Letter L1 : Love & Madness 1786 161-164 : Mary's Letter to Croft :

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Love and Madness, 5th edition, 1786:

## Letter LI: Pages 161-164: Mary's Letter to Croft:

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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1778. The others were supervised, perhaps."

Page 161 :

Mary Newton's letter starts: "Concious, of my own inabilitys to write to a man of letters."

**OE!.** The letter starts: "Concious, of my own inabilitys to write to a man of letters..."

Meyerstein states "I don't know if Croft altered Mrs. Newton's spelling, but in no autograph letter of her's that I have seen is it so illiterate as in this *piece justicative* of September 22,

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ce letters than Ovid, is continually invoking the Nine to describe me." In one part of the fister's letter, you will not fail to recollect Dryden, who speaks of the alliance between understanding and madness.—I am sure that love and madness are near relations. 66 Concious, of my own inabilitys to write to a man of letters. And reluctant to engage in the painfull recollection of the particulars of the life of my dear deceased brother. together with the ill state of health I've enjoyed since it has been required of me, are, Sir, the real causes of my not writing sooner. But I am invited to write as to a friend, inspired with the sacred name, I will forget the incorrectness of my epistel and proceed. My brother very early discover'd a thurst for preheminence I remember before he was 5 years old he would always preside over his playmates as their master and they his hired servants. He was dull in learning not knowing many letters at 4 years old and always objected to read in a small book. He learnt the Alphabet from an old Folio musick book of father's my mother was then tearing up for wast paper, the capitals at the beginning of the verses. I affisted in teaching him. I recollect nothing remarkable till he went into the school, which was in his 8th year. Except his promiseing my mother and me a deal of finery when he grew up as a reward of her care. About his 10th. year he began (with the trifle my mother allowed him. for pocket money) to hire books from the circulating library and we were informed by the usher made rapid progress in arithmatick. Between his 11th and 12th year he wrote

## Bishop, he made very senciable serious remarks on the awfullness of the ceremony and his own feelings and con-

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wrote a caterlogue of the books he had read to the number of 70. History and divinity were the chief subjects, his school mates informed us he retired to read at the hours allotted for play. At 12 years old he was confirmed by the

victions during it. Soon after this in the week he was door-keeper he made some verses on the last day, I think about 18 lines, paraphrased the 9 chapter of Job and not long after some chapters in Isaiah. He had been gloomy from the time he began to learn, but we remark'd he was more chearfull after he began to write poetry. Some saterical peicis we saw soon after. His intimates in the school were but few and they solid lads and except the next neighbour's fons I know of none acquaintance he had out-He was 14 the 20th of Novr. and bound apprentice the 1st of July following. Soon after his apprenticeship he corresponded with one of his school mates that had been his bedfellow, and was I believe bound to a merchhant at New-York. He read a letter at home that he wrote to his friend, a collection of all the hard words in the English language, and requested him to answer it. He was a lover of truth from the earlyest dawn of reason, and nothing would move him fo much as being bely'd. When in the school we were informed by the usher, his master depended on his verafity on all occations. Till this time he was remarkably indifferent to females. one day he was remarking to me the tendency fever study had to four the temper and declared he had always feen all the fex with equal indifference but those that nature made dear, he thought of makeing an acquaintance with a girl in the neighbourhood, supposeing it might soften the austerity of temper study had ocationd, he wrote a poem to her and they commenced corrisponding acquaintance. About this time LETTER 163 time the parchments belonging to my father that was left of covering his boys books, my brother carried to the office. He would often speak in great raptures of the un-

many books on furgery and I beleive he bought many more as I remember to have packt them up to fend to him when in London and no demand was ever made for them. About this time he wrote feveral faterical poems. one in the papers on Mr. Catcot's putting the pewter plates in St. Nicholas tower. He began to be univerfally known among the young man. He had many cap acquaintance but I am confident but few intimates. At about 17, he became acquainted with Mr. Clayfield, distiller in Castle-street, who lent, him many books on aftronomy. Mr. Cator. likewise assisted him with books on that subject. from thence he applyd himself to that study. His hours in the office was from 8 in the morning to 8 in the evening. He had little of his masters business to do. sometimes not two hours in a day, which gave him an opportunity to purfue his genius. He boarded at Mr. Lamberts, but we faw him most evenings before 9 o'clock and would in general stay to the limits of his time which was 10. o'clock. He was feldom 2 evenings together without feeing us. I had almost forgot to add, we had heard him frequently fay that he found he studied best toward the full of the moon and would

doubted fuccess of his plan for future life. He was introduced to Mr. Barret, Mr. Catcot, his ambition increas'd dayly. His spirits was rather uneven. some times so gloom'd that for many days together he would say very little and that by constraint. At other times exceeding chearfull. When in spirits he would injoy his rising same. consident of advancement he would promise my mother and me should be partakers of his success. Mr. Barret lent him

