Review, May, 1777.)

se moreover, that

" church, in the room before mentioned; requesting that the mayor and chief magistrates of the city, attended by the 46 town-clerk, together with the minister and churchwardens se of the parish, would annually inspect the same, and see that every thing was carefully preserved: ordering,

66 An ENTERTAINMENT (Catcott himself gives this. passage in Capitals) should be provided for TheM. ON THE DAY WHEN THIS VISITATION SHOULD BE

If this be so, it is, to be sure, tolerably

name is not once mentioned in the will. Itmakes just as much mention of "three or

66 four

LETTER LI. 189 four large chefts" of Rowley, as of Offian; or of three or four large chefts of Catcott's pewter. See Warton's History of English Poetry, Vol. II. 159. Whence did Mr. Catcott get this formal story? Certainly, either from Chatterton, or from some of Chatterton's friend Rowley's manuscripts. But, says Mr. Catcott (Gentleman's Magazine, August, 1778), it is true that what I told the world is not true—all this is not mentioned in Canynge's will. It is however mentioned "in " a deed in Mr. Barrett's hand" (produced by Chatterton); "and, what is more, men-

" tion is there made of a particular portion of Mr. Canynge's estates set apart to de-" fray the expences of an entertainment on 66 that occasion, and the chest itself is most ec particularly described." Catcott adds, 66 if Chatterton had seen this deed, he could

" not have read it, it being written in

Latin, of which he was, to my knowledge,

" totally ignorant." To cut the matter

short at once, he had better tell us that, to

his knowledge, Chatterton did not write a

fyllable of Rowley; and there would be an

end of the business-with those at least who

believe

LETTER LI. TOO believe in Catcott's infallibility. But, unluckily, next to Chatterton, Catcott is the man least to be believed. What a proper person did Chatterton's judgement select for his deception! Yet, this is he with whom we are told (Monthly Review, May, 77) Mr. Hale, the late Lord Lyttelton, Lord Camden, Mr. Harris, the Dean of Clogher, and Dr. Mills, have all agreed in opinion.

Reviews for April, May, and June, 1777 (the Critical gives extracts, but no opinion); in the Gentleman's Magazines for May, June, July, August, and September, 1777; and August and September, 1778; in the 2d Vol. of Warton, Section viii. and the additions to pages 148, 153, 156, and 164, at the end of the volume; in Mr. Walpole's letter; and, of course, in Rowley's poems, and Chatterton's miscellanies.

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If it be so, is not this the blind leading the *blind? But, to return from Catcott's contradictions. How very strongly the idea, that a human being may accomplish any thing, had taken possession of Chatterton, one of his letters will convince you. He desires, you * All that has hitherto (to the date of this letter by Mr. H. to Miss R.) appeared in print on the subject of Rowley, or of Chatterton, is contained in the Monthly

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LETTER LI. you will see, his sister to improve herself in copying music, drawing, and every thing

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which requires genius; as if genius were no less common to man and woman, than a pair of eyes or a nose. He gave all his fellow creatures credit for what he felt fo plainly himself. When Voltaire tells us, in his history of Charles XII. that, on fuch a day, Charles quitted Stockholm, to which he never returned, we are interested enough, even in such a

favage, to feel fomething like concern. In April, 1770, Chatterton for ever quitted

Briftol (from which place he never had before been absent further than he could walk in half a Sunday, and to which place he never returned), to try his fortune in London.-Hear him now tell his own ftory; and mark how regularly, but how rapidly, his method improves. LETTER I. London, April 26, 1778. Dear Mother, Here I am, safe, and in high spirits-To give you a journal of my tour would not be unnecessary. After riding in the basket to Brislington, I mounted the top of the coach and rid eafy; and agreeably entertained with the conversation

The letter headed Dear Mother, London, April 26, 1770, is treated in the next set of pages.

End: or go to next set of Pages: pp.191-193: View