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## Editors' Note

Though the 2007 issue of the *Journal* includes a bumper crop of sixty new Wilkie Collins letters in the third of the series of "Addenda and Corrigenda" to *The Public Face*, shortage of space dictates that quite a number of more recent finds have had to be held over until next time. The grateful thanks of the editors are due especially to Susan Haynes, whose sterling labours in pursuing Collins on his North American reading tour have brought to light many of the items of correspondence included here for the first time. Her *Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-4* will be published by Pickering and Chatto in April 2008, and is scheduled for review in our next issue. Also featured in this year's *Journal* are articles by Nathalie B. Cole and Mariaconcetta Costantini, both concerning Collins's representations of overseas travel, and both deriving appropriately enough from presentations at the International Conference on "Dickens, Victorian Culture, Italy" held at Genoa in June 2007. The issue is rounded off by reviews of two useful new reference works edited by William Baker and Andrew Gasson, plus two new books from Andrew Mangham, one a monograph and the other an edited collection of essays. We apologize for the delay in the appearance of this volume, so that the bumper crop arrives in untimely fashion in mid-winter, but hope that it has been worth waiting for.

Lillian Nayder  
Graham Law

~~Articles~~

“A Bed Abroad”:  
Travel Lodgings and the “Apartment House  
Plot” in *Little Dorrit* and *The Haunted Hotel*

Natalie B. Cole  
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Away from their private residences in England, temporarily sheltered in the less rigidly structured spaces of travel lodgings, the travelers in Dickens’s *Little Dorrit* and Collins’s *The Haunted Hotel* find their leisure practices more anxious than they had anticipated. Some of these anxieties cluster around where travelers will sleep. Such lodgings mimic the urban form of housing Sharon Marcus describes in *Apartment Stories*, combining as they do “the relatively private spaces of individual private units with the common spaces of shared entrances, staircases, and party walls,” and therefore [embodying] the continuity between domestic and urban, private and public spaces” (Marcus, 2). Marcus characterizes the spaces thus formed as “miniature cities ... whose multiplication of individual dwellings both magnified domesticity and perturbed its customary boundaries” (2). Further, Marcus describes an “apartment house plot,” which “[situates] the city’s flow and multiplicity *inside* the home” (Marcus, 11-12, her emphasis). Both *Little Dorrit* and *The Haunted Hotel* spatialize the bed abroad, and complicate its meanings through the apartment house plot.

While Dickens and Collins investigate the effect that strange, ambiguously bounded lodgings have on the tourist, this essay also reads their fictional spaces through Gaston Bachelard, who theorizes how houses and rooms may act as metaphors for “humanness,” offering a “topography of our intimate being” (Bachelard, vii, xxxvi). This essay considers briefly how Bachelard’s poetics of space appear in Dickens’s and Collins’s fiction.

Peter Bailey has noted that “leisure was haunted by the imperatives of a rigid work discipline” among the British nineteenth century middle class, noting that English travelers abroad could find it more difficult there to control the entry of “social undesirables’ into one’s circle (Bailey, 17). Contemporary travel guides support this anxiety. A guidebook describing the advantages of traveling to the continent by way of Dieppe claims: “There you may meet the elite of fashion from all parts of the world, mingled not ungracefully, with people of the middle ranks” (*Dieppe*, 5). J.C. Parkinson, in a travel essay describing a 1864 Thomas Cook tour to the continent, is ridiculed by his fellow club-members:

Genteel people ask whether I really am going abroad “with a mob of people.” “It may possibly suit you, as a fellow who writes things, and who

looks out for what you call *character*; but I couldn't bear to be mixed up with a ruck of people myself."

(Parkinson, 585, his emphasis)

He strives to relieve his readers' class anxieties, telling them at the beginning of the essay, "my dignity was never ruffled, nor my gentility flyblown" (Parkinson, 585-6). But in fact, he goes on to describe a night during which he goes not only without a private bedroom but even without a bed:

Our beds were nefariously taken before our arrival. A particularly short sofa in a room where gentlemen are supping and don't mean to go to bed; a balcony from which moon, lake, and stars are seen to advantage, and which is frequented in consequence at all hours during the night; two shakedown occupied by tourists of forty-snoring power; and a courier who knocks chairs and tables about in the dark, and calls the process "settling himself," – are not calculated to promote slumber;

(Parkinson, 588)

Parkinson describes a sleeping arrangement that violates the Victorian ideal that "every important function of life required a separate room" (Flanders, 37). Here sleep and touristic scene-viewing indiscriminately mingle, and employers and couriers bed down together, breaching class boundaries. Proper beds are not even available, but couches are appropriated as beds, and the floor is used in makeshift, "shakedown fashion."<sup>1</sup> For some travellers this could be part of the adventure of travelling, but for others this would add to their anxieties about travelling diminishing their class status, comfort, even their health. Further, the travellers themselves become part of the touristic spectacle, identifiable as the ones with no bedrooms roughing it in the common room to which all have access. Parkinson's experience, therefore, highlights the anxieties of bedding down abroad, reminding one of the multiple meanings of the word *abroad*: *foreign, alien, out of doors, out from one's own roof, even wide of the mark of truth* (OED).

\* \* \* \* \*

Dickens in *Little Dorrit* repeatedly shows how private, seemingly "safe" spaces are contiguous to public entryways and open to violation by dangerous strangers. He demonstrates the perils of bedding down in strange places in multiple scenes of the novel, beginning with Clennam's return home to his hellish attic bedroom, and continuing with his unexpected lock-in in the Marshalsea, which resembles a sojourn in a foreign land. In fact, Nicola Bradbury has linked *abroad* as a concept of alienation "comparable to the [novel's] prison imagery" (Bradbury, 83). Two tables pushed together comprise Clennam's makeshift bed in the "Snuggery" where the Collegians socialize, underscoring both the entertainment his discomfiture has provided to the jaded Tip, and the tribute of money he has provided to Mr Dorrit. On these tables where the Collegians drink and around which they congregate in a parody of the public community from which they have been banished, Clennam makes his temporary bed. Here he feels an empathetic claustrophobia that points him to a symbolic symmetry between his mother's self-imposed exile to her bedroom and the involuntarily imprisoned Dorrit family. All night he imagines scenarios of entrapment: fires within the Marshalsea walls; how bodies are disposed of, and whether death liberates one from the Marshalsea;

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<sup>1</sup> "Shakedown" refers to "any makeshift bed, esp. one made up on the floor" (OED).

and even escape routes over the walls with a cord and grapple. Dickens emphasizes the psychological and physical intrusiveness of the scene, since Clennam is forced to share the room with another man, and awakened by someone raking out the fire. "Little disposed to linger in bed, though his bed had been in a more private situation," Clennam hurries out of the Snuggery when he awakens (104).

Exiting the "little outer courtyard," beyond the prison, he sees the shabby "go-betweens" returning with break-fast items and thinks this about them: "Their walk was the walk of a race apart. . . . They eyed him with borrowing eyes, hungry, sharp and speculative . . . . Mendicity . . . leaked out of their figures in dirty little ends of tape and issued from their mouths in alcoholic breathings," representing the extreme end of indiscriminate domiciling. "When they coughed, they coughed like people accustomed to be forgotten on door-steps and draughty passages" (106; ch.9; I). In pursuing Little Dorrit, even to assist her, he voluntarily becomes an "in-between," leaking money to her needy father, and moving through the leaking valve of the entryway into the prison proper, and back outside again. Thus the contiguous public/private spaces of the Marshalsea and its denizens slowly cease to be a foreign territory to Clennam, as he lingers to explore it, going to acquaint himself next with Frederick Dorrit, another "in-between." Clennam's "bed abroad" literalizes a position he already holds as a returned exile, and the "barely intact" Marshalsea hangers-on offer an externalized image of his own emotionally forgotten, beggared self.

Also abed abroad, Rigaud using the alias of Lagnier discovers Cavalletto as his roommate at the Break of Day caberet in rural France. Rigaud locks the door, telling Cavalletto, "And this is the bed to which society consigns me, is it?" metaphorizing as a low social rank the rustic bed of the French caberet (147; ch.11; I). Shared chambers and lumpy beds represent social slumming for Rigaud, as well as further opportunity to exploit and make a servant of another man. Cavalletto is shocked by this unwelcome proximity, escaping at the first opportunity onto the open road; the incident of shared chambers and one man watching another man in a state of unconsciousness is eerily rewritten by Collins in the collaborative travel narrative he authored in October 1857 with Dickens, *The Idle Tour of Two Lazy Apprentices*.

In contrast to the unwanted proximity of males sharing bedchambers, Little Dorrit seeks out Minnie Gowan in the cold bedroom "cell" at the Convent of the Great St. Bernard. Minnie's adjournment to the bedroom and her bruised side figure both the risks of foreign travel, incurred in a fall from a mule on the precipitous climb up this highest slope of the Alps, and the risks of marriage (see Freedgood). Here Little Dorrit can show her desire for Clennam in a triangulated fashion, tending and identifying with Minnie's bruise, through which she feels connected to Clennam. Minnie can cover Amy Dorrit with her travelling wrapper and rest her arm on her shoulder, bestowing the tenderness Gowan lacks (468; ch.1; II). This bed abroad demonstrates Bachelard's claim that "all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home," for Minnie is linked through Clennam to Twickenham, and her parents' home, and Amy is once again allowed to offer solace to the wounded in a humble shelter, to share emotional vulnerability and strength as she did in the Marshalsea (Bachelard, 5). The easy access to Minnie's bedroom shows again the precariousness of a bed abroad. Gowan, the husband, must be kept out of the secret of the note. Blandois, the spy, listens from the stairs. Little Dorrit,

sharing the staircase with him, fears him. The Convent's common room also exposes the labor of leisure, as Dorrit and one of the convent's brothers converse about the confinement of the monastic order. Even small talk is work for William Dorrit, and every word he speaks about the space of the monastery evokes his home, the Marshalsea. As Bachelard writes, "An entire past comes to dwell in a new house," and Dorrit's follows him wherever he goes (5).

In Venice, the Dorrits live precipitously in one of the grand palaces described by Louis Simond: "No quays, no terraces, no landing-place before them; they plunge at once into the briny deep, which however here is very shallow; splendid marble stairs with marble balustrades lead up once from the water to the hall door" (Simond, 35). Little Dorrit notes the discrepancy between their formidable lodgings and their social accessibility:

Little Dorrit observes as she climbs the staircase of the Venetian palace they rent, that Blandois has made his way too easily into her father's house. But, so many and such varieties of people did the same, through Mr Dorrit's participation in his elder daughter's society mania, that it was hardly an exceptional case. A perfect fury for making acquaintances on whom to impress their riches and importance, had seized the House of Dorrit.

(535-6; ch.7; II)

Dickens's spatialization works in several ways: the palace is too easy to enter, even though it can only be approached by water; in fact, the acquaintance of the Dorrit family can travel through space and be caught like a "mania," a "fury," an infectious disease, like stock speculation later in the novel. Little Dorrit's Venetian palace bedroom is a "humbled state-chamber in a dilapidated palace," "six times as big as the whole Marshalsea" where she wakes up dreaming of her old home (489, 491; ch.3; II). About this bed abroad Dickens underscores Little Dorrit's sense of the surreal life she leads with her family, too much attended upon and incessantly watched, and her sense of disproportion, "of not being grand enough for her place in the ceremonies" (489; ch.3; II). The palace as a lodging is a perfect panopticon of servants and native Italians, always waiting on and observing the Dorrit family; Amy feels her body shrink to nothing within its giant walls.

However, she finds a refuge in her bedroom balcony. Bachelard calls the refuge a place of "centralized solitude," where the hermit is "alone before God," in a world lighted by a distant gleam that is the hermit's candle (Bachelard, 32). Little Dorrit, although she feels herself "little indeed" from her balcony on the top floor, is more largely psychologized in the section of the novel, in reverie and letters to Clennam (491; ch.3; II). Dickens uses the bedroom balcony space as a refuge and Little Dorrit as a hermit figure; in this scene she both sees the "distant gleam" of illuminated palaces and is the lonely figure, a tourist site: "she soon began to be watched for, and many eyes in passing gondolas were raised, and many people said, There was the little English girl who was always alone" (491; ch.3; II). Her own watching returns her always to the original home and refuge of the Marshalsea, as she watches the stars: "To think of that old gate now!" This balcony refuge foreshadows the refuge she provides for Clennam, when she transforms his prison bedroom in the Marshalsea from sickroom to betrothal space. Dickens lifts one character horizontally and spiritually beyond the apartment house plot.

Two other contiguous passageways merit attention: the London hotel staircase which leads to William Dorrit's chambers, and his bedroom suite itself. The first brings that luminary, Mr Merdle, who encounters clerks and



servants, “hovering in doorways and at angles, that they might look upon him” (641; ch.16; II). Hotel stairways allow such brushes between classes, and run counter to prevailing architectural theories of the mid-century in France and England, which stressed “the most complete separation possible between contiguous apartments” as well as between masters and servants (Daly; 203; quoted in Marcus, 160). Merdle’s money-making ability makes his vicinity magical or fertile, and humbler types move into the contiguous space hoping to be enchanted or inseminated by his proximity.

Through this passageway, Merdle brings his infected Midas touch to Mr Dorrit, much flattered by the pretended intimacy of this early morning call, while he is still at breakfast. Merdle’s inability to look at his host, his resistance to sharing the physical space of the hotel suite with him, is no different than his discomfort in his own home, where he also seems a transient, passing through. He shares this state with Dorrit. Further, both men’s masculinities are affected by their relative homelessness, even though they have wealth. Mr Merdle’s house is not a refuge for him, and its social gatherings seem to show him distinctly ill at ease with his own guests. He seems like a lodger there. Dorrit has not chosen to buy property and settle somewhere in England where his past might be scrutinized. As Marcus notes, “It was a cliché of architectural discourse to state that apartment houses were incompatible with national ideas of masculinity” (Marcus, 162), and in this regard, both Merdle and Dorrit have compromised masculinity as temporary lodgers in hotels and homes they don’t feel at home in. Further, citing Viollet-le-Duc, Marcus argues that “only a personalized residence can develop a habit of being oneself” (160) Neither man knows how to enjoy leisure, and both fear showing a genuine or authentic self to others, so they avoid a personalized residence, choosing instead the impersonality of hotels or of a residence decorated and socially constructed by another, someone like “the Bosom” or Fanny Dorrit. Finally, their attempts at leisure are so laborious, the pathology of this labor is exposed, and they die.

\* \* \* \* \*

Collins’s *The Haunted Hotel* also concerns the practice of leisure, the danger of contiguous public and private spaces, and the work of travel abroad. The congestion of modes of travel and foreign travel spaces begins to emerge in Collins’s writings. Travelling with Augustus Egg and Dickens, Collins writes from Naples to Edward Pigott in 1853:

I cannot shut my eyes to the palpable fact that the travelling part of the human race wants thinning. We have encountered crowds everywhere. No Hotels are large enough, no coaches numerous enough, no post-houses indefatigable enough to accommodate, hold and draw the legions of tourists who are now overflowing the Continent in every direction.

(Collins, *Public Face*, I 91)

Collins slept “shakedown” amidst grocery drygoods on one sea-crossing, and laughed about it in the same letter: “Did you ever sleep in a Store Room?” (92). The conflation of edible consumables with the human body as they share space points forward to *The Haunted Hotel*, in which a private space, the scene of a family tragedy, is transformed into a public enterprise for entertainment and capital investment. The slippage between public and private spaces is prepared for at the novella’s very beginning, when a patient waylays the physician Dr Wybrow in the hallway of his residence when he tries to avoid a consultation with her by leaving his residence without going through his consulting room.

This unwanted encounter demonstrates that the convenient placing of the consulting room adjacent to/within the home has its drawbacks. Forced to give the preternaturally pale and foreign woman a consultation, Dr Wybrow wonders later, “Had the woman left an infection of wickedness in his house, and had he caught it?” (Collins, *The Haunted Hotel*, 97).

The blurring of separate functions for space occurs also in the mysterious foreign woman’s own lodgings, as they are gossiped about at a men’s club in London. This woman, the Countess Naron, who has “stolen” the heart of the Baron Montbarry away from his respectable English fiancée, is reputed to have had an “apartment” in Paris [that] had been denounced to the police as nothing less than a private gambling-house” (*The Haunted Hotel*, 99). This aspersion on the Countess’s character points to one of the oft-stated justifications of the English for single-family homes in England, as quoted in Marcus’ study. In the 1851 census, Registrar General George Graham writes that “The possession of an entire house is ... strongly desired by every Englishman; for it throws a sharp, well-defined circle round his family and hearth” (Marcus, 232). Further, multiple-family dwellings are associated with sexual promiscuity, and the apartment-dwelling of Countess Naron with her compromised reputation is no exception (Marcus, 105).

Collins’s decision to move the scene abroad to the Venetian palace increases the tale’s gothicism, both in the palace’s setting with its subterranean vaults and mysterious chemical experiments by the Countess’ “brother,” and in its idea that “irrational and evil forces threaten both individual integrity and the material order of society” (Fowler, 105). The English Baron Montbarry, who owns land in Ireland and who has spurned his English fiancée in favor of a dark foreigner reputed to be an adventuress, seems spoiling for trouble. Montbarry, an apparent recluse, chooses his own honeymoon exile, oddly accompanied by his brother-in-law. Collins depicts here two travellers who are antithetical to travel: one man works at science, while the other shuts himself away from the delights travel can afford: “the imaginary space outside of ordinary life” (Buzard, 34); liberation from the “values and norms of the traveller’s home society” (Korte, 98); and the chance to “[heighten] one’s perceptive, imaginative, emotional and sensory powers” (Morgan, 10), especially in erotic ways, as the Baron is on his honeymoon with the woman he has defied Society to marry.

Instead, though, of a triumphant travelling awakening, the Baron meets an unexpected death in Venice from bronchitis, and insurance inspectors are sent to investigate the circumstances of his death. They discover nothing unusual. This same palace is converted into a grand hotel – the Palace Hotel – a destination for foreign travellers working hard at leisure.

The Palace Hotel fulfills multiple narrative functions. As a hotel, it uses elements of the apartment house plot, and also the haunted house story. Close to the square of St. Mark’s, inside it Collins situates “the city’s flow and multiplicity,” conflating public and domestic spaces and incurring the threat of mistaken identity, chance encounters, and the increasing interplay between isolation and community (Marcus, 11-12). The locus for all of this is the bed abroad, chamber 13A and number 38 above it, and the mystery concerning what took place there is intertwined with the fever of stock speculation in this new business venture. This fever has even spread to Ireland, where an old family retainer who has invested one hundred pounds urges a wedding party

and honeymoon couple to book rooms there, so she can see a ten percent return on her investment.

Collins critiques the cold-hearted Henry Westwick's callous indifference to his older brother's death by the fact that he has invested money in the scene where the death occurred, and that further, he actively solicits the monetary investments of others. Once at the Palace Hotel in Venice, Henry is at first assigned another room, one lit by gaslight. Gaslight consumed oxygen in bedrooms, and adequate ventilation was a major problem in Victorian bedrooms, as home, in lodgings and in hotels, as Lady Barker notes in her *The Bedroom and Boudoir* (1878) :

It is imposible to over-estimate the value of refreshing sleep to busy people, particularly to those who are obliged to do brainwork. In the following pages will, we hope be found many hints with regard to the sanitary as well as the ornamental treatment of the bedroom.

(Barker, *Preface*)

A bedroom with gaslight, despite being well-lit, would be apt to be stuffy and uncomfortable, and Henry is happy to exchange bedrooms with an American gentleman who must have gas laid on in his chamber and so takes Henry's room in another part of the hotel. The ordinary Victorian bedroom was haunted not by ghosts, but by "bad air, like a slaughterhouse," and the "want of freshness" was thought to be caused by "old walls" and "soiled clothes" (Emerson, quoted by Barker, 1; Barker, 4). Nevertheless, Henry experiences a real haunting: although he usually slept "as well in a bed abroad as in a bed at home ... [that night] He never slept at all. An indescribable sense of depression and discomfort kept him waking through darkness and daylight alike" (Collins, *The Haunted Hotel*, 169). Here Collins incorporates the ghost story, with its haunted house that "broadcast[s] the urban deformation of the domestic ideal" (Marcus, 50). That deformation occurs, despite the restructuring of the hotel into smaller, lavishly decorated chambers, and its slavish catering to its guests to create a grand hotel that will continue to woo English tourists away from English hotels to continentals ones (*The Haunted Hotel*, 158-9; Bence-Jones, 1062). Marcus argues that Victorian ghost stories "amalgamated realism and unreality" thus compromising each (121). Thus, Collins shows one brother discrediting the supernatural elements and burning the manuscript that unfolds the uncanny events, while the other follows up on the clues emanating from the apparition of the severed head and the confession/playscript. At the same time, the haunting of the family members cannot be denied, and such haunting links the luxury hotel, despite its distinctly upper-middle-class inhabitants, with the "characteristics attributed to the urban poor": pestilential living conditions, spying and surveillance, and the unwanted incursion of foreign bodies in close quarters.

Visiting the hotel's chambers 13A and 38, the other siblings all experience various physical, mental, and dream disturbances such as disgusting odors and nightmares, and a niece sees a bloodstain on the ceiling, but the worst horror is reserved for the jilted fiancée of the dead man, the idealized Agnes Lockwood. She experiences a chamber of horrors when she lights a match after midnight, reenacting a part of the experience of the English Baronet's murder by two foreigners; she discovers foreign bodies in her room: the widow of her dead lover, the scandal-ridden Countess Naronia lying in a trance in an armchair, and a floating severed head, too disfigured to reveal its identity.

Agnes's "bed abroad" in Venice epitomizes the English fear of lacking separation from and of mingling with social and ethnic others abroad. This crowded bedroom mirrors the hotel's popularity as a tourist destination, for the hotel is a congested site. Collins emphasizes its lack of vacancies: "So much interest . . . had been aroused, at home and abroad, by profuse advertising, that the whole accommodation of the building had been secured by travellers of all nations for the opening night" (Collins, *The Haunted Hotel*, 168). Beyond the fear of congestion, Agnes's bedroom resurrects the dead Baron, eerily intimating his ghostly desire for her. In Bachelard's terms, the cellar space is "the dark *entity* of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces" (Bachelard, 18). The visitation of the severed head in the bedroom recreates that space in the image of the cellar, the place of "buried madness," "walled-in tragedy," where the Countess's brother/lover performed his chemical experiments and tried to destroy the Baron's corpse (Bachelard, 20). The Countess Narona's trance-like state, and Agnes's loss of consciousness plunge them both into Bachelard's spatial and psychological "cellar dream" that Collins has created using the architecture of the Venetian palace and the apartment house and haunted house plots.

The hotel also functions as an example of Britons working at leisure, one of whom is Francis Westwick, the deceased man's brother, and a theatre manager. Westwick has travelled to Italy to celebrate a family wedding, but he is actually working the whole time he is there, scouting continental theatres for talent, and imagining new theatrical productions: he wants to produce a "ghost-drama," and its "title occurred to him in the railway: *The Haunted Hotel* – put that in red letters six feet high, on a black ground all over London and trust the excitable public to crowd into the theatre!" (175). Impervious to the bad taste of this idea, he is not impervious to a horrible smell in the room in connection to his brother's death, and his attention is solicited by his brother's widow, the Countess Narona in St Mark's Square, one of the public places where tourists cannot always control their social contacts.

The coffee houses on three sides of St. Mark's are populated, nineteenth-century travel writer Louis Simond estimates, by forty-thousand people each evening (Simond, 42). Simond reassures British tourists that "the different classes of people do not meet promiscuously" (Simond, 42), while W. E. Norris, writing in *Belgravia* in the same issue in which the final part of Collins's novel was serialized, tells a Venetian story in which his protagonist deliberately seeks out contact with ethnic others at St. Mark's Square: "I always like to associate with foreigners while I am abroad" ("Bianca," 49). The consequence of this meeting in public and their adjournment to a café, is the writing of a three-act play by the Countess which is also a confession.

Collins's bed abroad and its shared proximity become metaphors for the ultimate threat to Englishness: death, disappearance, mistaken identity. The Venetian palace/Palace Hotel converts too easily the domestic to the commercial, its bedroom the space for hiding a foreign body and exposing a foreign body, for forbidden intimacies such as cross-cultural marriages, adultery, and incestuous liaisons between brother and sister, for treachery, murder, and the neglect of family honor. The English body abroad feels restless, diseased and intruded upon, and Englishmen abroad work overtime on vacation to compensate for this insidious dis-ease, as Dickens and Collins both show. The once intact and honored English body of a Baron becomes the "mutilated remains" (*The Haunted Hotel*, 235) that go undiscovered,

unclaimed and unburied for many months, hidden in a secret vault, echoing Dickens's anxieties in *Pictures from Italy* about what he experiences as a cavalier attitude to the treatment and burial of the dead (*Pictures*, 379-80).

The foreign body shows its ultimate horror when it is offered for narrative and casual, almost touristic display. Invited by the hotel's manager to visit the expiring Countess, Henry Westwick watches:

The Countess was stretched on her bed. The doctor on one side, and the chambermaid on the other, were standing looking at her. From time to time, she drew a heavy stertorous breath, like a person oppressed in sleeping. "Is she likely to die?" Henry asked. "She is dead," the doctor answered. "Dead of the rupture of a blood-vessel on the brain. Those sounds that you hear are purely mechanical – they may go on for hours. Henry looked at the chambermaid. She had little to tell.

(Collins, *The Haunted Hotel*, 230)

While James Bower Harrison's *Medical Aspects of Death* (1852), owned by Dickens in his Gad's Hill library, suggests "the observance of respiration be taken as the indication of life, and its absence as a proof of death," Harrison does note exceptions to this rule (14). More importantly, the multiplicity of purposes for the deathbed space which violate its sanctity – the lack of dignity afforded the dying/dead woman, who has no privacy, nurse or religious attendant; the doctor's casual display of his specimen/patient; Westwick's desire to question the Countess and her maid – all make this space the ultimate act of voyeurism in *The Haunted Hotel* as the onlookers watch the extinction/expulsion of the foreign body.

\* \* \* \* \*

Finally, although W.H. Wills advocates in his 1855 *Household Words* essay "Paris Improved" that London should adopt Paris's model of apartment dwellings: "When the cobbler meets the baronet or the government official, or madame or mademoiselle on the stairs, he claims them as neighbors only by a bow, and a bon jour" and that neighbors in such proximity do not "interfere" with each other (Wills, 354), the apartment house with its common spaces, and similarly, the prison and the hotel, were perceived to compromise safety, sexuality, hygiene, privacy and class distinctions in ways that unwind in the apartment house plot, first identified by Sharon Marcus, and variously constructed in Dickens's *Little Dorrit* and Collins's *The Haunted Hotel*.

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# A Land of Angels with *Stiletto*s: Travel Experiences and Literary Representations of Italy in Wilkie Collins

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Italy held an enduring fascination for Wilkie Collins. The intriguing views of *Il Bel Paese*, offered by his fictional and non-fictional works, prove that his interest was neither purely aesthetic nor prompted simply by an age-long literary taste for the exotic. As an artist's son, Collins was a genuine admirer of Italian art and landscape. But he also felt a strong attraction for the culture of the Mediterranean country, which he strove to represent from a realistic, unbiased perspective.

This attraction for Italy is closely connected with Collins's sustained curiosity about *alterity* – a recurrent topic of his fiction, which has lately become a focus of critical scrutiny. *The Moonstone*, in particular, has been interpreted as a text that problematizes colonial relations with otherness. First raised by John Reed's early study of *The Moonstone* (1973), the interest in Collins's critique of imperialism has led to compelling readings of his racial images, which have been examined in the light of his constant swerving from mainstream Victorian ideology.

What is noteworthy, however, is the gap in critical attention paid to his different images of the non-British. In comparison with his extra-European representations of otherness, his European ones have received less scholarly notice. The need for a critical assessment of Collins's "pictures from Europe" – and especially from Italy – is compelling given the wide range of Continental figures, places and habits we can trace in his works. Altogether, these recurrent *topoi* show that Collins's curiosity about foreign cultures had no fixed boundaries. Enthralled as he was by the mysteries of the Caribbean or India, he was also drawn to less remote cultures, which he explored in two ways: indulging his ethnological curiosity about the Other, and underscoring, by comparison, some aporias and flaws of his own society. Italy fulfils both functions in his writing. In addition to offering effective examples of cultural diversity, his Italian figures and contexts work as sort of blueprints for the Victorian world, since they unveil its contradictions either by allusion or by explicit denunciation.

More than other countries visited or imagined by Collins, Italy acquired a cultural and epistemological relevance worth examining. But when and how did this attraction originate?

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Collins was a frequent traveller to Italy. At the age of twelve, he accompanied his parents on a two-year visit to the Continent. The family spent a long time in Rome and Naples and, despite some health problems, enjoyed their stay. As an adult, Wilkie made other trips to the "land of lost delight" (Peters, 129). In 1853, he went on a tour around Italy with Dickens and

Augustus Egg, and returned to many cities he had seen with his parents. He visited Milan and Rome again with Edward Pigott, in 1866. And he chose Italy as the destination of two trips he made with Caroline Graves in 1863 and 1877.

Every time he returned to Italy, he was overwhelmed by the happy memories of his first formative journey. His thrill at seeing again the art treasures he had admired with his father, his joy at discovering that the family's "favourite haunts" in Rome and Naples had hardly changed, are amply testified in his letters. On his first return to Rome, in 1853, Collins wrote to his brother Charles:

This place seems, and really is, unaltered. I recognised, this morning, all the favourite [erased word] haunts on the Pincian Hill, that we asked to run about as little boys – I saw the same Bishops, in purple stockings, followed by servants in gaudy liveries – the same importunately impudent beggars – the same men with pointed hats and women with red petticoats and tightly swaddled babies that I remembered so well in England since 1837 and 1838.

(13 November 1853, *Letters*, I 113)

A few days later, in a letter from Venice, he conveyed similar impressions to his mother: "Here as at Rome, nothing seems to have altered for the last fifteen years" (25 November 1853, *Letters*, I 117). Although he found Naples "altered in one or two important respects" (*Letters*, I 113), he was assailed by reminiscences and strove to detect signs of continuity with the past whenever he happened to visit the city again. (The Collinses had stayed in the area from May 1837 to February 1838, moving to Sorrento and Ischia while cholera was raging in town, and returning to Naples when fears of contagion had abated.) On his first voyage back to Naples, he felt the lure of the city as soon as he caught sight of it:

The sea was of the real Mediterranean blue [...] the Islands in the bay showed their lovely forms with a soft indistinctness indescribably visionary and beautiful to look at – and the unrivalled scene of Naples itself, with its gardens its lofty houses, and its grand forts, gleamed again right under the sunny portion of the sky. Every part of the view was familiar to me, though it is 15 years since I saw it last.

(To Edward Pigott, 4 November 1853, *Public Face*, I 93)

His later visits to Italy renewed his sense of putting the clock back. Compared to London, whose life-style and social structure were being transformed by the fast pace of progress, the Italian cities he had explored as a boy were familiar *loci* in which the culture of the past was preserved against traumatic changes.

The missives written on the occasion of his third journey to Italy, which he made with Caroline Graves and her daughter in 1863, record this pervasive sense of standstill. In writing to his mother, on 13 November 1863, Collins mentioned two transformations fostered by progress (the enlarged garden sites, the use of gas-light), but he undermined these novelties by listing a number of contextual and cultural parallels with the past:

Naples – as far as the rain has allowed me to see it – is not much changed. The Villa Reale is twice the size it was in your time, and the Toledo is lit with gas. But the hideous deformed beggars are still in the street [...] no two members of the populace can meet in the street and talk about anything without screeching at the tops of their [erased word] voice, with their noses close together and their hands gesticulating madly above their heads. – Here are all the old stinks flourishing – all the fruit-stalls and



iced-water stalls at all the old corners of the streets – here are the fishermen with the naked [mahogany] legs – here are the children with [erasure] a short shirt on, and nothing else, and here are their fond mothers hunting down the vermin in their innocent little heads. Political convulsions may do what they please – Bourbons may be tumbled down, and Victor Emmanuels may be set up – Naples keeps its old cheerful dirty devil-may-care face in spite of them.

(*Letters*, I 237)

Dirty, poor and smelly though it might be, Naples still preserved the “old cheerful face” it had shown to the Collinses twenty-five years before. A place of visual, auditory and olfactory contrasts, which inspired both pleasure and disgust, the city was nonetheless endowed with a marked cultural identity. Its power of resistance to change derived from the strength of communal bonds and from a primeval innocence, which made it impermeable to political transformations (including the annexation to Piedmont referred to in the letter). Isotopically evoked by the image of the fond mothers hunting down the lice (“vermin”) in their children’s heads, this idea of *innocence* problematized the cultural opposition Italy vs. Britain, since it implied that the North-European cities of *experience* and *progress* had lost some communal and family values that were still strong in Southern Europe.

Collins’s enthusiasm for Italy was not always shared by his travel companions. On their 1853 tour, Dickens often showed annoyance at the Italian memories and extravagances of the young Collins. His lack of interest in painting made him resent Collins’s learned discourses on art (Peters, 125). And he missed no chance of blaming his friend’s relish for various Southern *pleasures*. “He tells us about the enormous quantities of Monte Pulciano and what not, that he used to drink when he was last here”, Dickens wrote to his wife (quoted in Clarke, 73). In another letter, he mockingly refers to a transgressive story told him by Collins, who claimed he had made his first sexual experience with a married woman in Rome during his boyhood (Peters, 138).

Whatever the truth may be, these testimonies confirm the strong emotional response that Collins had to Italy, a country he was never afraid of exploring and tasting. The large variety of his interests – ranging from folklore to art, from food to women – prove that he was neither a detached observer nor a strict censor of foreign customs. When he was in Italy or thought of Italy, Collins tended to acquire the identity of “Guglielmo Collini”, the funny pseudonym he used to sign two letters sent to his mother after their return to England. Both written in Italian, these missives are riddled with errors of grammar, vocabulary and spelling (*Letters*, I 7, 8). But they bear witness to Collins’s wish to revive, through the Italian language, the memories of a land that he had come to love. Even his later reports on unpleasant aspects of Italian life – the piled-up dirt, the popular habit of shouting, the crammed ships, the aggressive mosquitoes – show a capacity for adaptation and enjoyment uncommon among British travellers.

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More light on Collins’s attitude to Italy is shed by his *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins, Esq., R.A.*, a biography of his father, the well-known painter William Collins. This commemorative work, which he wrote in 1848 after William’s death, includes long records of the family’s sojourn in Italy. Wilkie aimed to depict the foreign country through the eyes of his father, who

had refined his painting techniques during his stay in the land of Raphael and Michelangelo. Indeed, the biography offers good samples of the aesthetic approach that William had to Italian landscapes and people. By inserting letters written or received by his father, and excerpts from his Diary, Wilkie strove to maintain the primacy of William's focalization. But there are also passages that give insights into the son's perception of the foreign land, where he made crucial experiences that would shape his literary career. If carefully examined, Wilkie's memories reveal the important function that Italy fulfilled in broadening his young mind, which was trained to appreciate diversity and overcome the strictures of a monocultural identity.

A telling example is the description of the models engaged by his father in Rome. While the painter's scope was to choose the most suitable figures for his artistic projects, the biographer's focus was laid on the personality of the people sitting for William. His close observation enabled him to perceive a gap between art and life, to discover the inherent ambiguity of human nature, which could not be rendered by ready-made, simplistic categories.

One model, in particular, attracted his attention: a twelve-year-old beautiful boy, who sat for angelic figures but was, in "private life", a *stiletto*-wearing thief and rascal:

Another of his models was a beautiful boy, with features dazzling perfect, who had sat to every one for cupids, angels and whatever else was lovely and refined; and who was in "private life" one of the most consummate rascals in Rome – a gambler, a thief, and a "*stiletto*"-wearer, at twelve years of age!

(*Memoirs*, II 93-4)

The passage conveys an effective idea of the complexity of Italian culture, which the young Collins was learning to see as a land of oxymorons. By highlighting the contrast between the model's pose and actions, between his angelic image and his criminal deeds, Wilkie showed his early awareness of the danger of founding one's moral judgments on appearances. Such awareness would be later activated in his famous novels to unmask the hypocrisy of his own society.

But the ambivalence of the Italian boy did more than alert Collins to the artificiality of behavioural norms. It also instilled in him a sense of ethical relativity, which increased with age and inspired his bold characterization of amiable villains, questionable heroes, and lawbreaking heroines. The moral ambiguity of his characters, who mainly challenge the distinction between "sheep and goats", is anticipated by the portrait of the "*stiletto*-wearer", whose angelic nature is strangely enhanced by his criminal disposition. The boy is mentioned again in a later passage, where he is identified as the model of a beautiful picture of Christ titled "Our Saviour with the Doctors in the Temple":

The model for the face of our Saviour, in the picture now under review, was the beautiful Italian boy, mentioned in the notices of Mr Collins's first sojourn at Rome. Although the expression of his countenance is refined and elevated from the original, in the painter's work, the features retain the resemblance to the first study from Nature – thus mingling, in the personation of Christ, the human with the Divine, in a singularly eloquent and attractive manner.

(*Memoirs*, II 167-8)

In his description of the painting, which his father had completed for an Exhibition in 1840, the biographer notices that, despite the artist's refining touches, the boy's features "retain the resemblance to the first study from Nature". And he adds that it is exactly "this mingling of human and divine" that makes his figure so "singularly eloquent and attractive".

By recalling and interpreting his boyhood reminiscence, Collins suggested that his experience of Italy and Italians had been a major source of inspiration. The unorthodox views he had developed, since his first meeting with the Roman boy, were founded on the conviction that life was a blend of the corporeal and the spiritual, crime and pleasure, violence and beauty – a knot of conflicting ideas twisted together, which could not be untied without destroying its vitality.

Collins was not the only British traveller to be struck by the models that crowded the streets of Rome. Dickens himself devoted a paragraph of his *Pictures from Italy* (1846) – an account of a trip to Italy he had made in 1844-5 – to the description of what he called the "great place of resort" of idle models: the steps that lead from Piazza di Spagna to the church of Trinità dei Monti.

In plainer words, these steps are the great place of resort for the artists' "Models" and they are constantly waiting to be hired [...] and the cream of the thing is, that they are all the falsest vagabonds in the world, especially made for the purpose, and having no counterparts in Rome or any other part of the habitable globe.

(*Pictures*, 130-1)

Unlike Collins, however, Dickens detected no positive elements in those people, whom he scornfully called "the falsest vagabonds in the world". This definition is proof of his different attitude to Italy. Although he embarked on a tour which had become commonplace for middle-class Victorians, Dickens kept himself rather aloof from Italians and was mostly critical of their culture.

A comparison between Dickens's *Pictures* and Collins's *Memoirs* confirms the divergence of their views. Close though were in genre and composition, the works bear evidence of Dickens's perception of Italy as a land of corruption, grotesqueness and violence, while Collins looked at the same aspects with greater tolerance and amusement. In all his sketches of Rome, Dickens evoked a pervasive atmosphere of decay. The collapsing monuments of the "Dead City" (*Pictures*, 114) were made more spectral by the moral debasement of the inhabitants and the stifling practices of the Catholic Church. The latter, in particular, is the butt of the author's bitter criticism. The sickened Pope who looks "as if his mask were going to tumble off" (121), the veneration of scary relics (138-40), the many emblems of martyrdom, the humiliating rituals of penitence (such as, the climbing of the Scala Santa, 156), are instances of the Catholic obsession with death and punishment – a tendency that reaches its climax in the gory spectacle of the beheading of a murderer. The involvement of Churchmen in the execution is highlighted by Dickens, who describes "priests and monks" standing "on tiptoe for a sight of the knife" (142) amid a crowd of petty criminals and blood-thirsty voyeurs.

Quite different was Collins's depiction of the city, whose fascinating aspects did not escape his notice. Although he complained about the dirt of their first abode, he enjoyed the grandeur and mysteries of Rome. A case in point is his memory of some penitent figures he had watched inside the Colosseum, whose stature was enhanced by the solemn atmosphere of the amphitheatre. The scene, which had also made a strong impression on William,

was preserved in the son's memory, who, despite his own protest, managed to reproduce it in an effective pictorial language:

The glorious arches of the Colosseum, showing doubly mysterious and sublime in the dim, fading light cast down on them from the darkening sky, alone surrounded this solemn scene, whose tragic grandeur is *to be painted, but not to be described*. It impressed the painter with emotions not easily forgotten [...]

(*Memoirs*, II 97, my italics)

In another passage of the *Memoirs*, Wilkie expresses admiration for the “splendid ceremonies of the ‘Holy Week’” (II 138-9). His aesthetic note of appraisal is in sheer contrast with Dickens's sustained criticism of the gaudy ornaments, the superstitious rituals and the religious fanaticism of the Roman Church.

Equally different are their emotional responses to the scenes of poverty they viewed in Naples. In his “Rapid Diorama” of Neapolitan life, Dickens lays stress on some outdoor activities that might appear “picturesque”, such as the widespread use of gesture language, the habits of “maccaroni-eating at sunset, and flower-selling all day long” (*Pictures*, 166). Yet, he warns his readers against the risks of idealizing those folkloric aspects at the expense of realism:

But, lovers and hunters of the picturesque, let us not keep too studiously out of view the miserable depravity, degradation, and wretchedness, with which this gay Neapolitan life is inseparably associated! It is not well to find Saint Giles's so repulsive, and the Porta Capuana so attractive. A pair of naked legs and a ragged red scarf, do not make *all* the difference between what is interesting and what is coarse and odious? Painting and poetising for ever, if you will, the beauties of this most beautiful and lovely spot of earth, let us, as our duty, try to associate a new picturesque with some faint recognition of man's destiny and capability; more hopeful, I believe, among the ice and snow of the North Pole, than in the sun and bloom of Naples.

(*Pictures*, 166-7)

The hyperbolic expression “the beauties of this most beautiful and lovely spot of earth”, and the reference to the North Pole (a region that epitomized wilderness), testify to his intention of dismantling an artistic cliché which concealed the drab reality of Neapolitan life. In his view, the allure of the Italian city sprang from a distorted perception of its “beauties”, which was commonplace among British poets and painters. While admiring its exotic colourful surface, they tended to ignore the underlying problems of the largest city in Italy, which was plagued with unemployment and urban poverty (Clark 29-30). In comparison with its London counterpart (Saint Giles's), the Neapolitan underworld of paupers and criminals (the Porta Capuana) was even more repulsive to Dickens, who used the paradoxical remark on the Arctic to underline the inhuman conditions of its inhabitants.

At first sight, the crowd of beggars and “ragged lazzaroni” (165) depicted by Dickens is congruent with the heterogeneous mob that Collins portrayed in his *Memoirs*: “Idlers in the street, fishermen, country people, and lazzaroni, church processions and perambulating provision-sellers—all the heterogeneous population of a Neapolitan highway” (II 115). Yet, a careful scrutiny of their works reveals their different attitudes to the wretched population they observed in the streets of Naples. Whereas Dickens insisted on

images of human degradation that betrayed his sense of cultural superiority, Collins exalted the positive endowments and habits of Neapolitans, such as their unswerving capacity for life enjoyment. This idea comes fully to the fore in a passage that highlights the citizens' popular gaiety during a cholera epidemic:

Nothing in Naples, at first sight, conveyed the slightest idea that the city was threatened by a wasting pestilence. The gaieties of the place all moved on unchecked, and the idle and good-humoured populace lounged about the streets with the same sublime carelessness of all industrious considerations that had ever characterized them.

(*Memoirs*, II 167-8)

Through a careful choice of vocabulary, Collins voiced his admiration for the remarkable skills of Neapolitans, whose resilience to adverse circumstances is given a quasi-heroic tinge (notice how the adjective "sublime" aggrandizes their unwillingness to yield to fears of contagion).

These experiences in Naples had a strong impact on the imagination of the young Collins, who came to perceive the whole Italian peninsula as a land of fascinating, insoluble contrasts. Most evident in his representations of Central and Southern Italy, which had a longer history of political and cultural turmoil, this view also emerges in his memories of Northern cities and regions. In this regard, it is interesting to examine the picture of Venice drawn in the biography. Unlike Dickens, who laid all stress on the ghostliness and decadence of the Serenissima, Collins merged literary echoes with personal impressions to create an elaborate image that challenges definition.<sup>1</sup> Melancholy and declining though it seems, the Venice he portrayed is also a city of delightful sights and amenities, where a British traveller like William could spend sunny days "glid[ing] along in his gondola" and be involved in comic situations. (See the comic anecdote of his father's encounter with the "former cook of Lord Byron's, named Beppo", *Memoirs*, II 147-8).

In the main, these Italian memories prove that, from the very beginning of his career, Collins distrusted most British stereotypes and strove to find a hermeneutic path towards a fresh interpretation of what he considered an appealing foreign culture. In spite of their undeniable behavioural flaws (idleness, corruption, superstition), the Italians he met provided a cultural alternative worth exploring, since they burst with a vitality that counterbalanced the rigidity of British citizens. Less strict than the Victorians in moral and behavioural matters, Italians were also proof against despondency and self-annihilation when they faced hardships or happened to overcome the borders of the licit. The ease of mind exhibited by the equivocal "*stiletto*-wearer" exemplifies Collins's perception of the Southern ability to harmonize strengths and weaknesses – an ability mostly lacking in Northern Europeans, who wavered between prudery and violent passions.

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<sup>1</sup> This picture might appear at odds with the Gothic atmosphere of the late novella "The Haunted Hotel" (1878), set in Venice. Yet, even there Collins attempts to combine literary cliché with real-life observation. The inspiration drawn from a long-established tradition 'romanticizing' Venice is counterbalanced by the references to historical phenomena changing the image of the Serenissima, such as the transformation of its ancient Gothic sites (e.g. the *palazzo* where the murder is committed) into modern luxury hotels.

This cultural contrast is well rendered in Collins's fictional works, which offer insightful studies of Italian customs and personalities. In some works, the author sets the events wholly or partly in Italy, and represents natives in their cultural environment. Elsewhere, he portrays expatriates who interact with British culture *from within*. The latter cases are particularly interesting since they lay the focus on some *Zwischenräume*, i.e. intermediate spaces of encounter and exchange with otherness (Ponzo and Borsò, 1-2). In anticipation of twentieth-century theorists, Collins explored the liminal zones that existed within his society and, in so doing, became aware of the volatility of borders. Against the supporters of monoculturalism – and especially against the Romantic celebrators of essentialism and nationhood – he came to see cross-cultural encounters as the harbingers of a “liquid” phase of modernity, in which the idea of heterogeneity would dismantle “solid” patterns of life and identity (Bauman, *Liquid Times*, 1).

Such openness is best rendered in *The Moonstone*, where the “invasion” of the Indians brahmins epitomizes a *reverse colonization* that questions basic assumptions of race and civilization (Nayder, *Wilkie Collins*, 101). But the role played by his Italian characters is not so different. Less menacing than the Indians, because of their Mediterranean gaiety and their ethnic closeness as Europeans, these characters are nonetheless charged with a subversive energy. The main function they fulfil is that of embodying *familiar* forms of *otherness*, of providing alternative models and value systems that are not felt as too distant but, for this very reason, have disruptive effects on essentialist cultural notions. This reading is confirmed by a comparative analysis of Collins's texts featuring Italians. As will be shown, the sources for their characterization are manifold. In addition to representing the people he actually met during his travels, Collins drew inspiration from the popular heroes of the Risorgimento who lived in London as refugees in the 1840s and 1850s, as well as from a number of mythicized figures of artists and politicians. Like other Victorians, he saw himself in a literary tradition that gave birth to multifarious images of Italy (as the fatherland of Roman emperors and Renaissance dukes, of great artists and bandits, of popes and *patrioti*). Yet, unlike many contemporaries, he strove to interpret these conflicting images in the light of his personal experiences and made limited use of cultural stereotypes. Although they fit into two main paradigms (the *exile* and the *native*), his Italian characters are far from being types or caricatures. Quite varied in their physical and socio-cultural features, they exhibit a psychological complexity and a moral ambiguity which are thought-provoking. If the hybridized nature of exiles poses a direct threat to their host society, natives living in Italy are made to work as dark mirrors for their Victorian counterparts, since they embody an idea of non-disjunction which challenges Victorian binaries of conduct and morality.

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An early example of the *native* paradigm can be found in the novel *Antonina* (1850). The context of this historical novel, which is set in Imperial Rome during the first siege of the Goths, is remote from Collins's world both in time and space. Yet, a close scrutiny of its plot and characterization throws light onto the author's choice of such a distant setting. Rather than proving his antiquarian taste for the Classics, his reconstruction of the Roman empire on the brink of collapse bears evidence of his wish to explore, by comparison, the reality of two countries that were distressed by social and political troubles at

his time: Victorian Britain and the still-fragmented Italian nation, whose unification was being promoted by the ideologues of the Risorgimento.

Many parallels with nineteenth-century Britain are drawn by the narrator himself. In the early chapters, he makes explicit references to gender differences among the Romans that persisted in his age (28), and uses a slave robbery as a pretext to mention the future rise of the uncultured “middle class” (41-3). Later in the novel, he establishes other worrying links between “Ancient Rome” and “Modern London”, including their common problems of overpopulation and urbanization (219). These overt parallels have encouraged critics to interpret ancient Rome as a mythicized projection of Collins’s society. Indeed, the class conflicts between Roman aristocrats and the hungry populace can be viewed in the context of the political troubles of the 1830s and 1840s (the Reform Bill riots and the Chartist petitions) which, half a century later than the French Revolution, faced the Victorians with the spectre of domestic political instability (Heller, 48-57). Equally convincing is the detection of textual analogies between Roman and British imperialism. Before the colonial revolts of the 1850s and 1860s, and before the late-Victorian identification with *Romanitas* (Vance, 197), Collins warned his readers against the future decline of their prosperous empire which, after thriving on slavery and racial discrimination, was doomed to fall like its Roman antecedent (Nayder, *Wilkie Collins*, 21-9). Skilfully combined with problems of gender inequalities, the class and imperialistic policies exposed in *Antonina* prove that the author turned the myth of late Imperial Rome into a symbolic projection of his own world.

But these parallels do not fully account for the complex symbolism of *Antonina*. In addition to posing questions of class, race and gender that were prominent in mid-century Britain, Collins transposed into historical fiction some issues that did not personally involve his Victorian readership but were nonetheless amply discussed at home. A main issue is the struggle for Italian independence and unification, which is indirectly evoked by the image of the siege of Rome. While Collins was completing *Antonina*, the Continent was upset by the insurrections of 1848 and by the proclamation of the Roman Republic (9 February-3 July 1849), which was governed by a secular triumvirate until the restoration of papal power. The heroic resistance of the Roman revolutionaries for over two months, under the military guidance of Garibaldi, was followed with great interest by British people and was largely debated in the press (Rudman, 80-8).<sup>2</sup>

Collins did not take an active part in the public discussion, but it is not hard to imagine that he was struck by an event that had so much resonance among Victorian intellectuals. Different though they were in their historical details, the two sieges could be ideologically subsumed into one long chronicle, as crucial moments in the history of a nation that was on the verge of dissolution in the year 408, and was being reconstructed in 1848-9. In *Antonina*, the nexus between the proto-Italian empire of the Romans and the national ideal pursued by nineteenth-century revolutionaries is indirectly traced by the narrator when he describes “the plains of fated Italy, whose destiny of defeat and shame was now hastening to its dark and fearful accomplishment” (Collins, *Antonina*, 10). By using the noun “Italy” with reference to the Roman

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<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to David Paroissien for this bibliographical suggestion.

Empire, Collins seemed to endorse the political ideas of the strenuous defenders of the Roman Republic, who fought in the name of a nation that had ceased to exist shortly after the Goths' invasion (Clark, 2).

Another question that is obliquely connected with the Italian cause for independence is the conflict between secularism and religion. Apart from the *exogenous* Gothic invaders, there is an *endogenous* agent of chaos that threatens to shatter the world of *Antonina* into pieces: religious fanaticism. In line with Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88), Collins "portrays a Christian culture that is unwilling to live peacefully alongside other faiths" (Mangham, 104). The depravity of the founders of the Roman Church is rendered in appalling terms by the young novelist, who unveils their mercenary motives, highlights their collusion with politicians, and provides fierce images of their persecution of pagans. Described as a temporal, more than a spiritual, struggle for power, the public conflict between Christians and pagans is reduplicated, at a private level, by the bloody fight between two brothers, Numerian and Ulpius, which tragically affects their family. But what are the reasons for Collins's virulent attack on politicized religion and fanaticism? If it is true that anti-Catholic prejudices were ingrained in the Victorian frame of mind, it is also true that the young author must have responded to some particular events that showed how belief was easily turned into zealotry and a will-to-power.

Some light is thrown on his motives by the political role played by Pope Pius IX in the mid century. The cultural milieu in which Collins lived was strongly influenced by the secular views of Italian radicals in exile, and by the widespread enthusiasm for the short-lived Roman Republic. The restoration of Pius IX posed, with more urgency, the problem of a despotic Church that used faith as an instrument of political oppression. These historical facts validate the hypothesis that *Antonina* was a fictional contribution – or at least a response – to the antipapal campaign conducted by Italians both at home and abroad, a campaign which mounted in the following decades and finally led to the annexation of the papal states to Piedmont. By reconstructing the misdeeds of the early Roman Church, Collins wove a critical discourse against "distorted" uses of religion. As already suggested, this discourse was most likely influenced by the struggles for independence fought in the Italian peninsula. But Collins widened the implications of his critique, which did not only target ancient and modern Roman Catholicism. In depicting both Christians and pagans as blood-thirsty fanatics, he expressed his disapproval of all religious creeds that stifled individual and collective aspirations in the name of God. This view is confirmed by the mad bigotry of Ulpius. Like his Christian enemies, the insane pagan priest is involved in a game for power that has no spiritual scope but only wreaks havoc. Both responsible for bloodshed, the two antagonistic parties are connoted as anomic forces that have betrayed their religious mission, since they have engaged a political conflict that is displacing the mental, physical and spiritual balance of the community.

In this sense, *Antonina* sets the scene for an early dramatization of the difficult relations between clergy and laymen, a problematic issue that the author explored in more details in two later works: "The Yellow Mask" (1855) and *The Black Robe* (1881). In the short story, whose framed narrative is set in Pisa one century before his age, Collins portrayed a scheming Italian priest, Father Rocco, who destroys people's happiness and sanity to strengthen the temporal power of the Church. The dreadful plot he hatches to restore the



former Church properties “to the successors of the apostles” (“The Yellow Mask”, 105), is not only an anticipation of the sense of loss felt by Roman Catholics during the Risorgimento. It also epitomizes a long-established tendency to muddle up spiritual and materialistic interests, which was widespread among clergymen of different faiths and ages. Not surprisingly, Father Rocco adopts a treacherous conduct that recalls the actions of most religious men in *Antonina*. Like Ulpus, who betrays Rome to the Goths, he has no scruples in cheating his family members, and like the sanguinary Christian priests who “strip the pagan temples of the mass of jeweled ornaments and utensils” (Collins, *Antonina*, 280), he uses illegal means to restore economic benefits to the Church.

Both in “The Yellow Mask” and in *Antonina*, the author seems to uphold a prejudiced view of Italy as the fatherland of clerical fanaticism and greed. But a careful examination of other works proves that his criticism was not constrained within geographical and cultural boundaries. In representing Catholicism, Collins also laid stress on its fascinating aspects, as some pictures of the *Memoirs* attest. Nor did he exclusively associate religious perversions with Italy. In *The Black Robe*, for example, the role of villain is played by a British Jesuit, Father Benwell. Like Father Rocco, Benwell seeks retribution for what he considers a “profanation of a sacred place” (*The Black Robe*, 38) and a historical crime – in his case, the seizing of Church properties in Britain during the Tudor Reformation. And, like his fictional antecedent, he pursues his aim with a sort of insane obsession. It is worthy of mention, however, that the *Italian* priest avoids committing murder and is partly redeemed by his pity for his victims, while the *British* Jesuit is a relentless fighter for the cause, who has no scruples in leading his brethren to death.

This reversal of national stereotypes suggests that Collins’s view of religious deviance was transnational and transcultural. His exposure of bigotry and mercenary motives, in spiritual matters, was combined with a criticism of those social rules that curbed individual aspirations to freedom and self-realization. It is no coincidence, therefore, that one year before writing “The Yellow Mask”, he exposed the stifling norms of English Dissenters in *Hide and Seek* (1854). And in other works, he missed no chance to cast a shadow on the hypocrisy of High Church observants and Evangelicals.

Although it was traditionally linked with clerical and political corruption, Italy was not only conceived by Collins as an anti-model which made Britain emerge, by contrast, as a paragon of virtue. In exploring the dark sides of the Southern culture, he was also struck by some elements of diversity that evaded the strictures of Victorian conduct and morality. His search for alternative models is evident in the strange characterization of some Italians endowed with multi-faceted personalities, which epitomize morally perplexing, but also liberating, forms of otherness. An early specimen is the Roman senator Vetrano portrayed in *Antonina*, a pleasure-seeking man who displays a capability for generosity and a healthy cynicism that is proof against religious frenzy.

A prototype of some memorable characters later drawn by Collins, the senator is a living oxymoron that is not encompassed by simplistic categories. Humane and profligate, comic and serious, cynical and caring, he overshadows the gloomy heroism of the Goths, and is more helpful than the stern Numerian in saving Antonina’s life. His epicurism, which is never disjunct from a stoic belief in humanistic values, offers an interesting way out of the fanaticism of

other characters. A lover of good food, music and pets, who is well-known for his kindness to slaves and to the lower classes, Vetrano is the prophet of a hedonistic faith which leads him to chase his objects of desire (such as Antonina) but also saves him from the grips of irrationality. Unlike the sanguinary zealots of both creeds, he is endowed with an ability to sympathize with people. Emblematic is the case of Antonina, whom he first tries to seduce but later rescues from dishonour and death. Another interesting feature is Vetrano's sense of dignity, which makes him prefer death to humiliation. While the sieged Romans are starving in the streets or resorting to cannibalism, the senator refuses to yield to beastly drives and organizes a suicidal banquet (the Banquet of Famine) to meet an honourable death. Even though he fails to commit suicide, he never exhibits signs of fear and, after being rescued by the sight of Antonina, reconverts his hedonism into a nobler form of love.

Initially introduced as an "elegant gastronomer" (85), a description also applicable to Collins himself, Vetrano organizes Lucullan banquets and prides himself on being the author of celebrated sauces. Indeed, he is consistently defined through the dominant trope of the novel: food. Even his final metamorphosis into a sort of paternal figure, who outdoes Numerian in granting Antonina's safety, is achieved through food, or rather through its lack, which is grotesquely shown in the Banquet of Famine. The wine he drinks copiously with the other revellers, in replacement of sumptuous eatables, opens Vetrano's mind to a new kind of emotion: the non-erotic love between parent and child. After having a first glimpse of such love by observing Reburus (the hunchback who delivers the corpse of his dead mother from public scorn), he is suddenly confronted by Antonina, whose materialization on the scene cancels his resolve to die and offers him a new role, as disinterested protector of the girl. In the novel's conclusion, the senator gives the following definition of his new feeling of love: "I know nothing of the mysteries that the Christians call their 'Faith'; but I believe now in the soul. I believe that one soul contains the fate of another, and that *her* soul contains the fate of mine!" (Collins, *Antonina*, 289). Although he mentions the "soul" as a possible explanation for his passional impulse, he expresses his conviction in the power of "fate" and disavows any knowledge of supernaturalism ("Faith"). His object of desire is still a human being and the nature of their bond, which excludes a third party, is strangely rendered in earth-bound terms (notice the physical connotations of the verb "contains"). What Vetrano has undergone, by experiencing the temporary *loss* of his wished-for objects (both food and erotic love), is thus a process of sublimation of his compulsive drives, a process that has refined his hedonism without changing the direction of his passionate trajectories.

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Clearly distinguished from religion, the *spiritualized humanism* of the senator is a variation of his epicurean attitude, which keeps him aiming at wordly objectives. This evolving attitude adds to the intricacy of his personality. A blend of hedonistic and spiritual aspirations, of streaks of cynicism and stoical endurance, the senator embodies an idea of non-disjunction which, in literature, is conventionally rendered by figures of doubleness (Kristeva). His ambivalent complexity is better viewed in comparison with the two Italian characters of *The Woman in White*, of which the senator is a fictional archetype. Like Count Fosco, Vetrano is extremely fond of pets and enthuses about life pleasures with child-like spontaneity – they are both lovers of fine music and food. What he shares with Professor

Pesca, instead, is a sense of responsibility for individuals, whose interests are put before those of society. These three figures are endowed with a psychological depth that becomes a catalyst for transgressive discourses. A main difference among them, however, is in their relation to British society. Whereas Vetrano offers an upsetting, but far-off, model of non-normative conduct, Fosco and Pesca incarnate a dangerous hybridity, since they personally interact with the community that has given them shelter. Their aggressive status of *exiles* enhances the disruptive function of their otherness, since they are shown to inhabit a space of uncanniness *within* the apparently homogeneous world of the Victorians.

Count Isidoro, Ottavio, Baldassare Fosco is one of the greatest figures ever conceived by Collins. “[H]e is more real, more genuine, more *Italian* even [...] than the whole array of conventional Italian villains” wrote Margaret Oliphant (567), who was charmed by the witty Count despite her moral reservations. Cunning and chivalrous, masculine and gentle, wise and scrupulous, Fosco frustrates any attempts at classification. Repeatedly compared to Napoleon for his magnificent self-control (241), he evokes through his first name (Baldassare) and behaviour two models that were dominant in Mediterranean cultures: the courtier elaborated by Baldassarre Castiglione in *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528) and the wise Jesuit dissimulator celebrated by Baltasar Gracián in *Oraculo Manual y Arte de Prudencia* (1647). Fosco himself seems to validate this view when he claims to be “a Jesuit [...] – a splitter of straws” (Collins, *The Woman in White*, 265).

Even more disorienting are the features he shares with some historical figures of the Risorgimento. Initially presented as an Italian exile, he is inscribed within a genealogy of political refugees well-known to the Victorians – apart from punning on the name of Ugo Foscolo, Collins endows the Count with a mesmerizing personality (Collins, *The Woman in White*, 239) that seems to reproduce the “immense magnetic power” exercised by Mazzini (Rudman, 149; Hutter, 196). In the course of the narration, however, the Count puts on other masks that complicate his political position. A former member of a radical secret society (the Brotherhood), he is said to have become a counterrevolutionary and an agent of a foreign government in disguise (584). But this apparent revelation is not devoid of ambiguities. First of all, the Count claims to be “charged with a delicate political mission from abroad” (618) that is not proved to have criminal scopes. Secondly, his betrayal of a violent society like the Brotherhood, which thrives on intimidation and murder, is not automatically readable as a villainous act. A further aspect that deserves attention is his endowment with great political skills. The self-assurance he preserves in dangerous situations, his ability to combine “prompt decision”, “far-sighted cunning”, politeness and audacity (611-13), were highly valued qualities among Collins’s contemporaries, who admired them both in domestic and foreign politicians. A telling example was that of Count Camillo Benso di Cavour. While Collins was publishing *The Woman in White*, Cavour was using his “diplomatic scoundrelism” (Rudman, 271) to achieve the scope that had been missed by revolutionaries: the unification of Italy. Never regarded as a hero, he was nonetheless much respected for his political successes by the British moderate intelligentsia.

Under attentive reading, Fosco displays a number of traits in common with the Piedmontese Minister. Phonically suggested by their names (notice the similar sound-structure of *Fosco* and *Benso*), the parallels between their figures

are reinforced by their Machiavellianism, their aristocratic titles (both are counts), their corpulent frames and their Anglophile leanings. The latter feature, which is evident in Fosco's perfect mastery of his hosts' language and manners, was also a peculiarity of Cavour who was sometimes "more English than the English themselves" (Rudman 271-83).

A most important quality that Fosco seems to share with historical Machiavellians, including Cavour, is his clarity of vision. Both in public and in private affairs, the Count displays an uncommon ability to perceive human weaknesses and compromising attitudes below the surface of exhibited morality. Soon after his arrival at Blackwater Park, for instance, he shocks his British relatives by asserting the primacy of two notions that clashed with the dominant Victorian ethos: the notions of *cultural* and *ethical relativity*.

I am a citizen of the world, and I have met, in my time, with so many different sorts of virtue, that I am puzzled, in my old age, to say which is the right sort and which is the wrong. Here, in England, there is one virtue. And there, in China, there is another virtue. And John Englishman says my virtue is the genuine virtue. And John Chinaman says my virtue is the genuine virtue. [...] John Bull does abhor the crimes of John Chinaman. He is the quickest old gentleman at finding out faults that are his neighbours', and the slowest old gentleman at finding out the faults that are his own, who exists on the face of creation. Is he so very much better in his way than the people whom he condemns in their way? English Society, Miss Halcombe, is as often the accomplice as it is the enemy of crime.

(Collins, *The Woman in White*, 256-8)

Convincingly sustained by experience and wisdom ("old age"), his argument against cultural and moral absolutes is an amazing anticipation of the notion of relativism which became prominent in Western thinking in the late nineteenth century. In addition to providing a historical critique of imperialistic policies – he clearly alludes to "the reprehensible actions of the British during the Opium War" (Nayder, "Agents of Empire", 4), Fosco gives voice to a philosophical problem that was dawning on mid-century intellectuals: the problem of living in an age of transition, in which old certainties were being displaced by ideas of multiplicity and fragmentation.

A clear spokesman for the author, who called a variety of monological systems into question, Fosco is here invested with the role of *embodying modernity*, of giving flesh to its contradictions and merging them together. His strange synthesis of political idealism and scoundrelism poses two thorny problems that faced the Victorians during the Risorgimento: of choosing between loyalty to legitimate governments (like the one which Fosco is believed to serve) and support for revolutionary groups; and of reconciling political with moral scopes in European and colonial affairs. As an intellectual aristocrat, moreover, Fosco incarnates an ambiguous syncretism of class and cultural issues, which renders the irreversible process of change experienced all over Europe.

This latter aspect comes fully to the fore in the relations he establishes with the British representatives of conflicting classes: the aristocracy, the landed gentry, and the rising bourgeoisie. In comparison with the hysterical members of the upper classes, the hypochondriac Frederick Fairlie and the neurotic Sir Percival Glyde, the Italian Count is a model of composure and politeness, who claims to respect the laws of propriety (630) and to believe in "the sacred interests of humanity" (624).

Another remarkable feature he possesses is his deep knowledge of medicine and chemistry, a form of learning that, unlike Fairlie's sterile collection of art objects, could have helpful applications in society. The criminal use he occasionally makes of this knowledge is counterbalanced by his unselfish treatment of Marian Halcombe during her illness, and by his claim to have avoided "committing unnecessary crime" (632) in applying his science. If we consider his learning, Fosco appears as a bizarre aristocrat, who has much in common with middle-class professionals. Like them, he is torn by the difficulty of reconciling theory with praxis, personal profit with public welfare. His relation with Walter Hartright is particularly meaningful in this regard. A member of the intellectual middle class, who initially suffers from social discrimination, Hartright develops a resolution and a cunning which enable him to marry above his station. His climbing of the social ladder is achieved through his imitation of Fosco's shrewdness. By becoming a "spy" of the Italian Count (586-7), in an action that ironically reduplicates the latter's espionage activities, Hartright learns a secret that he uses to blackmail his antagonist. His lack of scruples is most evident in the concluding section of the novel in which he becomes the instrument of Fosco's assassination. His avowal of being innocent of the charge is invalidated by his unscrupled use of the Count's secret, as well as by the strange coincidence between the journey to Paris he makes with Pesca and the finding of Fosco's corpse in the Seine (640-4). Whatever his agency in the murder may be, Hartright is morally responsible for a crime which he strives to justify in humanitarian terms (to restore Laura's identity) but which actually grants him social and economic benefits.

In contrast with Fosco, who tempers utilitarian goals with refined manners and love for knowledge, Hartright comes to embody the materialistic ethos of the rising middle classes. A further clue to this reading is provided by a question of honour raised by the Count. When he yields to Hartright's blackmail and agrees to write the confession, Fosco poses three conditions himself, the last of which has to do with gentlemanly values:

You give me the satisfaction of a gentleman for your intrusion into my private affairs, and for the language you have allowed yourself to use to me at this conference. The time and place, abroad, to be fixed in a letter from my hand when I am safe on the Continent, and that letter to contain a strip of paper measuring accurately the length of my sword.

(Collins, *The Woman in White*, 611)

Never mentioned again by Hartright, the promised letter of challenge from the Continent becomes the symbol of their diverging ideologies. To the obsolete custom of duelling invoked by the Count, the drawing master opposes his utilitarian attitude, which makes him ignore and easily forget the question of honour.

Although he is morally reprehensible for his plot against Laura and Anne, Fosco is no stock villain. What he offers is a cohesive but protean commingling of the values associated with different Victorian classes. Unlike Hartright, who betrays the humanistic ideals of the cultured middle class to espouse the doctrine of self-help, the Italian Count exhibits a *trans-class* identity, since he combines greed with fairness, resolve with equanimity, intellectualism with sophistication, cunning with sense of honour. His syncretic personality suggests that Collins did not take sides with one specific class or value system, but was rather intrigued by new combinations. Whereas Glyde and Fairlie are typical representatives of the declining aristocracy and landed

gentry, Fosco is endowed with a dignity and self-assurance that exude from his body even after his death: “Hushed in the sublime repose of death, the broad, firm, massive face and head fronted us so grandly [...]” (643). At the same time, however, he adapts to the changing reality of his world with chameleonic ability, even though he lacks the uncompromising determination of an acolyte of self-help like Hartright. The errors he makes are attributed to what he calls his “humanity” (632), a personal elaboration of the notion of virtuosity which makes him preserve the life of his victims, and pay unswerving respect to his female antagonist, Marian. The latter case deserves special notice. Whereas Hartright stifles the unconventional energy of the young woman, who becomes his ally but is gradually forced into an orthodox domestic role (“Marian was the good angel of our lives”, 646), Fosco is a gallant admirer of her transgressive femininity. A tamer of women, as shown by the strict control he exercises over his “tigerish” wife Eleanor (239), the Count is also capable of relating on equal terms with Marian. The battle of wits he engages with her, and the homage he repeatedly pays to her cunning, prove that he allows the woman more freedom of thought and action than she is later accorded in Hartright’s world.

Highly contradictory but innovative, Fosco has been the object of multiple, often diverging, interpretations. If his witticism and cheerfulness have aroused the sympathy of generations of readers, his Machiavellianism and his criminal plotting decidedly inscribe him in the category of literary villains. To get a clue to the author’s intentions, in drawing his impressive portrait, we need to take two things into consideration. First of all, we should take into account that Fosco is neither a Briton nor a foreigner. His Anglicized Italian nature, onto which he has grafted other cultural constituents (he easily moves across Europe and claims to understand extra-European customs), connotes him as a cross-cultural hybrid, who proudly defines himself “a citizen of the world” (256). A second element to consider is that, exactly because of his transnationalism, Fosco can sow the seeds of doubt in British soil. His partly familiar strangeness fulfils a double mirroring function, since it brings to the fore the cultural peculiarities of the British characters and simultaneously confronts them with a composite figure in which all sort of barriers (class, gender, national, ethnic) are blurred.

In choosing to activate this function, Collins betrayed his curiosity about the effects of cross-culturalism, a phenomenon that he continued to investigate in subsequent fiction. If it is true that he lived in a nation that still preserved its cultural homogeneity, it is also true that he understood that the uncanny forces of otherness could not be kept at a distance forever. Once transplanted into Britain, these forces eroded the limen between diversity and sameness, and generated hybrid forms which altered the local perception of identity. An early symptom of this change could be traced in the London community of political refugees. The disquieting impact of their ideas was enhanced, in some cases, by their decision to settle down in Britain – a decision which inevitably affected the cultural and social pattern of their host nation. The controversial role played by influential figures like Foscolo, Gabriele Rossetti, or Antonio Panizzi, who often puzzled or divided the British public opinion, shows that they did not undergo a complete process of integration. While acquiring Anglicized habits, they retained an Italian aura that gave them the *neither/nor* identity of “cultural undecidables”, an identity

which exposed the artificiality of “the most vital separations” between ethno-cultural categories (Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, 56).

Perfectly embodied by Fosco’s *excessive* body, which is a metaphorical pivot of multiple models and ideas, this liminal condition is also associated with Professor Pesca, the other Italian exile portrayed in *The Woman in White*. Apparently a minor figure, whose imitation of British manners is scornfully described by Hartright, Pesca is mostly absent from the novel. But his late re-appearance on the scene renders a crucial twist to the plot, since he becomes the means of Fosco’s defeat and Hartright’s social ascent. Often disregarded by scholars, the Professor deserves attention since he confirms the important role played by Italy and Italians in Collins’s imagination.

From a historical perspective, Pesca is a fictional testimony to the author’s interest in the community of Italian *patrioti*. Generally viewed as a projection of Gabriele Rossetti (Caracciolo, 384-5; Peters, 219), he also bears resemblance to other men of the Risorgimento, such as the spare-built Agostino Ruffini, whom he also evokes for his mixture of “very British [...] habits” with the Italian “mannerism of gesticulating” (Rudman, 220-2). The difficulties we face in identifying a single source of inspiration suggest that Collins conflated different historical personalities to represent a condition of *hybridity* which challenged cultural absolutes.

The relevance of this goal is attested by some details of Pesca’s characterization which prevent him from ossifying into a stereotypical comic role. Introduced by Hartright as a funny Italian affected by a *mimicry* complex, the Professor is also endowed with physical and psychological traits that add more shades of meaning to his figure. The grotesqueness of his outward appearance, the acumen he shows in some situations, his erudition and his unswerving trust in friendship, are all evidence of a tangled personality that contrasts with the initial impression of a comic caricature. On his first appearance on the scene, Pesca is described as a dwarfish man, whose diminutive body evokes the subhuman specimens of a “show-room”:

Without being actually a dwarf – for he was perfectly well proportioned from head to foot – Pesca was, I think, the smallest human being I ever saw out of a show-room. Remarkable anywhere, by his personal appearance, he was still further distinguished among the rank and file of mankind by the harmless eccentricity of his character. The ruling idea of his life appeared to be, that he was bound to show his gratitude to the country which had afforded him an asylum and a means of subsistence by doing his utmost to turn himself into an Englishman.

(Collins, *The Woman in White*, 35)

More than a funny element, his grotesque smallness is a first hint at his perturbing hybridity which the narrator fails to fully understand at this stage.

After equating his weird corporeality with the “harmless eccentricity of his character”, Hartright intensifies the idea of Pesca’s clumsy innocence with many remarks: he derides his efforts to appear British “in dress, manners, and amusements” (37), exposes his misuse of colloquial English (39), and makes fun of his frequent relapses into extravagant Italian habits. In drawing this humorous picture, however, the narrator provides some clues to Pesca’s intricacy of character which are clarified later in the novel. A first clue is provided by a funny story he tells to ridicule the Professor’s devotion to “English sports and pastimes” (35). Unable to swim, he irresponsibly dives into

the sea at Brighton and is rescued from drowning by Hartright's intervention. The accident reveals an important trait of the Italian's "warm Southern nature" (36): his "overwhelming sense of obligation" (37) to his saviour. Unlike Hartright, who laughs at the ejaculations of the man he has just saved ("I did my best to stop the torrent of his tears and protestations by persisting in treating the whole adventure as a good subject for a joke", 36-7), Pesca shows himself to have a sacred view of friendship and gratitude, which later compels him to reward his rescuer at the risk of his own life.

The gap between his strict code of honour and Hartright's scorn does not only reveal the latter's patronizing attitude as unfair. If read in relation to Pesca's obsessive imitation of Englishmen, it also offers glimpses into an identity problem which became evident one century later, when postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha analyzed the effects of the mimetic process fostered by imperial policies. With an early awareness of this problem, Collins created a perplexing figure of the 'mimic man', who behaves funnily but outdoes the prejudiced narrator with his potential for loyalty and affection. In comparison with Conrad, who was chided by Chinua Achebe for his biased characterization of the fireman (4-5), Collins took a more ironic distance from his narrator to let the humanity of his "mimic man" come to the fore.

Another signal of the Professor's tangled character is the special blend of erudition and wit he displays in a conversation with Hartright, in which he mocks the drab materialism and the ignorance of his employer, a "mighty merchant". The Dantesque references he makes, in his brilliant sketch of "the golden barbarian of a Papa" and the "three young Misses, fair and fat" (40-1), grant him an authority that contradicts the cultural bias against his Anglophilic mimicry. As suggested by Peter Caracciolo (387), "the infernal imagery" of the *Divina Commedia* that the Professor evokes here (he says he is teaching the Seventh Circle of the Hell to the Misses) "is extended and applied to the nineteenth-century economic man" (386). With learning and acumen, Pesca articulates a critique of the Victorian commercial bourgeoisie, whose dominant ideals were turning Britain into a hellish world devoid of taste and creativity. Once again, Collins assigns to a cultural hybrid the important function of deflating Victorian presumptions. Similar to Fosco, who defends the cultural and ethical autonomy of "John Chinaman", Pesca is granted a knowledge and a clarity of vision which make him an authoritative censor of his host society.

These early elements of ambiguity prelude to his final transformation into a syncretic character. After scaring off Fosco with his mere appearance in the theatre, the Professor is forced to reveal his secret identity to Hartright, who learns with surprise that the comic teacher of Dante is actually a powerful member of an Italian secret society living under disguise. Vaguely referred to as the Brotherhood, the secret association with which Pesca is affiliated might be any of the conspiratorial societies that proliferated on the Continent during the Risorgimento. Whether a Carbonaro, a member of the Sublimi Maestri Perfetti, or a Camorrist, the Professor is at any rate an equivocal figure of patriot/terrorist, who has enrolled a murderous group of outlaws. In spite of their ideological justifications (they claim to pursue "the destruction of tyranny and the assertion of the rights of people", 595), the Brothers belong to an organization founded on ritualized practices of concealment and intimidation:

We are warned, if we betray the Brotherhood, or if we injure it by serving other interests, that we die by the principles of the Brotherhood – die by



the hand of a stranger who may be sent from the other end of the world to strike the blow – or by the hand of our own bosom-friend, who may have been a member unknown to us through all the years of our intimacy.

(Collins, *The Woman in White*, 596)

Forced to loyalty by the threat of a faceless avenger – a threat that materializes in the shape of Fosco’s invisible murderer – they are trapped in the liminal condition of prisoners and accomplices, exiles and terrorists. The ambiguity of this condition is well rendered by Pesca who, before outlining the unlawful deeds of the society, vindicates the righteousness of their political fight:

“It is not for you to say – you Englishmen, who have conquered your freedom so long ago, that you have conveniently forgotten what blood you shed, and what extremities you proceeded to in the conquering – it is not for *you* to say how far the worst of all exasperations may, or may not, carry the maddened men of an enslaved nation. [...] In the time of your first Charles you might have done us justice – the long luxury of your own freedom has made you incapable of doing us justice now.”

(Collins, *The Woman in White*, 595-6)

In defending their use of violence as a political instrument, he reproaches the British for undervaluing the importance of their struggle after enjoying centuries of freedom. The ironic reference to the tyranny and execution of Charles I strengthens his argument against the political opportunism of the British public, who were involved in heated debates for and against the Italian cause.

Apart from giving flesh to a number of historical contradictions, Pesca’s tirade is a further proof of his non-disjunctive character. Like Fosco, with whom he shares the negative phonosymbolism of the consonant cluster *sc* (both in Italian and English, this cluster is highly suggestive of violence, fear, and deprivation), the Professor is an elusive hybrid that escapes classification. A funny and apparently innocent figure in the beginning, he metamorphoses into an advocate for political freedom, a self-assured conspirator and, finally, a mischievous organizer of Fosco’s assassination.

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Quite similar in their elusive *alterity*,<sup>3</sup> Pesca and Fosco are testimonies to the modernizing function that Collins assigned to cultural hybrids. The syncretic quality he had occasion to admire in Italy, since his early encounter with the “*stiletto-wearer*”, was more tangibly discernible in the personalities of the London-based exiles, whom he came to perceive as the harbingers of a transnational fluid identity. This cultural awareness accounts for the presence of other fictional refugees in his works, who either foreshadow or reshape the ambivalent duo of *The Woman in White*. Before writing his successful novel, for instance, Collins sketched the intriguing figure of Professor Tizzi, who makes a short but significant appearance in the narrative frame of “The Yellow Mask”. A former professor “of the University of Padua” who was exiled “for some absurd political reason, and has lived in England ever since” (3-4), Tizzi is a natural philosopher ruled by a powerful ambition: that of composing “for the press – and posterity” a twelve-volume study of “The Vital Principle, or Invisible Essence of Life” (3). His encounter with the

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<sup>3</sup> For a racialized reading of the two Italians in relation to Victorian evolutionary discourse, see Ceraldi.

narrator, an English painter whom he hires to make his portrait, is the starting point of a cultural exchange which has interesting results.

First of all, Tizzi is a source of artistic inspiration, since he tells the original story that the painter-narrator appropriates and reworks in the framed narrative (9). Through his agency, the painter makes a double experience of ‘contamination’, linguistic and aesthetic, since he translates the story and shifts from the visual to the written medium. From an epistemological perspective, moreover, Tizzi raises an important problem: that of adopting multiple perspectives and approaches in the pursuit of knowledge. Apart from consulting heterogeneous sources in his work (“the theories of all the philosophers in the world, ancient and modern”, 6), he exposes the limits of the Judeo-Christian interpretation (6), and makes an effort to combine scientific analysis with speculative philosophy. This effort is confirmed by the weird appearance of his studio, which is both a Gothic laboratory and a disorderly library. The stuffed creatures and “horrible objects” in “glass vases” (4) scattered among the dusty books, the “complete male skeleton” dangling from the ceiling (7), and the “coloured anatomical prints [...] nailed anyhow against the walls” (8) form a chaotic mass of epistemological instruments, which he utilizes to create a *summa* of philosophical, mythopoetic and analytical knowledge.

A third effect of hybridization associated with Tizzi is cultural. His praise of vegetarian food in the form of garlic bread is followed by a strong criticism of carnivorous eating habits, which he makes by describing the egg as “a cannibal meal of chicken-life in embryo” and the chop as “a dog’s gorge of a dead animal’s flesh, blood, and bones” (7). People who consume meat are, for him, similar to fierce animals, as shown in the following assemblage of “lions, tigers, Carribbees, and Costermongers” (7) in the same category. Although he never mentions Britain, it is easy to catch a reference to Anglo-Saxon eating habits in contrast with Mediterranean ones. Unlike his carnivorous hosts, Tizzi prefers to have an “innocent, nutritive, simple, vegetable meal; a philosopher’s refectio; a breakfast that a prizefighter would turn from in disgust, and that a Plato would share with relish” (7). An intellectual representative of Mediterranean philosophy, the Professor proposes himself as a model of conduct and good taste. The comic hyperboles he uses and the typical Italian chaos surrounding him do not cancel the cultural relevance of his self-promotion. Through the food metaphors, Tizzi opposes the quieter, meditative nature of Southerners to the aggressiveness and money-making attitude of Northerners – he significantly mentions two groups of *sellers* as cannibals: “costermongers” and “prizefighters”. In spite of his Italian flaws (the dirt of his abode, his inability to carry his project to completion), the Professor offers an *alternative* model of thinking and action that is enhanced by his dignified countenance. “What a grand face it was! What a broad white forehead – what fiercely brilliant black eyes – what perfect regularity and refinement in the other features; with the long, venerable hair, framing them in, as it were, on either side!” (5). Both illustrious and funny, Tizzi gives substance to Collins’ enduring interest in the cultural contradictions of Italians, whose sparkling protean figures served as foils for the pretensions of orthodox Victorians.

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# The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins: Addenda and Corrigenda (3)

William Baker, Andrew Gasson, Graham Law, & Paul Lewis

This is the third in the series of annual updates to *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters*, published in four volumes by Pickering & Chatto in 2005. The editorial principles, transcription conventions, and abbreviations employed here remain consistent with those described in the prefatory sections of Volume I. In the course of time, it is hoped that this material will be incorporated into a revised edition available in digital form with the added benefit of searchability.

Since the publication of the second of this series in December 2006, sixty new letters have surfaced. At the same time, the number of letters recorded in *The Public Face* has been reduced by four, since there the text on the recto and verso of four manuscript fragments in the Parrish Collection at Princeton were mistakenly recorded as those of eight independent items of correspondence. In total the sum of recorded letters thus now stands at 3072. The opportunity has also been taken to correct a number of other substantial editorial slips that have come to light. We hope that readers of the *Journal* will continue to draw our attention to omissions and errors.

## (A) Addenda

### \* TO JOHN MURRAY,<sup>1</sup> 22 MAY 1847

MS: NLS (John Murray Archive, Acc.12604/1235).<sup>2</sup>

1. Devonport Street | Hyde Park Gardens | May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1847

Dear Sir

I think I once had the pleasure of an introduction to you, when you paid us your last visit to see my father's pictures before they were sent to the Exhibition; and although you have doubtless forgotten the circumstance, my name will I dare say serve sufficiently for my re-introduction to you through the medium of this letter.

I am engaged in writing a Biography of my father, having collected from different sources materials likely to be interesting to the general public in such a work. Before however I proceed further in my task, I wish to obtain advice upon matters practically connected with publication; and I know no one to whom I could apply, under such circumstances, more satisfactorily than yourself.

If therefore you could favour me with a quarter of an hour's conversation upon this subject, at the earliest opportunity convenient to you, I

should feel greatly obliged. At any day and hour you may appoint I shall be happy to wait upon you.

Faithfully yours | W. Wilkie Collins  
To / John Murray Esqre<sup>3</sup>

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1. John Murray (1808-1892), the third generation of the John Murray publishing dynasty based at Albermarle Street in London.

2. On full-mourning paper with a thick black edge, with the addressee line at the foot of the first page, and addressed and dated at the end of the letter after the signature.

**\* TO JOHN MURRAY, 25 FEBRUARY 1848**

MS: NLS (John Murray Archive, Acc.12604/1235).<sup>1</sup>

1 Devonport Street | Feby 25<sup>th</sup> 1848<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir

I have only this morning discovered that a letter I wrote to you, on the day when I received from you my M.S., was, by some mistake, not taken to the Post as I had imagined. This will account for my delay in answering your communication.

I am much obliged by the attention you have given to my Biography of my father, and by your kind advice relative to the best manner of endeavouring to procure its publication. I hope in a few days to submit my M.S. to the revision of a competent literary friend, in compliance with your recommendation to that effect.<sup>2</sup>

I remain Dear sir, | Very faithfully yours | W. Wilkie Collins  
To / John Murray Esqre

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1. On half-mourning paper with a thin black edge, with the addressee line at the foot of the first page, and addressed and dated at the end of the letter after the signature.

2. It is not clear who, if anyone, performed this service. Arrangements had already been made to publish the biography by private subscription though Longmans by early May – see to Sir Robert Peel of 4 May 1848.

**\* TO ELHANAN BICKNELL,<sup>1</sup> 9 DECEMBER 1848**

MS: Parrish (5/11).

London 9<sup>th</sup> December 1848

Received of E. Bicknell Esqre The Sum of one Guinea, for one copy of Memoirs of Wm Collins Esqre R.A.

£1 .. 1.. –

W. Wilkie Collins

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1. Elhanan Bicknell (1788-1861; *DNB*), art collector.

**\* TO LEWIS M. BECKER,<sup>1</sup> 2 DECEMBER 1856**

MS: Massachusetts Historical Society.<sup>2</sup>

2 Harley Place | New Road | Decr 2<sup>nd</sup> 1856

Sir,

I have received from Mr Dickens your letter requesting permission to adapt for stage purposes a story of my writing called, "Sister Rose".<sup>3</sup>

I regret that I cannot give you the permission you seek, as it has already been conceded in another direction.<sup>4</sup>

Your obedient servant | Wilkie Collins  
Lewis M. Becker Esqre

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1. Maybe Lewis Matthew Becker (1832-1909), listed as master engraver in the 1861 census.
2. In an extra-illustrated edition of *American Actor Series* (Boston: 1882), extended by Curtis Guild, Boston, 1883, and bound 18 March 1886.
3. See Dickens to Becker, 9 November 1856, Pilgrim VIII p. 220; the tentative identification there of the recipient as Bernard Henry Becker (1833-1900), journalist, is clearly incorrect.
4. No dramatisation of 'Sister Rose' has been indentified.

**\* To F. H. UNDERWOOD,<sup>1</sup> DECEMBER 1857<sup>2</sup>**

MS: Maine Historical Society (Fogg Collection 420).

11 Harley Place | Marylebone Road | London. | N.W.

My dear Sir,

I must again trouble you with a note to thank you for the first two numbers of the Atlantic Monthly, and to ask you to excuse the delay that has taken place in producing my promised contribution to that periodical.<sup>3</sup>

When I last wrote to you I was little better than an invalid, and since that time my health has been altogether upset by an accident.<sup>4</sup> Long confinement to the house has told upon my nerves, and has obliged me to be very careful not to exhaust what little literary energy I have still preserved. I have always been accustomed to plenty of exercise, and the enforced cessation of all bodily activity has sadly affected my health and spirits.

I only trouble you with this characteristic egotism of a sick man, because I am very anxious that you should not think me forgetful of an engagement which I still hope to fulfil. I am able to get out a little now, and I expect to be able to follow up this advantage by working off some of the arrears that have accumulated on me. If I succeed soon, which I trust I may, in doing something for the Atlantic Monthly, my proper course, I presume, will be to send my Mss to Messrs Trübner & Co for transmission to Boston.<sup>5</sup>

I have read the new Magazine with great interest. It seems to me to have the first great merit of appealing to a large variety of tastes; and I can express no better wish for it than that it may have already met with the success which it thoroughly deserves. The first publication of it in the very midst of a great commercial panic was an act of courage which no English publisher, under similar circumstances, would have so much as thought of rivalling.<sup>6</sup> There must be a genuine interest in literature, for its own sake, in America – or such a speculation as the Atlantic Monthly could never have been launched in such times as these.

Believe me, My dear Sir, | Very truly yours, | Wilkie Collins  
F.H. Underwood Esqre<sup>5</sup>

- 
1. Founder of the (Boston) *Atlantic Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Art and Politics* – see to him of 12 August 1858.
  2. In another hand, upside down at the foot of the fourth page, a filing note reads: ‘Wilkie Collins | Dec. 1857 | London’. Given the acknowledgement of receipt of the first two issues of the *Atlantic*, dated November and December 1857, the letter seems likely to date from the middle of the month.
  3. Presumably WC had been originally invited to contribute to the opening issue.
  4. The letter remains untraced, but must date prior to 8 September 1857, when WC injured his ankle during the walking tour of Cumberland with Dickens.
  5. WC’s contribution ‘Who is the Thief’ duly appeared in the issue for April 1858; Trübner & Co were the London agents for and distributors of the magazine.
  6. The financial panic of 1857 was triggered by the failure due to embezzlement on 24 August of the New York branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Co.

**\* TO FREDERICK LEHMANN,<sup>1</sup> 25 MARCH 1861**

MS: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Dreer Collection, Eng. Prose, vol. II, p. 4).

**12. Harley Street, W. | 25<sup>th</sup> March 1861**

My dear Lehmann,

Dickens and Forster are coming to dine here on Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> at 1/2 past 6.<sup>2</sup> Will you make another in a free and easy way (No dress)? I write at once instead of waiting till Wednesday – so as to make the surer of your being disengaged.

Enclosed is a little contribution of mine to your domestic postage-stamps. It is my admission to Covent Garden, on that evening when we enjoyed one of the most refined musical treats I ever remember.

Ever yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. See to Wills of the same date.

**TO FANNY MITCHELL, 30 MARCH 1861**

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

**12. Harley Street, W. | March 30<sup>th</sup> 1861**

Dear Mrs Mitchell,

I have unfortunately no hope of being able to get to Great Stanhope Street today or tomorrow – but in the course of next week I shall be very glad indeed to call at five o’clock.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime I have read Mrs Ferguson’s specimens of versification and I greatly fear that her prospect of obtaining employment in English periodicals is more than doubtful.<sup>2</sup> In these cases I always force myself to “speak out” – and though the feeling of the little poems is excellent, the expression is not calculated, I am afraid, to recommend them to Editors or to do them justice with the public. This is only my individual opinion – and I am too sincerely anxious to be of service, if I can, to any friend of your’s, to rest satisfied with my own impression. I will therefore submit the “specimens” to the gentleman critically appointed to read all the new contributions (in poetry as well as prose) which are offered to “All The Year

Round”<sup>3</sup> – and when I have the pleasure of calling in Great Stanhope Street, I will bring you his opinion as well as mine. I hope, for Mrs Ferguson’s sake, that it may contradict mine as flatly as possible!

With compliments to Mr Mitchell

Believe me | Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

---

1. WC writes on a Saturday.
2. Mrs Ferguson and her verses remain unidentified.
3. Presumably W.H. Wills.

\* **TO ALFRED-AUGUSTE ERNOUF,<sup>1</sup> 7 MAY 1862**

MS: Massachusetts Historical Society.<sup>2</sup>

12, Harley Street | Cavendish Square | London. | 7<sup>th</sup> May 1862.

Dear Sir,

Your letter has reached me today. The copy of the Revise which you have kindly sent to me, has not arrived at the same time.<sup>5</sup> I have no doubt however that I shall receive it in a day or two. The book-post is always slower than the letter-post.

“The Frozen Deep” and “The Red Vial” are written in the same general plan as The Lighthouse. In all three dramas my intention was to invent a story containing a strong human interest – to work the story out by means of characters as little theatrical and as true to everyday nature as I could make them – and, lastly, to surround events and persons thus produced with the most picturesque and striking external circumstances which the resources of the stage could realise. Thus, the story of The Lighthouse, passes in the Eddystone Lighthouse, and is illustrated by all the little picturesque circumstances of lighthouse-life. The story of The Frozen Deep (a love story) is so constructed as to connect the interest of it with the Arctic Discoveries of England – and the main collision between two of the male characters occurs in a hut of Lost Explorers in the regions of eternal frost, with all the circumstances of danger in that situation interwoven with the circumstances of the plot. The Red Vial traces the slow degrees by which circumstances distort the love of a mother for her child into the commission of a crime by the mother for the child’s sake. And here the climax of the Drama is worked out in the famous “Dead-House” of Franckfort – where all bodies are laid out before burial with a bell-pull attached to their hands, so that no supposed dead person may be buried alive by mistake. Here again, all the terrible and picturesque surroundings of the Dead House are associated with the story of the drama – just as the Lighthouse and the Arctic hut are associated with the other two stories. None of these three dramas have been printed. In the present degraded state of the drama in England – degraded, I mean, in the literary sense – I have refused all proposals to publish them, or to allow them to be acted after the period of their first stage appearance. I mean to keep them till better times come – and if no better times come, I will turn them into Novels.<sup>4</sup>



So much for my Plays. No Name will I hope be finished this autumn. It is – like The Woman in White – an attempt to create a strong interest out of characters and incidents taken from modern life, without inventing any outrageous crimes, or creating any impossible people. The interest, this time, centres round a young girl. The story is told on a totally different plan from The Woman in White, and is carried out by a totally different set of characters. As far as the book has been read here, it is thought the best book of the two. I am trying hard to make it the best book.

I need scarcely say that I shall read your article with no ordinary interest. I have so hearty and sincere an admiration for French literature that I feel honestly anxious to deserve some recognition from French critics and French readers. You only do me justice in supposing that I am incapable of the folly of resenting a plain and fair statement of my faults. Criticism which frankly and intelligently endeavours (as I am sure your criticism will) to improve the artist, in the interests of Art, is, in my opinion a compliment to any man who is the object of it. When you tell me of my faults you show me, by implication, that you think I am worth improving.

Believe me, Dear sir | very truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
Monsieur | Le Baron Ernouf

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1. Alfred-Auguste, Baron Ernouf, Parisian journalist and scholar.
2. Tipped into extra-illustrated copy of James T. Fields, *Yesterdays with Authors* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1883), extended by Curtis Guild, Boston, 1887.
3. Presumably of Ernouf's forthcoming piece on WC; see to him of 16 September 1862.
4. *The Frozen Deep* was indeed used for his readings in America and published in *The Frozen Deep and other Stories* (1874), while the plot of *The Red Vial* was reworked in *Jezebel's Daughter* (1880).

**\* TO UNKNOWN RECIPIENT, 26 MAY 1862**

MS: Parrish (5/11/AM18709).

May 26<sup>th</sup> 1862 /

“ . . . . The poor weak words, which have failed to describe Miss Fairlie, have succeeded in betraying the sensations she awakened in me. It is so with us all. Our words are giants when they do us an injury, and dwarfs when they do us a service.”<sup>1</sup>

From “The Woman In White” | By | Wilkie Collins

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1. WC copied out the same passage for another fan in February 1861.

**\* TO A. VOGUE,<sup>1</sup> 2 FEBRUARY 1863**

MS: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Society Collection).

**12. Harley Street, W.** | 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1863

Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your kind letter, and in thereby complying with the request which you are so good as to make to me.<sup>2</sup>

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins  
To | A Vogue Eqre

---

1. Unidentified.
2. Clearly a request for WC's autograph.

**\* TO GEORGE SMITH, 11 MAY 1864**

MS: NLS (Smith, Elder Archive, MS. 43104).

12. Harley Street. W. | 11<sup>th</sup> May 1864

My dear Smith,

I enclose a letter & poem from a namesake of mine (whom I don't know from Adam) who addresses me as Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. I have merely written back to dissipate his delusion, and to say that I have returned his contributions to Messrs Smith & Elder.<sup>1</sup>

The infernal East Wind has given me a bad cough and cold – but I am at work in spite of it, and am getting towards the close of the first monthly number of the new story. It is slow work at first – for the form is new to me, and I feel my long want of practice with the pen.<sup>2</sup> But I am steadily “under weigh” and I feel myself getting into better and better working order. As soon as the number is done, you shall have it.

Ever yours | Wilkie Collins

P.S. – Here is a petition. You kindly offered me, a few copies of the Library Edition of After Dark (to range with Low's editions) some little time since. I am making up, and am going to have half bound, on a plan of my own, four sets of my complete novels for presents to certain old friends – and if you will help me with four copies in the matter of “After Dark”, the series will be complete.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Collins in question remains unidentified. At this time George Smith was one of the editors of the *Cornhill*.
2. The first part of *Armada*, serialised in the *Cornhill* in November 1864. Since WC's previous serial novels had appeared CD's weeklies, he had not written in monthly numbers before; moreover, he had not written for some time after a lengthy period convalescing on the Continent.
3. For later requests by WC concerning specially bound sets, see to Smith of 5 May 1873, and to Andrew Chatto of 4 July 1876.

**\* TO FREDERICK ENOCH,<sup>1</sup> 15 SEPTEMBER 1864**

MS: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Gratz Collection 10/28).

12. Harley Street, W. | September 15<sup>th</sup> 1864

Dear Sir,

Will you be kind enough to send a messenger tomorrow – or the next day, if it is more convenient – any time between 11 and 3 o'clock to take some copy to the printers? It is part only of the new number<sup>2</sup> – but I am anxious, as I may be leaving town shortly, to save time this month in the “setting up”. There will be no need to send me any proof until the copy for the whole number has been received complete.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Frederick Enoch Esqr /

P.S. There will also be a corrected proof (of No 3) to go back

---

1. See to him of 21 February 1865.

2. Of *Armadale*, which began its run as a serial in the November issue of the *Cornhill Magazine*. The postscript suggests that this is likely to have been the fourth part, appearing in February 1865.

### **TO UNKNOWN RECIPIENT, 22 AUGUST 1865**

MS: Parrish (5/11/AM14749). Published: Parrish & Miller, p. 57 (misdated 22 August 1885).

August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1865 /

“I must go” he said, as he turned wearily from the window, “before she comes to the house again. I must go before another hour is over my head.” With that resolution he left the room; and, in leaving it, took the irrevocable step from Present to Future.

From “*Armadale*” (Book III Chapter XIII)<sup>1</sup> | By | Wilkie Collins

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1. As in the *Cornhill* serialization – in the volume edition it became Book II Chapter XIII.

### **\* TO FREDERICK ENOCH, 7 DECEMBER 1865**

MS: Massachusetts Historical Society.

9, Melcombe Place | N.W. | Decr 7<sup>th</sup> 1865

Dear sir,

The duplicate proofs for February have reached me safely,<sup>1</sup> in good time before I go away today.<sup>2</sup>

Many thanks.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Frederick Enoch Esqr

---

1. Of *Armadale* serialised in the *Cornhill*.

2. To Tunbridge Wells to see his mother.

### **\* TO FREDERICK ENOCH, 14 MARCH 1866<sup>1</sup>**

MS: University of Pennsylvania (Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Van Pelt-Detrich Library Center).

9. Melcombe Place | March 14<sup>th</sup>

My dear Sir,

I was in a hurry this afternoon or I should have tried to get through the closed door.

I enclose the Illustration (one of the very best, I think, that has appeared) with the lettering.<sup>2</sup>

Many thanks for the book-proofs. I have very few alterations to make. You shall have the first volume for the printers in a few days.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

P.S. | If “*Armada*” is not republished in three volumes, please let me know. If I don’t hear from you, I will assume that the book will appear in the usual form of three volumes.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Year dating based on the reference to the volume publication of *Armada*.

2. Probably the plate for the April number of the *Cornhill*.

3. In fact published in two volumes, in June 1866.

### TO UNKNOWN RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 18 NOVEMBER 1869

MS: Unknown. Published: *Baltimore Sun* (29 November 1873) p. 4, our copy text, and *Richmond Daily Dispatch* (1 December 1873) p. 4.

No. 90, Gloucester Place | Portman Square, W. London  
November 18, 1869

Dear Sir,

My life, like the lives of other literary men, is all in my books. I was born in 1824. I was the oldest of the two sons of William Collins, Royal Academician, the celebrated English painter of the coast scenery and cottage life of his native country. I was christened by the name of his dearest friend, the late Sir David Wilkie, another famous painter of the British School. Wilkie was my godfather.

I was educated at a private school of excellent repute, and learned Latin and Greek as well as most of the boys. The only part of my “education” which has, as I believe, done me any good in later life was given to me by my father, who took me to Italy with him for two years when I was a boy of twelve years of age. Here I learned to observe for myself, and became, as far as a boy could be, associated with all sorts of clever people, whom my father’s reputation as a painter collected about him. I never went to college, though my father was willing to send me there. The life was not the sort of life for me, after Italy and the artists. I was tried for a few years in a merchant’s office, and did my work and hated it. I was taken from commerce and entered as a student at the bar. I am a barrister of Lincoln’s Inn, but I never practiced my profession, and never studied it. I was good for nothing, in short, but writing books, and I ended in writing them. How this “analytical power” which you and other critics find in my novels comes to me I know no more than you do. The only “rule” I have in writing a work of fiction is at anybody’s service. Begin at the beginning, know what the end is before you write a line, and keep the story always going on. With this, and with enormous pains and care, you have the sum total of what I

*consciously* know of my own art as a writer. These few particulars are entirely at your service.

Faithfully yours, | Wilkie Collins

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1. This letter was published to presage WC's appearance at the Music Hall, Baltimore, on 11 December 1873 during his tour in America. The *Baltimore Sun* introduced it as a letter written to 'a gentleman of Virginia, now of Baltimore'.

**\* TO HENRY BLACKETT,<sup>1</sup> 1860s**

MS: University of Pennsylvania (Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ms. Coll 585, Ward Coll. 41), incomplete.<sup>2</sup>

to a periodical publication.

Trusting that I may have some future opportunity of showing that I have not forgotten your proposal,

I remain, dear Sir, | Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Henry Blackett Esqre

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1. Henry Blackett (1826-71), of the publishers Hurst & Blackett who issued *The Queen of Hearts* in 1859. See to him of 31 May 1860.

2. The second leaf only of a sheet of folding notepaper.

**\* TO BENJAMIN WEBSTER,<sup>1</sup> 2 SEPTEMBER 1870**

MS: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Dreer Collection, Eng. Prose, vol. II, p. 5).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.**

Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1870

My dear Webster,

I have made a four-Act drama, on the subject of my last novel – “Man and Wife”.

Would you like to look at it, before I open negotiations in other quarters? If yes, one line here, on, or before, Monday next – to tell me so – in case I leave town after that date.

Yours ever | Wilkie Collins

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1. In the event, *Man and Wife* did not appear at Webster's Royal Adelphi Theatre; the first London production was in February 1873, under the direction of the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales.

**\* TO HUGH MCCULLOCH,<sup>1</sup> 1 APRIL 1871**

MS: Lilly Library, Indiana University (McCulloch MSs).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W. | April 1<sup>st</sup> 1871**

My dear Sir,

I have only just returned to London – or I should have thanked you sooner for your kind letter (forwarded here from a residence which I no longer occupy).

The main object of my return to town is to keep certain dinner engagements – and one of them falls due, most unluckily, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of this

month. I should otherwise have gladly availed myself of the honour of dining with Mrs McCulloch and yourself. As it is I can only beg you to accept my thanks and my apologies, and assure you that I sincerely regret losing the opportunity of improving our acquaintance which you have so kindly offered to me.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. Hugh McCulloch (1808-1895; *ANB*), American financier; identification by the Lilly Library. From 1870 to 1873 McCulloch running the London branch of the business.

### **To JOHN BONNER,<sup>1</sup> 10 JUNE 1871**

MS: University of Pennsylvania (Rare Book and Manuscript Library)

**90, Gloucester Place, Portman Square. W.** | London | 10<sup>th</sup> June 1871  
My dear Sir,

I should have written to you at an earlier date on the subject of my dramatic version of “The Woman in White”— if the arrangements for the production of the work in England had been complete. They are not yet settled – but I defer communicating with you no longer.

If the play is produced in England, during the present year, it will probably be performed in September next. If it is to be first represented in London, I will as soon as I am certain of the fact send you an early copy, giving you time to treat for its production in the United States.

If, on the other hand, the play is first produced at an English provincial town, I have a question to ask you relating to the possibility of also producing it in America, with an English actor in the chief character.

The actor who is to play “Fosco” here—and who is now reading the part with me – has been invited to appear in America – and has some idea of accepting the invitation, provided he can play “Fosco” in your principal cities. Could he (for example) appear in the part in Liverpool (say) in August next – and then cross to New York and appear there, (say) in September – leaving the representation of the piece in London to be accomplished on his return to England after a series of performances in the United States? Is it possible, under these circumstances, to secure the copyright of my drama, in America? Or can the actor to whom I allude (whose name I am not yet at liberty to mention)<sup>2</sup> only play “Fosco” (in my drama) in the United States, on condition of the piece being first produced in the United States, and not, in the first instance, represented in England at all? The object of the proposed preliminary performances in Liverpool, would be to enable me to see a rehearsal and to give the necessary hints as to the acting and the stage business generally.

As to the play, there is not the least fear of any existing version copied from the novel coming into competition with it. It is an original work – with entirely new situations and new developments of character. The question of the conditions under which it can be profitably produced in the United States – with the English actor in the chief character – is the important question to settle. Will you kindly let me hear what your experience suggests on this point – before I do anything definitely with the drama in England?

I hear from my brother that “No Name” is to be shortly produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre.<sup>3</sup> This I am afraid, is a production of the piece at the worst theatrical season of the year. A success in the American summer is, as I am informed, not to be hoped for. The best actors take their holiday – and the public are at the watering places. Even here, the summer is the very worst possible season for the production of a new play.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

1. Although the recipient is not formally identified, it is clearly to WC’s agent for dramatic works in the USA – see to Bonner of 21 January 1871.
2. George Vining, who in the event only played the part for a short time.
3. The play had been originally written by WC, but was later adapted by Augustin Daly and Wybert Reeve and opened on 7 June 1871.

**\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 15 DECEMBER 1871**

MS: Parrish (5/11/AM14749).

London | December 15<sup>th</sup> 1871 /

“There in the middle of the broad bright high road – there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from the heaven – stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments,”

From | “The Woman In White” | by | Wilkie Collins

**\* TO HARPER & BROTHERS, 13 JANUARY 1872**

MS: Maine Historical Society (Lot M. Morrill Collection 284).

Private

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.** | London  
Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 1872

Dear Sirs,

You will already have heard from my amanuensis that it has been impossible for me to defer the publication day of “Poor Miss Finch” beyond the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month.<sup>1</sup> No publisher in London would consent to issue the book simultaneously with the periodical conclusion of the story.

The insanely-absurd system of the three volume English novel at the fancy price of a guinea and a half is entirely answerable for this.<sup>2</sup> One great monopolist (Mr Mudie) virtually purchases the whole edition of a 3 volume novel, at a price agreed on between the publisher and himself.<sup>3</sup> Every circulating library in the Great Britain of any importance is under Mr Mudie’s direction – and the idea of forcing his hand by publishing a popular story before its periodical completion, and so exposing him to the demands of impatient periodical readers eager for the end, is the idea at the bottom of the present system of novel-publishing in England, when novels appear first in periodicals. Note: My friend Charles Reade’s last novel was published in England in book-form six weeks before the last periodical part was published in Cassell’s Magazine.<sup>4</sup> Add to this, that Mr Mudie has been known to cut out the pages of the story from the periodical – bind them together – and issue

them to his subscribers as a book – and you will understand the degrading position in which the publishers and writers are placed under the present system – and will I hope, see at the same time how impossible it is for me to meet your views, in the matter of the English publication of “Poor Miss Finch.”<sup>5</sup>

It is also to be observed – in my case, where there is a considerable public demand on Mr Mudie for the book – that he limits that demand. Hundreds of his subscribers never get my book – and write to me in despair to know what they are to do. Mr Mudie’s interest, as a commercial man, is to take as few copies of “Miss Finch” as the public demand will let him take. He can get bad novels, by obscure writers, cheaper than he can get my novel – and he can send them as stop-gaps to his subscribers who want my book. His customers are quite helpless. They have no other library to go to – and no other system of supply yet set in motion.

I must beg you to consider this letter strictly confidential—for my English publisher’s sake. He has bought an edition of “Miss Finch” of me – and the sale of that edition virtually rests with Mr Mudie alone. I am myself so disgusted with these degrading conditions of publication, that I am seriously contemplating turning to dramatic writing for the future instead of novel-writing. The publishers here who have money, have no enterprise. The publishers with enterprise have no money. The small booksellers are being ruined. The public is as badly supplied as possible. And all for want of the courage, among English publishers, to issue a book, as you do, at a price which the reader can pay. I have myself formed a plan for a new system of publishing novels which I have stated to our principal publishers. They admit that it is founded on sound commercial principles – but the novelty of it terrifies them, and they object to the risk – in other words they object to that bold speculation on the public taste which is the essence of a publishers business!

I make no apology for troubling you with this long letter (written in haste). It is only right that you should thoroughly understand my position, and the impossibility of my individually abolishing a corrupt system, by which I am myself a serious loser.

Sincerely regretting my inability to meet your views, I remain, Dear  
Sirs

vy truly yours, | Wilkie Collins  
Messrs Harper & Brothers

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1. See Carrie Graves to Harper & Brothers of 9 January 1872.

2. WC uses the same phrase ‘insanely-absurd system’ two months later in to Bentley, 22 March 1872.

3. The animosity of WC towards George Mudie, the owner of the largest circulating library, is well documented in his letters. See, for example, to Charles Ward of 14 August 1860, to William Tinsley of 11 July 1868, and to George Smith of 23 October 1871.

4. The note is added in WC’s top margin, with saltire insertion marks indicating its position.

5. W.H. Smith, a rival circulating library, was to do just that with *Poor Miss Finch*; see to Harper & Brothers of 28 May 1872.



**\* TO CHARLES A. KING,<sup>1</sup> 2 MARCH 1872**

MS: Folger (Yc2885/4).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.** | London | March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1872  
Dear Sir,

I have only today returned to London – and found your letter waiting for me.

Messrs Smith & Elder 15, Waterloo Place London are the publishers of the cheap editions of my books. The Illustrated Edition (bound in cloth) only contains a Frontispiece to each volume, and sells at five shillings (and in one or two cases) at six shillings the volume.

The cheaper edition, “in boards” with a coloured illustration outside, sells at two shillings the volume. The type is the same in both cases.

To my mind, the best edition of my books is the edition published (without illustrations) by Tauchnitz (of Leipzig) for continental circulation. This edition is not allowed to pass the English Custom House – as it would interfere with the sale of the English editions. The price varies with the size of the books – average three shillings ~~a volume~~ for each work – contained in two volumes. Some volumes of the “Tauchnitz Collection” no doubt find their way to the United States.

Lastly, my American publishers – Messrs Harper of New York – inform me that they “contemplate” issuing a new, American edition of my novels.

This ends my stores of information. With thanks for your kind letter,

Believe me | yours faithfully | Wilkie Collins

Charles A. King Esqre

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1. Unidentified American correspondent.

**\* TO HARPER & BROTHERS, 20 JULY 1872**

MS: Parrish (5/2/AM21741), envelope only.<sup>1</sup>

Messrs Harper & Brothers | Franklin Square | New York | United States |  
America  
Wilkie Collins

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1. Postmarked: ‘LONDON-W | XA | JY 20 | 72’ and ‘NEW YORK | JUL | 30 | PAID ALL’. The letter itself presumably concerned the serialization of *The New Magdalen* in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* – see to Hunter, Rose of 27 July 1872.

**TO WYBERT REEVE, [FEBRUARY] 1873<sup>1</sup>**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Wybert Reeve, *From Life* (London: George Robertson, 1891) p. 113.<sup>2</sup>

Both Miss Cavendish and I would be glad to obtain your valuable assistance to direct the performances, and to play the principal part.

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1. Dating is assumed to be slightly before 3 March 1873 when WC wrote to Palgrave Simpson asking about Clayton playing Julian Gray.
2. Reeve prefaces the extract with ‘On finishing the dramatization of the New Magdalen, he writes me:–’ and after it writes ‘My having decided on visiting America, and other business matters prevented this arrangement.’

### **TO WYBERT REEVE, JUNE 1873**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Wybert Reeve, *From Life* (London: George Robertson, 1891) p.108.

MY DEAR REEVE, – First let me heartily congratulate you on the great increase of reputation which your performance of Fosco has so worthily won. I and my play are both deeply indebted to your artistic sympathy, and your admirable business management – to say nothing of the great increase of sale in the book in each town you play, &c.

1. Reeve prefaces the letter: ‘Mr. Vining failing of success in the provinces in a few weeks, and not having behaved well in the transaction with me, Mr. Collins destroyed the agreement between them, took all future right in the piece from him, and placed it in my hands, for all future performances. Nothing could be more generous than his acknowledgments to me. In June 1873, he writes:’.

### **\* TO JOSEPH J. CASEY,<sup>1</sup> 12 JULY 1873**

MS: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Gratz Collection 10/28).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square.W.** | London | 12<sup>th</sup> July 1873  
Dear Sir,

Pray accept my thanks for your kind letter, and pray believe that I am gratefully sensible of the honour which the offered welcome of your Association confers on me. I feel the sincerest respect for the Public School Teachers of America. No other public duties, in any country, can compare in importance, with the duties which the Teacher performs. The future of the nation is in his hands.

But – while I feel sincerely ~~the~~ proud of the recognition of my labours as a literary man which the greeting of your Association confers on me – there are reasons, I regret to say, that compel me to refrain from availing myself of the invitation which your letter conveys.

I have (as you are perhaps aware) public engagements to fulfil on my arrival in the United States. My health is not good – and I am medically advised that I can only hope to sustain the inevitable fatigue of the readings which I propose to give, by reserving all my energies for that one occupation, and by laying it down as a rule to abstain from appearing at public meetings.

Under these circumstances, I hope I may count on your indulgence, and on the indulgence of the Association, to accept my excuses.

With the renewed expression of my thanks,

I have the honour to be | Your faithful servant | Wilkie Collins  
To | Joseph J. Casey Esqre  
President of | The Public School Teachers’ Association

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1. Then President of the Public School Teachers' Association of New York, and later principal of New York Public School No. 83 for boys in 110th Street, off 3rd Avenue.

**\* TO JOHN WATKINS, 15 JULY 1873**

MS: University of Rochester, USA.

Eastbourne | Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July

My dear Sir,

I am staying here for a few days – and your letter has followed me.

By this post I write to hurry the binder. In a few days you will I hope have the books.<sup>1</sup>

I am concerned to hear that you are still suffering. I had hoped that you would be able to try change of air and scene.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

(In great haste | to catch the post)

John Watkins Esqr

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1. See to Watkins of 5 May 1873 and 26 August 1873, and to Bentley of 29 May 1873.

**TO WYBERT REEVE, JUNE TO OCTOBER 1873**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Wybert Reeve, *From Life* (London: George Robertson, 1891) p. 108.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot reconcile myself to the idea.<sup>2</sup> You, who have assumed the responsibility, surely ought to be the first gainer. I thank you most heartily, but pray forgive me if I ask you, for my sake, to say no more about it.

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1. This piece follows the extract from June 1873. Reeve prefaces it with 'Later on, I wished to make a difference in our arrangements, more to his advantage. He replies:'. Reeve left for the USA on 15 November 1873 where he joined WC.

2. Of changing the financial arrangements over the provincial tour of *The Woman in White*, which Reeve produced and in which he played Fosco.

**\* TO JERE ABBOTT,<sup>1</sup> 17 DECEMBER 1873**

MS: Lilly Library, Indiana University (English Literature Mss).

St James's Hotel | Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup> 1873

My dear Sir,

Am I right in supposing that the hour you fixed on when you kindly invited me to dinner today was six?

If I am right, pray don't trouble yourself to answer this. Silence shall mean – "Chesnut Street 6 o'Clock".<sup>2</sup>

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

To | Jere Abbott Esqr

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1. Perhaps of the Boston trading company, Jere Abbott & Co.

2. Close to Boston Common.

**\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 13 FEBRUARY 1875**

MS: Parrish (5/11/AM16824).<sup>1</sup>

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
July 13th 1875

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1. On a square of laid paper – probably a simple autograph.

**\* TO J. TILFOR,<sup>1</sup> 2 JULY 1875**

MS: Paul Long (in a family album entitled ‘Autographed Letters of Charles Dickens’ Friends’).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W. | 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1875**

Dear Sir,

If you still have Warrens “Diary of a Late Physician” and “Ten Thousand a Year” (advertised in your last Catalogue) please send them here when your messenger is coming my way.<sup>2</sup>

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

To | Mr J. Tilfor

---

1. WC wrote to the same book-dealer on 30 November 1874.

2. Samuel Warren (1807-1877); his novels *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician* and *Ten Thousand a Year* were published in 1832-8 and 1840-1 respectively.

**\* TO JANE WARD, 27 AUGUST 1877**

MS: Berg.

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W. | 27<sup>th</sup> Aug<sup>t</sup> 1877**

My dear Jane,

I have not only not written the play of “The Dead Secret” – but I don’t even know who has written it. Under these circumstances I am afraid I can hardly ask ~~the~~ for orders. Mrs Bateman was polite enough to ask my permission to take the piece from the novel.<sup>1</sup> But the barbarous English laws, allow anybody to make plays from novels without my permission being in the least necessary.

I will try hard to call and say goodbye. At present I am so busy I hardly know which way to turn.

Yours affly | W.C.

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1. Sidney Frances Bateman née Cowell (1823-1881), the widow of actor and theatre manager Hezekiah Linthicum Bateman (1812-1875), and herself manager of the Lyceum from his death until 1878. *The Dead Secret* by E. W. Bramwell was to open at the Lyceum on 29 August 1877 and was advertised as ‘A NEW PLAY Adapted by the Author’s express permission from the Popular Novel of WILKIE COLLINS’.

**\* TO AUGUSTIN DALY, 28 SEPTEMBER 1877**

MS: Folger (Yc2885/1).

Brussels | Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1877

Dear Mr Daly,

Another letter! You will naturally say “this is a persecution”! But I have no other alternative than to write again. There is a report in “Galignani’s Newspaper” that you are giving up the management of the Fifth Avenue Theatre.<sup>1</sup> If this report should by any chance be founded on the truth, I hasten to make my excuses for troubling you about my dramatic affairs at a time when you have far more important subjects to think of.<sup>2</sup> I can only add that I sincerely regret losing the opportunity of renewing my dramatic relations with you.

I have written to Mr French Junior<sup>3</sup> – always, of course, supposing the report to be true – requesting him to relieve you of the trouble of taking care of the copy of “The Moonstone” piece which I have innocently sent to you at so unpropitious a time.<sup>4</sup>

Believe me | Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. ‘Rumors were in circulation during last week, and again on Monday, to the effect that Mr. Augustin Daly, the manager of the Fifth-Avenue Theatre had failed and was about to enter into banruptcy’ (*New York Times*, 12 September 1877, p. 1): the rumours were well founded. *Galignani’s Messenger*, published in Paris in English, was widely relied upon by English visitors to the Continent.

2. Referring to WC’s letter to Daly of 22 September 1877.

3. Thomas Henry French, son of the theatrical publisher – see to him of 24 June 1876.

4. See to Daly of 22 September 1877.

**\* TO WILLIAMS & NORGATE, 19 DECEMBER 1877**

MS: Lewis Collection.<sup>1</sup> Published: Lewis website.

90. Gloucester Place | Portman Square | W. | 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 1877

Dear Sirs

Will you kindly send to me – in the enclosed envelope – the necessary form, authorising you to receive for me through the Customs House six copies of the Tauchnitz edition in one volume of a new work of mine immediately to be published at Leipzig.<sup>2</sup>

I will return the form to you, signed – taking a copy previously, so that I need not trouble you on the next occasion<sup>3</sup>

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Messrs Williams & Norgate

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1. Pasted into an album with an ownership slip: ‘To Muriel White with love and best wishes Mildred B Shaw’.

2. *My Lady’s Money and Percy and the Prophet* was published by Tauchnitz on 3 January 1878; copies are recorded from December 1877 (Todd & Bowden, p. 280)

3. For an example of the form used by the publishers acting as agents to Tauchnitz, see the first extant letter to them of 24 December 1859.

**\* TO AUGUSTIN DALY, 11 OCTOBER 1878**

MS: Folger (Yc2885/2)

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> Oct: 1878

My dear Mr Daly

I have just got back to London for a few days. If you have nothing better to do between 4 and 4.30 on Monday afternoon next (the 14<sup>th</sup>) I shall be delighted to see you. Don't trouble to write again, if this date will do. Silence shall mean Yes.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Augustin Daly Esqre

**\* TO HENRY HERMAN, 7 FEBRUARY 1879**

MS: University of Chicago.<sup>1</sup>

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

London. 7<sup>th</sup> Feby 1879

My dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date.<sup>2</sup>

I must ask for time, on my side, to consider the proposal which you are so kind as to make to me.

Under these circumstances therefore I readily accede to your suggestion that I should "give you the refusal of the piece for six weeks," reckoning from the date of this letter.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

H. Herman Esqre

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1. Tipped into a copy of James T. Field, *Yesterdays with Authors* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1882), with the bookplate of Frank O. Lowden.

2. WC had written to Herman on 4 February 1879.

**\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 23 APRIL 1879**

MS: Lewis.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

23<sup>rd</sup> April 1879

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1. Apparently sent as an autograph or with an enclosure. It has been attached, probably at a later date, to a small coloured print of Macclesfield Bridge, Regent's Park.

**TO RUDOLF LEHMANN,<sup>1</sup> 10 DECEMBER 1879**

MS: Unknown. Extract: *Daily Telegraph* (24 September 1889) p. 3b.<sup>2</sup>

... I must ask you to kindly consent to a delay of a few weeks until I and the printers (who are now close at my heels) have parted company for the time. In January next the hard work will, I hope, be over, and I shall have regained

some of the “colour” which has latterly suffered in the service of pen, ink, and paper.

---

1. The artist Rudolf Lehmann (1819-1905), older brother of Frederick Lehmann, who commissioned Rudolf to paint a portrait of WC in oils for Nina’s fiftieth birthday in 1880. See to him of 16 April 1880. An image is found at the Lewis website.

2. The extract is found in a piece following WC’s obituary, and headed ‘FROM ONE WHO KNEW HIM’. It is introduced: ‘Just ten years ago Mr. Wilkie Collins was giving sittings to an artist for the first portrait taken of the novelist, and being still a sufferer from rheumatic gout, as he had been for some years previously, the sittings were necessarily few and far between. He was also much engaged in literary work, and was, therefore, often unable to keep his appointments. In a letter, dated Dec. 10, 1879, he writes to the artist, ...’.

**\* TO CHARLES E. FERGUSON,<sup>1</sup> 6 APRIL 1880**

MS: Lilly Library, Indiana University (Ferguson Mss).

Ramsgate | England | 6<sup>th</sup> April 1880

Dear Sir,

I am staying at this place for a few days only – and your letter has followed me.

With the view of protecting myself from unauthorised representations of the dramatic works which you mention, I have declined to allow them to be published – and I can only therefore reply to your question that they are not to be obtained.

Regretting that you should be disappointed.

I remain | Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

To | Charles E Ferguson Esqr

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1. Charles Eugene Ferguson (1856-1945) was a physician from Indianapolis, Indiana, whose papers are held at the Lilly Library. His interest in WC’s plays is not known though he did write to many literary figures about their work.

**\* TO WILLIAM A. SEAVER, 20 APRIL 1880**

MS: Parrish (5/8/AM16030).

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

London | 20<sup>th</sup> April 1880

My dear Seaver

Mr Chatto has just told me that you are going to cross the Pond – under the protection of Cunard – and appear like a comet on the British horizon. This contains a modest request that you will flash the light of your presence on this house at the earliest possible opportunity. Mark the address (in case you have forgotten it) – and may the heavy “joints” of the good Cunard’s cabin dinner table sit more lightly on your stomach than they did on mine!

Ever yours | Wilkie Collins

If I remember correctly, I think you like your champagne dry?

**TO RUDOLF LEHMANN, [APRIL-JUNE] 1880**

MS: Unknown. Extract: *Daily Telegraph* (24 September 1889) p. 3b.<sup>1</sup>

... my friend (and medical advisor) tells me that I want a change of air, and I feel that he is right ... If I “fall below par” (as they say in the Share Market), then comes the gout.

---

1. See to Lehmann of 10 December 1879. The extract is introduced: ‘In another note, written later on, after he had given a sitting or two, he says ...’.

**\* TO HENRY PHILLIPS JR,<sup>1</sup> 7 JUNE 1881**

MS: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Gratz Collection 11/15).

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

7<sup>th</sup> June 1881

Dear Sir,

Pray excuse this late acknowledgment of your interesting translation of Chamisso’s “Faust.”<sup>2</sup> I am slowly recovering from severe illness – and I am (literally) only able to write “a few lines”.

With many thanks for the addition which you have kindly made to my library,

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
Doctor Henry Phillips Jr | &c &c &c

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1. Henry Phillips Jr (1838-1895) of Philadelphia, author on archeological and numismatic subjects and translator from German, Spanish and Italian.

2. Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838) originally published his interpretation of the Faust legend in 1804. A presentation copy of Phillips’s translation, *Faust: A Dramatic Sketch* (Philadelphia: 1874), of which only one hundred copies were printed for private circulation, was found in WC’s library (Baker, p. 88).

**\* TO ROSA KENNEY, 6 MAY 1882**

MS: Berg (tipped into copy of F.G. Kitton, *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, 2 vols; London: 1890-2, vol. 1, fol. p. 64).

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

6<sup>th</sup> May 1882

Dear Miss Kenney,

Pray excuse this late answer to your kind note. I am in better health now – and, this time, I hope nothing will prevent me from making one among your audience on the 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
Miss Rosa Kenney

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1. See to her of 17 May.



**\* TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,<sup>1</sup> 27 JUNE 1882**

MS: Boston Athenaeum.

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

27 June 1882

My dear Sir,

I have been suffering from a malady which is always lying in wait for me – the gout – and I can only hope to be well enough to have the pleasure of shaking hands with you towards the close of this week.

If you can favour me with a visit on Friday next at five o'clock, I shall be delighted to see you. If this appointment is not convenient, pray choose your own day and hour, after Monday next.

Between Saturday and Monday, I may be trying a little change of air.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

If Friday will suit you don't trouble to write again.

Mr J. R. Lowell

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1. James Russell Lowell (1819-91) American Ambassador to London 1880-1885, and previously editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. WC was to meet him again at the dinner on 25 July 1888 at the Society of Authors – see to Little of 25 June 1888.

**\* TO CHATTO & WINDUS,<sup>1</sup> 18 DECEMBER 1882**

MS: Folger (Yc2885/3).

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

Decr 18<sup>th</sup> 1882

Heart and Science

Weekly Part 28. (Forwarded by mail of December 16<sup>th</sup>).

If the enclosed alteration and enlargement of the concluding paragraph of the story, reaches you in time, please adopt it. Out of four different changes in the last chapter, this is the only one which has not been embodied in the proof already despatched!<sup>2</sup> W.C.

---

1. See the similar notes to the firm of, e.g., 21 and 27 November 1882.

2. Referring to the final chapter of the novel, numbered 62 in the various weekly newspaper serializations and 63 in the monthly serial in *Belgravia* and subsequent volume editions.

**\* TO HENRY HERMAN, 5 MARCH 1883**

MS: University of Chicago.<sup>1</sup>

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

5<sup>th</sup> March 1883

Dear Mr Herman,

I am only now recovering from another attack of gout in the eye – and I have no choice but to thank you and Mr Flaxman,<sup>2</sup> and to make my excuses.

Even if I had been well enough to attend the meeting, my “revolutionary views” in the matter of reform as applied to the affairs of

dramatic authors should have put me in the corner as the naughty boy of the party. I want all authors of really original plays to be rewarded as the French authors are, by a percentage on the gross receipts of each performance. I want authors who adapt other men's ideas, with their permission to pay half that percentage to the other men. And lastly I want a rogue who steals from a novel or a play, to be on that account ineligible by any society of dramatic authors. If any manager receives his stolen goods – that manager (for this first offence) to be forbidden for a year to play any work produced by a member of the Society. In France, these ideas have passed into established institutions. What would England say to them?

Before I close my letter let me heartily congratulate you and your collaborateur on a success which has set a most valuable example, at a time when it is most sorely needed.<sup>3</sup> With the “run” that is still before you, I may hope that my wretched health will yet allow me to see the piece.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

H. Herman Esqre

P.S. I have, of course, written to Mr Flaxman.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Tipped in at p. 138 to a copy of James T. Field *Yesterdays with Authors* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1882), with the bookplate of Frank O. Lowden

2. Arthur J. Flaxman (b. 1845), dramatist, barrister and campaigner for dramatic copyright (see Folger Library Yc4722, and UK census for 1871, 1891, 1901, plus birth index 1845).

3. Possibly *The Silver King* by Herman and Henry Arthur Jones which opened on 16 November 1882 at the Princess's Theatre, Oxford St, London (Nicoll, II p. 419).

4. The letter remains unidentified.

### \* TO CHARLES KENT, 6 DECEMBER 1883

MS: Parrish (5/4), envelope only.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Kent Esqre | 1. Campden Grove | Kensington W.  
Wilkie Collins

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1. Foolscap envelope sealed with red sealing wax carrying WC's initials, and bearing a postmark in red on the verso: 'LONDON-W | A1 | DE 6 | 83'.

### \* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 8 DECEMBER 1884

MS: Unknown. On sale: eBay (December 2006), by Signature House, Bridgeport, West Virginia, item 230052489359.<sup>1</sup>

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
8<sup>th</sup> December 1884

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1. Apparently a simple dated autograph, on a cream card with rounded corners.

### \* TO THE REV. CHARLES TOWNSEND,<sup>1</sup> 5 JANUARY 1886

MS: Lilly Library, Indiana University (English Literature Mss), with envelope.<sup>2</sup>

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE. W. | London**  
5 January 1886

Dear Sir,

I should be miserable indeed, if I did not feel gratified and encouraged on reading your friendly letter. Pray accept the few lines enclosed, and believe me,

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins  
The Revd Charles Townsend | &c &c &c

Count Fosco on John Bull.

“He is the quickest old gentleman at finding out the faults that are his neighbours’, and the slowest old gentleman at finding out the faults that are his own, who exists on the face of creation.”<sup>2</sup>

From “The Woman in White” | By Wilkie Collins | 5 January 1886

- 
1. Otherwise unidentified American fan – see the address on the accompanying envelope.
  2. Directed to ‘The Reverend Charles Townsend | Pastor’s Study | Lansingburgh | New York | U.S.A.’, and postmarked ‘London W | JA 5 | 86’.
  3. From Marian Halcombe’s Diary entry for 17 June, Second Epoch III.

**\* TO PERCY WILLIAM BUNTING,<sup>1</sup> 4 JULY 1887**

MS: University of Chicago.

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

Monday 4 July 1887

Dear Sir,

I only received your letter yesterday evening, owing to a mistake on the part of the letter-carrier, who delivered it at the wrong house.

If you can favour me by calling here on Wednesday next between three and four o’clock, I shall be very glad to see you.

If this appointment suits you, pray do not trouble to write again. If not, in that case, I beg that you will choose your own later afternoon at the same time.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins  
Percy William Bunting Esqre

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1. Sir Percy William Bunting (1836-1911), social reformer, editor of the *Contemporary Review* from 1882 until his death.

**\* TO PERCY WILLIAM BUNTING, 4 SEPTEMBER 1887**

MS: University of Chicago.

Margate 4 Sept 1887

Dear Mr Bunting,

Your kind letter and Mr Cabel’s stories have just found their way to me.<sup>1</sup> After recovering slowly here (onshore) I have tried cruising at sea next, and making a more rapid progress towards recovery. We have sent ashore for letters – and I am now able to thank you at last.

I have only had time (before sending this to the post) to read two of Mr Cabel's stories. Very much better, to my mind, than any modern American fiction that I have read – excepting only Bret Harte. Excellent observation of character – as far as character can be observed within narrow limits – and descriptions which have the merit of making the reader see what the writer sees – these, so far as I may judge at present, are Mr Cabel's merits. The only noticeable defect that I can see is that the conscientious hard work does not conceal itself as it ought. If "Old Creole Days"<sup>2</sup> is a first work, the author has probably learnt this last secret of his art.

Pray dont suppose that I forget my promise to write for the Review. I hope to report myself again when I am able to conquer arrears of work that have accumulated during my illness.

Believe me | vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
Percy Wm Bunting Eqre

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1. George Washington Cable (1844-1925: *ANB*) – WC misspells the name consistently – the Louisiana author, was invited in 1887 by Bunting to write for the *Contemporary Review*. He replied on 23 June 1887 that he had been travelling in the southern states and was planning to write an account which he would send to Bunting. The letter is also held at the University of Chicago. Cable's 'The Negro question in the United States' appeared in the March 1888 issue of the *Contemporary*, pp. 443-68.

2. Cable's collection of short stories *Old Creole Days* was published in 1879 and presumably sent to WC as an example of the author's work.

**\* TO PERCY WILLIAM BUNTING, 6 DECEMBER 1887**

MS: University of Chicago.

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**  
6<sup>th</sup> Decr 1887

My dear Mr Bunting,

I was indeed sorry to have missed you when you kindly called today. A headache of the sort called "splitting" had driven me out to get the nearest approach to fresh air that London can offer. The truth is that I have been working a little too hard – and I am going away tomorrow to get some days of idleness, and to breathe the country freshness or dampness whichever it may be.

I need hardly tell you – but I will tell you – that I well remember that I am to be one of your contributors. The obstacle in my way is – as I think I mentioned when I last had the pleasure of seeing you – a new serial story. It begins in February next – and I am not yet as far in advance as I ought to be. In other words, I must still trust to your indulgence – and deserve it, if I can, by accepting no other proposals for an article, until I can redeem my pledge to you.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

**\* TO CHARLES KENT, 17 DECEMBER 1881-7**

MS: Parrish (5/4).<sup>1</sup>

Mr WILKIE COLLINS | 90, Gloucester Place, Portman Square. W.  
17 Dec<sup>r</sup>

With my love | WC  
To Mr Charles Kent. | 1. Campden Grove

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1. On a small printed visiting card, which provides the conjectural dating limits.

**\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 8 JUNE 1888**

MS: Parrish (5/11/AM18505).<sup>1</sup>

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
8th June 1888

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1. On an oblong card with rounded corners – presumably a simple autograph.

**\* TO THE REV. GEORGE BAINTON,<sup>1</sup> 13 JUNE 1888**

MS: Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Gratz Collection 10/28).

82. Wimpole Street | London, W.  
~~90, GLOUCESTER PLACE. | PORTMAN SQUARE, W.~~  
13<sup>th</sup> June 1888

Dear Mr Bainton,

I am about to trespass on your kindness for a little information of which I stand in need, under these circumstances.

My new novel, called “The Legacy of Cain” is published serially in weekly newspapers here, in the Colonies, and in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

One of the characters is a Minister of the Wesleyan Methodist “persuasion.”<sup>3</sup> He is a married man, whose wife has borne him no children, during the first seven years of their married life. He adopts an infant, from merciful and Christian motives, who is the daughter of a woman, hanged for the murder of her husband.

If the helpless orphan is to be happy in after-life, the infamy of her parentage, by the mother’s side, must be strictly concealed. She must be taken for his child. He is within two days of being transferred to a new “circuit”, in a distant place, when he adopts the child, and his wife willingly assists in helping the pious fraud. All the necessary precautions are taken – no suspicions are excited among the new congregation – and the child’s future is so far safe.

There is the situation in the serial story.

But one of my readers, a lay member of the Wesleyans and a “circuit steward”, writes to tell me that a Wesleyan Minister must attend the “district meeting” – must give in on a paper schedule the names of his children, the place of their birth &c, &c, – and receives from the “circuit steward” six guineas annually for each of his children. This curious domestic inquisition would make it simply impossible for the Minister in my story to keep the adoption of the child, and the parentage of the child, a secret without being guilty of conduct quite unworthy of his position and his character.

I see no way out of this difficulty, but to alter the religious denomination to which my “Minister” belongs, before the story is republished in book-form.

You will now anticipate the inquiry which follows: Is there any such rule, as the Wesleyan rule, in the Nonconformist church system? or ought I to call it the Congregational church system? or the Independent church system?<sup>4</sup> Pray forgive, and enlighten, my ignorance.

If a Minister, in your position, is not obliged to supply a list of his children to the constituted authorities, and is left to bring them up on his own sole responsibility, then another question follows: Under which circumstances can a Nonconformist minister leave the town in which he performs his clerical duties, and remove to another place and minister to a new congregation?

I ought perhaps to add that the Minister in the novel is supposed to have married a lady with a fortune of her own. Also that her state of health might make it necessary for him to take her to the seaside for change of air after he had left the scene of his duties, and before he removed to a new sphere of action. This latter event is not necessary to the conduct of the story, unless it might be required in the interests of probability.

Pray excuse this long letter – and, if I am giving you any trouble, and ignorantly making an undue demand on your time, do more than forgive me – take no notice of me, and you will be appreciated and understood by

Yours very truly | Wilkie Collins  
The Revd George Bainton

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1. See to him of 15 June 1888.
2. *The Legacy of Cain* was syndicated by Tillotson both in Britain and overseas, but neither the colonial nor American venues have been traced.
3. Reverend Abel Gracedieu.
4. Gracedieu becomes a Congregational Minister in the book edition.

**\* TO JAMES STANLEY LITTLE,<sup>1</sup> 18 JULY 1888**

MS: Lewis Collection.<sup>2</sup> Published: Lewis website.

82. Wimpole Street. W. | 19<sup>th</sup> July 1888

Dear Sir,

I beg to enclose a postal order for 10/6 for a ticket for the Dinner to American Men and Women of Letters on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins  
Jas Stanley Little Esq Secy

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1. Secretary of the Society of Authors – see to him of 25 June 1888.
2. Mounted and framed, alongside a print of the full-length photographic portrait of WC taken by Herbert Watkins in May 1861.

**\* TO WILLIAM F. GILL,<sup>1</sup> UNKNOWN DATE**

MS: Unknown. On sale: eBay, June 2007.

## Wilkie Collins<sup>2</sup>

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1. William F. Gill, Boston publisher who issued several of WC's books.
2. All that remains is the signature excised from the envelope. On the reverse in another hand is this note: 'Mr Collins is in England. I have cut the autograph from an envelope upon which it was written. It may serve your purpose. | Yours truly | Wm F Gill'.

### **\* TO HENRY GRAY,<sup>1</sup> UNKNOWN DATE<sup>2</sup>**

MS: Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society.

technically speaking, in a false position.

Affcly yours | Wilkie Collins

Henry Gray Esq

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1. Henry Gray (1823-1898), the sixth child of WC's mother's sister Catherine Esther Geddes (1796-1882). See Donald Whitton, *The Grays of Salisbury* (San Francisco: 1976), p. 15.
2. A scrap torn from a letter for the signature. It is accompanied by a MS note 'Autograph of Wilkie Collins (author of the "Woman in White" &c) given to me by his cousin H. Gray Esqr – May 10, 1890. E. Henson. London'. Henson remains unidentified.

### **\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, UNKNOWN DATE**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Christie's, 5 June 2007.<sup>1</sup>

and believe me | very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. Undated fragment torn from the foot of a letter for the signature; the hands suggests WC's later decades.

## **(B) Corrigenda**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*I. p.xxvi*

*J. Sterling Coyne should read J. Stirling Coyne.*

### **TO NEWTON CROSLAND, [LATE 1851]**

*I p. 56.*

### **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, -1855**

*I p. 133.*

*These two texts are in fact found on recto and verso of one and the same manuscript fragment. The later entry should therefore be removed, with the text incorporated into the earlier one.*

### **TO J. STERLING COYNE, 6 MAY 1859**

*I. p.177.*

*Name should read Stirling Coyne in both the recipient and addressee lines, as well as note 1.*

### **TO J. STERLING COYNE, 18 FEBRUARY 1860**

*I. p.190.*

*Name should read Stirling Coyne in both the recipient and addressee lines.*

### **TO J. STERLING COYNE, 23 MAY 1862**

*I. p.263.*

*Name should read Stirling Coyne in both the recipient and addressee lines.*

### **TO ANNE THACKERAY,<sup>1</sup> 22 NOVEMBER 1864**

*I p. 300: The entire entry should read:*

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

12. Harley Street. W | Nov<sup>r</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> 1864

Dear Miss Thackeray,

I wish I could help you to find Mary out.<sup>2</sup> But so far as I know that excellent girl has (in the language of Mr Carlyle) “vanished into infinite space”.<sup>3</sup> If my mother (to whom I shall be writing in a day or two) can help in finding the lost trace, I will let you know immediately.<sup>4</sup> I am always delighted to be of any service to you that I can – however little.

It is very kind of you to help in making Nice agreeable to Charley and Katie. I have been recommending them to go to Rome if the Nice climate won't do.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. See to her of 3 November 1864.

2. Perhaps the Collins family servant referred to in, e.g., the letter to HC of 10 August 1860.

3. While, echoing Hamlet, Carlyle employs the phrase ‘into infinite space’ with some frequency, we have not been able to locate in his writings the precise phrase cited here by



WC. Perhaps the closest call occurs in the opening chapter of *The French Revolution* (1837): ‘all Dubarrydom rushes off, with tumult, into infinite Space; and ye, as subterranean Apparitions are wont, vanish utterly, – and leaving only a smell of sulphur!’

4. The topic is not mentioned in the next known letter to HC, dated 18 December 1864.

5. CAC and his wife Katie were travelling in Europe. Exactly how Miss Thackeray helped them in Nice is not clear, though CAC wrote to HC on 14 November from Hotel Chauvain, Nice mentioning a letter she had earlier directed to him in Cannes from Miss Thackeray who is ‘back again in London . . . and much with Mrs Leech who they say is suffering terribly’ (Morgan MA3153). The couple remained in Nice until after 29 November, before travelling to Mentone in France.

### **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 1861-5**

*II p. 23: Date should read [December 1861], with note 1 revised as follows:*

1. Undated fragment on both sides of a single sheet of plain paper with no watermark, with text excised at the foot of the recto. The conjectural dating derives from the reference to the American Civil War and what appears to be the international diplomatic incident of early November 1861, known as the Trent Affair or the Mason and Slidell Affair. This was first reported in the *Times* of 28 November 1861, p. 9b and the piece WC refers to may be that in the *Times* of 12 December 1861, p. 9c.

### **TO J. STERLING COYNE, [MAY 1859-JUNE 1868]**

*II. p. 117.*

*Name should read Stirling Coyne in both the recipient and addressee lines, as well as note 1.*

### **TO EMIL LEHMANN, 7 AUGUST 1870**

*II p. 204. Source line should read:*

MS: Parrish (4/12/AM85-86).

### **TO GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA, 23 FEBRUARY 1871**

*II p. 238. Source line should read:*

MS: G.A. Sala Correspondence, Princeton University Library (C0804/3/268).

### **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, [7] AUGUST 1871**

*II p. 267-8.*

*The lost first part of the MS has now been located, and the entire entry should now read:*

### **TO JOHN BONNER, 5-7 AUGUST 1871**

MS: University of Pennsylvania Library (Rare Book and Manuscript Library) [part dated 5 August], and Parrish (Box 4/12) [part dated 7 August].

**90, Gloucester Place, Portman Square. W. | 3<sup>rd</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> August 1871**

My dear Sir,

A line to thank you for your kind letter of July 14th.<sup>1</sup>

The dramatic “Woman in White” is to be produced on the London stage, at the Olympic Theatre, on the 2nd of October next. “Fosco” is to be played by Mr. George Vining.

I have not yet seen Mr Palmer.<sup>2</sup>

The question now is – How to prevent my play from being pirated in the United States – if it succeeds in London. If Mr Palmer and I come to terms, he will probably be able to answer my question. If we do not, my idea is that I ought to send you a copy of the piece before it is produced here, and that some American writer on whom we can rely, should “write in” a few lines here and there, and then copyright the play in America as the joint production of my pen and his. Will this be enough of itself to protect the play from being performed without my leave in the United States? Or must the work be actually produced in an American Theatre? In the latter case, would it be possible to perform it in some small town – then to stop the run – and keep it waiting until Mr Vining could visit America and play Fosco in your large cities? In plain words – will one of two public performances (in a small place) of a play stated to be the joint production of an American and an Englishman, secure the dramatic copyright of the piece for future performances in America? If the answer is No, and if American managers refuse to produce the play simultaneously with its production in London, I do not see how I can protect myself from piracy.

Excuse my again troubling you on this question. But I want nothing now to complete my disastrous dramatic campaign in your country, but to have a success here with “The Woman in White”, and then to have the play produced successfully also in America, without my making a farthing by it!

If you are in any doubt on the points I have put, would it not be desirable to apply to my friend Mr W. D. Booth at Wall Street,<sup>3</sup> who possesses great experience on the copyright question?

The piece is printed – and I can send you one or more copies, if you think it desirable.

“Fosco” would certainly have a better chance on your stage, if the character was played by an actor who has read it over with me. I know “Fosco” intimately – in every inflection of his voice, and every gesture of his hands. If I could have instructed the “Wragge” and the “Magdalen” at Mr Daly’s Theatre results might have been very different. My characters are living beings to me. I only know how to write them by knowing how to act them as well.

Excuse this new trial of your patience. I write while there is still time to do something for the dramatic “Woman in White.”

Yours truly Wilkie Collins

On consideration I have thought it wisest to send to you at once by registered book-post, a copy of the piece – which is of course for your use only – in case it may be wanted for the object in view. In the event of accidents by post, another copy goes to Mr Booth by this mail also.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> August | **90. Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.**

I have kept my letter till the above date, in case of having news to send you on the subject of Mr Palmer.

Mr Vining has seen Mr Palmer – and has told him what I have planned to do with the piece. Nothing has been settled – and I gather from Mr Vining that Mr Palmer (if he treated for the piece at all) would be only disposed to

treat for the production of it, simultaneously with the production in London. I have not myself seen him yet – but, if I do see him, I shall hold to my idea of keeping “Fosco” off the New York stage until Mr Vining can play the part there – if the thing can be done.

After the experience of “No Name”,<sup>4</sup> I am more and more convinced that there would be a very poor chance of success with a “Fosco”, who had not rehearsed the character with me. It is a character outside all theatrical conventions. If you had a great genius on the American Stage, I could trust the great genius to play it without my assistance. As things are I have not seen here, and have not heard of, an American actor who would be likely to make a great success in the part. The play is all Fosco. If he does not take the audience by storm, failure is certain. Mr Vining is privately rehearsing with me – every line in the dialogue is matter of consultation between us. If this hard work is repaid by a great triumph here – Mr Vining is almost certain to repeat the success with you. If he fails – there is an end of the play, on both sides of the Atlantic.

I am therefore all for waiting, until the first night at the Olympic enlightens us – provided we can copyright the play in the U.S. If we can not copyright it, it must take its chance – and I can only thank you for the kind interest which you have shown in the matter.

On reflection, I have written by this mail to Mr Booth to get his opinion at all hazards, on the purely legal aspect of the question.<sup>5</sup> It will save you trouble in putting the points to him, if you find it desirable to consult together on the subject.

I must again apologize for this inordinately long letter. It is the result of my anxiety to place you in complete possession of my view – and to spare you more letter writing.

WC

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1. Given the time for transatlantic travel, probably a reply from Bonner to WC’s letter of 10 June 1871.

2. Probably Albert Marshman Palmer (1838-1905), manager of the Union Square Theater, New York.

3. William D. Booth, WC’s legal representative in New York.

4. Augustin Daly had staged *No Name* at his Fifth Avenue Theater in New York from 7 June that year.

5. The letter to Booth has not been traced.

## **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, [JANUARY 1872]**

*II p. 319.*

## **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, UNKNOWN DATE**

*IV p. 384 (fragment beginning ‘of binding’).*

*These two texts are in fact found on recto and verso of one and the same manuscript fragment. The later entry should therefore be removed, with the text incorporated into the earlier one.*

**\* TO CHARLES KENT, 12 JUNE 1872**

*II p. 350. Date should read 18 June 1872, with note 1 revised as follows:*

1. The faint postmark reads 'LONDON-W | 2 | JU 18 | 72'. Found with letter to Kent, 28 June 1871, Parrish.

**TO WILLIAMS & NORGATE, 23 MAY 1873**

*II pp. 402-3. On the verso of the manuscript is found the following fragment of text:*

to pass the book through the Custom House.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

**TO FREDERICK LEHMANN, 2 JANUARY 1874**

*The MS has now been located and the version in The Public Face, taken from printed sources, should be replaced with the following:*

MS: The Poetry Collection, University of Buffalo. Published: Lehmann, pp. 65–8; Extract: Robinson, pp. 269–71; Davis, p. 279; Hyder, p. 55. Published (incomplete): Baker & Clarke, II, pp. 372–3.

Buffalo. N.Y. | 2nd January 1874

Strange to say, my dear Fred, I have actually got some leisure time at this place. A disengaged half-hour is before me – and I occupy it in writing a sort of duplicate letter for the Padrona and for you.

I hear you have called like a good fellow, at Gloucester Place, and have heard something of me there, from time to time. No matter where I go my reception in America is always the same. The prominent people in each place visit me, drive me out, dine me, and do all that they can to make me feel myself among friends. The enthusiasm and the kindness are really and truly beyond description. I should be the most ungrateful man living if I had any other than the highest opinion of the American people. I find them to be the most enthusiastic, the most cordial, and the most sincere people I have ever met with in my life. When an American says, "Come and see me," he means it. This is wonderful to an Englishman.

Before I had been a week in the country I noted three national peculiarities which had never been mentioned to me by visitors to the "States." I. No American hums or whistles a tune – either at home or in the street. II. Not one American in 500 has a dog. III. Not one American in a 1000 carries a walking stick. I, who hum perpetually – who love dogs – who cannot live without a walking stick – am greatly distressed at finding my dear Americans deficient in the three social virtues just enumerated.

My readings have succeeded by surprising the audiences. The story surprises them in the first place – being something the like of which they have not heard before. And my way of reading surprises them in the second place – because I don't flourish a paper-knife, and stamp about the platform, and thump the reading desk. I persist in keeping myself in the background and the story in front. The audience begins at each reading with silent astonishment and ends with a great burst of applause.

As to the money, if I could read often enough, I should bring back a little fortune – in spite of the panic. The hard times have been against me of course – but while others have suffered badly, I have always drawn audiences. Here, for example, they give me a fee for a reading on Tuesday evening next – it amounts to between £70 and £80 (English). If I could read five times a week at this rate (which is my customary rate) here is £350 a week – which is not bad pay for an hour and three-quarters' reading each night. But I cannot read five times a week without knocking myself up – and this I won't do. And then I have been mismanaged and cheated by my agents – have had to change them and start afresh with a new man. The result has been loss of time, and loss of money. But I am investing in spite of it – and (barring accidents) I am in a fair way to make far more than I have made yet, before the last fortnight in March – when I propose to sail for home. I am going “out West” from this – and I may get as far as the Mormons. My new agent – a first rate-man – is ahead making engagements, and I am here (thanks to the kindness of Sebastian Schlesinger) with my godson Frank as secretary and companion. I find him a perfect treasure – I don't know what I should do without him.

As for the said Sebastian S. he is the brightest nicest kindest little fellow I have met with for many a long day. He would'nt hear of my dining at the Hotel while I was in Boston this last time. Whenever I had no engagement (and I kept out of engagements, having work to do) I dined at his house – and dined superbly. Mrs. S. had just lain in of a daughter – so I have still to be presented to her – and our dinners were of the bachelor sort. It is not one of the least of Sebastian's virtues that he speaks with the greatest affection of you. He also makes the best cocktail in America. Vive Sebastian! Barthold S. was also as kind as could be. I dined with him too in New York. So you see your letters have not been thrown away.

The nigger-waiters (I like them better than the American waiters) are ringing the dinner bell. I must go and feed off a variety of badly cooked meats and vegetables ranged round me in (say) forty soap dishes. Otherwise I am comfortable here. I have got the Russian Grand Duke's bedroom – and a parlour in which I can shake hands with my visitors – and a box at the theatre – and the freedom of the Club.

Write soon, my dear boy, and tell me about yourself and the Padrona – to whom I send my best love and sincerest good wishes. She is happily settled, I hope, in the new house. I want to hear all about the new house – and about the boys – God forgive me! I am writing of Rudy as if he was a boy. Don't tell him! The fact is I am getting to be an old man – I shall be fifty if I live till the eighth of this month – and I shall celebrate my birthday by giving a reading at “Cleveland”. I wish I could transport myself to London!

Yours my dear Fred always affily Wilkie Collins

Providence (the city, not the deity) paid me 400 dollars – in spite of the panic! P.S. My address is care of Naylor & Co, Boston, Mass: (Do you know that Firm?) Frank sends his respects.

**TO CHARLES KENT, 3 FEBRUARY 1881**

*III, pp. 286-7: The MS has now been located. The source line, transcription, and associated notes should now read:*

MS: Berg (in made-up souvenir volume, *The Frozen Deep by Wilkie Collins, Performed at the Gallery of Illustration, 8 August 1857*), with envelope.<sup>1</sup> Published: *Dickensian*, 5:6 (June 1909), p. 161.

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.**

3rd February 1881

My dear Mr Kent,

It is not easy to resist the temptation to say Yes, to any request of yours – but, for consistency’s sake, I must refrain from accepting the proposal of the amateur company. I can certainly not “count on my two fingers” the number of applications to perform “The Frozen Deep” which have reached me<sup>2</sup> – and which have been refused for one sufficient reason. No amateur company that I ever saw or heard of can perform the piece. I shall be reminded of the amateur company which did perform it. Let me see a new amateur company with two such born actors in it as Charles Dickens and Mark Lemon, and they shall have the piece directly – and what is more those two “leading men” ~~they~~ shall be offered Fifty pounds a week, each (supposing them to be amateurs of moderate income) to appear on the public stage, in two new parts of my writing.

Forgive a late reply to your kind letter. The printers are close behind me

Yours always truly | WC

Many thanks for the information about the British Museum. The piece shall be sent there, of course.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Directed to ‘Charles Kent Esq | 1 Campden Grove | W.’, postmarked as dated.

2. See, for example, to J. [Dennis] Powell of 18 January and 13 March 1875.

3. Reference unidentified.

**TO CHARLES H. WILLIS, 8 AUGUST 1881**

*III p. 302: The family name should be corrected to Willes in both the recipient and addressee lines, with note 2 revised to read:*

2. Postmarked as dated; originally directed to ‘Charles H. Willes Esqre | Camden Fort | Crosshaven | Co Cork | Ireland’, though the second two lines of the address have been struck through and the letter redirected twice, in different hands, first to ‘Clonakilty’ and then to ‘Carlisle Fort | Whitegate’.

**TO J. E. SMITH, 3 MAY 1882**

*III p. 338: The middle initial should be corrected from E. to C. The following recipient line should be added at the foot of the letter:*

To | J.C. Smith

*This is probably the provincial actor J.C. Smith.*

**TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, [1861-83]**

*III p. 453.*

**TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, UNKNOWN DATE**

*IV p. 383 (fragment beginning ‘and believe me’).*

*These two texts are in fact found on recto and verso of one and the same manuscript fragment. The later entry should therefore be removed, with the text incorporated into the earlier one.*

**TO JANE WARD, 22 JULY 1884**

*IV p. 51: The following postscript should be added at the foot of the letter, before the addressee line:*

P.S. | Will you kindly let me know what William’s address is – so that I can send to my co-trustee a copy of this letter.

**TO CHARLES J. DAVIS, 11 JUNE 1885**

*IV p. 98: The family name should be corrected to Davies in both the recipient and addressee lines.*

**TO WILLIAM WINTER, 11 FEBRUARY 1886**

*IV p. 145: Source line should read:*

MS: Parrish (5/9/AM79-25).

**TO THE REV. GEORGE BAINTON, 23 SEPTEMBER 1887**

*IV p. 266: Source line should read:*

MS: Parrish (4/13/AM82-73). Extract: George Bainton, *The Art of Authorship* (London: J. Clarke & Co., 1890), pp. 89-91.

**TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, UNKNOWN DATE**

*IV p. 384 (fragment beginning ‘at all satisfy me.’).*

**TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, UNKNOWN DATE**

*IV p. 384 (fragment beginning ‘Pray forgive a very hasty letter.’).*

*These two texts are in fact found on recto and verso of one and the same manuscript fragment. The later entry should therefore be removed, with the text incorporated into the earlier one. Together the two suggest that the letter might be to a member of staff at Harper and Brothers, New York, perhaps William Seaver; if so, the letter might date from around 1880.*

**INDEX**

*IV p. 407: Coyne, J. Sterling should read Coyne, J. Stirling*

*IV p. 414: Willis, Charles H. should read Willes, Charles H.*

## ~~Reviews~~

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(1) William Baker. *A Wilkie Collins Chronology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. pp. xiii + 236. ISBN 1-40399-481-1; (2) *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures, Part V: Vol. 2 Wilkie Collins*. Ed. William Baker & Andrew Gasson. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007. pp. xli + 285. ISBN 1-85196-819-0 (3 Vol. Set).

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*A Wilkie Collins Chronology* by William Baker is part of the Palgrave “Author Chronologies” series, with another leading Collins scholar, Norman Page, as General Editor. Among others in the series are volumes on Joyce, Wilde, Hardy, and Lawrence, so Collins’s inclusion is clear evidence – if any were needed – of what Baker calls “the remarkable critical and scholarly revival” of the last few years (ix). As Baker points out, the uncovering of previously murky details of Collins’s life by biographers like William Clarke and Catherine Peters, plus the recent publication of the complete correspondence in *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins*, for which Baker was also an editor, have made the volume possible in a way that it wouldn’t have been twenty years ago. In drawing heavily on Collins’s letters, as well other primary sources and recent biographical materials, *A Wilkie Collins Chronology* does offer a new perspective. Inevitably, the volume has less information on Collins’s early life than on his later years, but the same would be true of any author before he or she became famous. The volume has most detail on the 1850s and 1860s, the start of Collins’s professional writing life and the period in which he established a range of social networks, most notably Dickens’s “Tavistock House set” and the theatrical community of London’s West End. Evoking – often in very precise detail – the wide range of Collins’s social activities – reading, theatre-going, lots of dinners, this study reveals Wilkie’s skills as a networker. He took part in amateur theatricals, performing before the Queen on 16 May 1851. He attended social events at the houses of millionaire Sir Francis Goldsmid or Angela Burdett Coutts, rumoured to be the richest woman in Britain. As an adult he lived in a succession of comfortable houses replete with servants in respectable West End locations: with his mother principally at Blandford Square, Hanover Terrace, and Harley Place, and on his own account at New Cavendish Street, Harley Street, Melcombe Place, Gloucester Place, and finally Wimpole Street. As the *Chronology* reveals, it was a fine life, with plenty of champagne and caviar. Included at the end of the volume is an index to the key people mentioned; useful as this is, it might also have been helpful to include a “Who’s Who” section as elsewhere in the series.

The *Chronology* is particularly good at demonstrating the interconnectedness of Collins’s and Dickens’s activities, giving information about fictional, theatrical and journalistic output, collaboration and publication, as well as finances, health and travelling, though interestingly little about relationships with the opposite sex. Yet whilst Dickens seems to dominate Collins until the mid-1860s – at least according to the information here – Baker also includes valuable material on other immediate family members (Harriet Collins, Charles Allston Collins), friends (William Holman Hunt, Edward Pigott, Ned and Charles Ward, Charles Reade), and other literary connections such as agents and publishers. Such a broad scope evinces the close and lively artistic community in which Collins lived, but Baker also includes details of the losses, tensions and creative anxieties which plagued him. “I laugh like a fiend over my own maladies”, Collins writes in 1862 (120). In following all the ups and downs of Collins’s health and reminding us of the central place this issue played in his life, the portrait of which emerges is affectionate and engaging, yet also grim in



its way. The book's layout, organisation and stark, highly-concentrated blasts in Collins's own words thus convey a sense of the struggle involved in writing against the clock and the costs involved. When Collins's value in the marketplace starts to dip in the 1880s and his rate of work goes up as his body slowly falls apart, you can almost feel him struggling to keep things together.

Along with Andrew Gasson, William Baker is also the editor of the volume on Collins in Pickering and Chatto's *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures*. This is part of a three-volume set, reproducing in facsimile selections of contemporary writings and reminiscences about three of the period's popular novelists (the other volumes are devoted to Thackeray and Braddon). The intention, as general editor Ralph Pite points out, is to go back and listen to what contemporaries said about these individuals rather than relying on later commentators, allowing us to see "the many different voices which modeled and claimed these famous and at times notorious figures" (xvii). In 1889, there was no "official life" for Collins – nor indeed for Braddon or Thackeray. Thus the selections of journalism, reminiscences, memoirs of friends (and enemies) become part of the "process by which reputation is formed" (xvii), as well as showing these literary figures from different perspectives. At the same time the selections don't offer an authoritative contemporary assessment and it is unsafe to assume that they represent a fully-rounded picture. However, to the extent that the Victorian era was, as Pite suggests, about establishing yourself as respectable – especially in the public eye – they are revealing and a useful supplement to later biographical accounts. By virtue of being "Victorian" the selections on Collins are tactful and reticent. Evidently, writing about famous authors with "double lives" was a challenge for anyone with beans to spill.

Of the twenty-five items devoted to Collins all but four were published after his death. The few obituaries which are included remind us that Collins did not inspire national reverence in same way that Dickens did, and the editors provide a revealing extract from the *Pall Mall Gazette* which describe some undignified scenes at Collins's funeral prompted by his legions of female fans. With the remaining extracts there are some drawbacks: coverage is patchy and could be more generous and adventurous – some more negative comments might give a rounder picture – and the extracts are not grouped in any way except chronologically. Some cuts could have been made; the recollections of Nathaniel Beard contain twelve pages devoted to Frances Kemble, whose connection to Collins is not made clear. Elsewhere, Harry Quilter's gushing tribute to Collins from the *Universal Review* of 1889 seems of limited interest, apart from the fact of its being gushing – which perhaps says something about the relationships the older, lonelier Collins established with certain type of younger literary man on the make. That other literary-hanger on, Hall Caine, is also featured here. Certain episodes – Collins's writing methods – are dealt with several times – whereas other aspects – Collins's relationship with his family and also with Dickens – receive scant treatment. Given the closeness – evident in *Wilkie Collins: A Chronology* – between these two figures in their literary careers and the jealousy it provoked among Dickens's other (less talented) acolytes it might have been helpful to give some emphasis to the question of how this relationship was interpreted by those who claimed to have observed it.

Nevertheless, the extracts given can also be suggestive and the editors are careful to contextualize each personality. All the writers are introduced by a brief but effective biographical sketch and outline of their connection with Collins. They include James Payn, Edmund Yates, Algernon Swinburne and Wybert Reeve. Perhaps the most enlightening item is one of the least well-known – a reminiscence from Lucy Walford in her *Memories of Victorian London* which manages to capture

something of what Collins was like to sit next to at dinner. Also revealing are the theatrical recollections which give us an insight into Collins's (not always successful) attempts to become a force in Victorian theatreland. Then there are pieces which attempt – rather in vain – to correct the idea, summarized by William Winter in 1909, that “Wilkie Collins was a man of weak character, self-indulgent, and subservient to the opium habit” (226). Winter himself worried that this view of Collins would distort an assessment of the novelist's genius. Another interesting point to come out of these *fin de siècle* assessments is that most of the important discussions about Collins – his work-rate, the “value” of the later works, his gourmandizing – were identified early on, even though later twentieth century scholars would adjust their relative weights.

As with *Wilkie Collins: A Chronology*, the editors make no claim to have produced a definitive account of Collins's posthumous reputation and it would be unreasonable to expect twenty-five extracts to sum up all aspects of Collins and his career. Their aim is something different. In presenting, in an accessible way, copies of material otherwise hard to come by, this volume will help generate a wider discussion of Collins's place in the Victorian literary field. The editors have also provided a succinct – if somewhat sketchy – introduction to their subject's twentieth century reputation. As a set the volumes are rather expensive, but should prove a useful addition to library bookshelves.

Andrew Maunder  
*University of Hertfordshire*

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**Andrew Mangham, ed. *Wilkie Collins: Interdisciplinary Essays*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007. pp. xii + 295. ISBN 1-84718-109-0.**

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Developed from papers given at a Collins conference at the University of Sheffield in 2005, this wide-ranging collection contains sixteen essays divided into five sections: “Collins in Context,” “Collins and Art,” “Collins and Medicine,” “Collins and the Law,” and “Collins, Theatre, and Film.” The volume also includes an Introduction by Andrew Mangham and an Afterward by Janice M. Allan. Providing a rationale for the collection, Mangham explains the book's aim: to show that interdisciplinary and intertextual approaches most effectively illuminate Collins's writings (1). While this is certainly not a new idea and has become, in fact, a given in Collins scholarship, the principle is well supported by the essays gathered here. Like many conference collections, the quality of the essays is uneven, and some could be more fully researched and more effectively edited. Nonetheless, the volume is a welcome contribution to Collins studies. Although Mangham's claim that critics “still appear preoccupied with the small sample of work Collins produced in the 1860s” (4) seems rather outdated, several of the essays included here usefully focus on lesser-known works and provide unusual pairings of Collins with other writers and visual artists.

Anne-Marie Beller opens Part I (“Collins in Context”) with “‘Too absurdly Repulsive’: Generic Indeterminacy and the Failure of *The Fallen Leaves*.” Examining the “structural and formal elements” of Collins's 1879 novel, Beller attributes the “almost universal disparagement and neglect” of this work to its subversion and “hybridization” of generic categories (10, 12). She argues that the novel “often appears disjointed” but reveals Collins's desire to disrupt aesthetic categories while also “destabilizing gender boundaries” (18). Beller's association of particular female figures with particular genres is especially interesting and reveals the generic self-consciousness of the novel. Holly Furneaux's “A Distaste for

Matrimonial Sauce: The Celebration of Bachelorhood in the Journalism and Fiction of Collins and Dickens,” the second in this section, challenges those who foreground Dickens’s control and censorship of Collins’s writing in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. In Furneaux’s view, Dickens tactically interspersed Collins’s celebrations of “the unmarried man” with his own serials and, “far from repressing” Collins’s material, “prominently positioned” his subordinate’s “often controversial paeans to the joys of unmarried life,” the two sharing an interest in figures “who failed, or refused, to become accommodated within a rigid family model” (22-23). Furneaux usefully reminds us of the unconventionality that originally drew Dickens to Collins; yet in foregrounding their “mutual sexual radicalism” and the challenge it poses to “the normative family” (31-32), she downplays the conservative bent of both writers—their emphasis on the self-destructive psychopathology of angry spinsters (Miss Wade and Limping Lucy, for example) and the hurtful narcissism of confirmed bachelors (such as Ralph Nickleby and Frederick Fairlie). Turning from the collaborative to the cultural context of Collins’s writing, Tatiana Kontou considers the sensation heroine in relation to the female medium in “Parallel Worlds: Collins’s Sensationalism and Spiritual Practice,” showing how both sensation fiction and spiritualism place “acute emphasis on the politics of sex and gender” and use “theatrical or melodramatic narrative tropes” (38). Focusing on *No Name* and its “domestic actress,” Magdalen Vanstone, Kontou reveals the “false passivity” and the “alternate selves” that Collins’s heroine shares with the Victorian medium, both of whom “challenge the concept of ‘unnatural’ behavior” as well as the “notion of a single, concrete identity” (41). In approaching “Magdalen’s theatrics in terms of failed séances” (46) and noting how the heroine “ventriloquises *herself*” when playing Miss Garth (49), Kontou’s reading is especially compelling.

The essays in each of the remaining sections prove more closely interrelated than those on “Collins in Context” prove to be. Part II (“Collins and Art”) includes Clare Douglass’s “Text and Image Together: The Influence of Illustration and the Victorian Market in the Novels of Wilkie Collins,” and Aoife Leahy’s “The Face of the Adversary in the Novels of Wilkie Collins.” The first “reclaim[s] the image as a central part of the reading experience,” looking at illustrations for “Mr. Wray’s Cash-Box,” *No Name* and *Armada*, and examines their power to complement and subvert the text—in the case of *Armada*, “cementing [our] connection with Midwinter,” who “gaz[es] forward beyond the confines of the page” (70). In the second, Leahy uses Paton’s painting, *The Adversary*, and its demonizing of Raphael’s Apollo to help explain Collins’s own equation of Raphael’s ideal of beauty with “deceit and evil” (80-81), Godfrey Ablewhite supplying a case in point. Unfortunately, the reproductions found alongside these thoughtful discussions are rather poor in quality.

Five essays comprise the third section on “Collins and Medicine”: Andrew Mangham’s “Mental States: Political and Psychological Conflict in *Antonina*”; Jessica Cox’s “Reading Faces: Physiognomy and the Depiction of the Heroine in the Fiction of Wilkie Collins”; Amanda Mordavsky Caleb’s “Questioning Moral Inheritance in *The Legacy of Cain*”; William Hughes’s “Habitation and Incarceration: Mental Physiology and Asylum Abuse in *The Woman in White* and *Dracula*”; and Greta Depledge’s “*Heart and Science* and Vivisection’s Threat to Women.” While Depledge links Collins’s representation of medical treatment and vivisection in *Heart and Science* to gender politics and the oppression of women, working-class women in particular, Hughes distinguishes Collins’s relatively “neutral” handling of the asylum and its moral management of the mentally ill in *The Woman in White* from that of Bram Stoker, who more clearly indicts the “presiding physician” in *Dracula* (145-46). The two novels are linked by “the uneasy interface

between curative therapy and manipulative abuse,” Hughes argues, yet Collins holds “those outside of the medical profession” responsible for the wrong done to the institutionalized Laura Fairlie (145). For Mangham in his approach to *Antonina*, the political significance of mental illness lies in the parallel between imperial fall and insanity as Collins represents them—by means of the mental breakdowns of Goisvintha and Ulpius—with madness “a complex vehicle for expressing the author’s ambivalent attitude toward the political instabilities of the 1840s” (98). Whereas Mangham seeks to distinguish his approach from the “gender-preoccupied argument” of Tamar Heller (98), meeting with partial success, Cox explores the ways in which Collins sometimes frustrates gendered expectations in drawing on the pseudo-science of physiognomy. For Cox, Collins questions Lavater’s misogynistic theories in *The Legacy of Cain*; for Caleb, he uses the novel to challenge theories of inherited madness and criminality, “suggesting that individuals have the ability to defy their parental inheritance through individual moral strength” (123).

In Part IV, contributors approach “Collins and the Law” from three directions. In “The Scotch Verdict and Irregular Marriages: How Scottish law Disrupts the Normative in *The Law and the Lady* and *Man and Wife*,” Anne Longmuir contrasts the “irrationality” and “savagery” of Scottish law with the order and reason or its English counterpart, calling attention to “Collins’s interest in the heterogeneous nature of the British state” (166-67). Her analysis of legal uncertainties in the two novels and the ways in which these destabilize identity is original and insightful, although it makes English law sound overly coherent and too highly valued in Collins’s eyes. While Longmuir discusses the ambiguous and tentative quality of marital status under Scottish law, Lynn Parker examines the seemingly “irrevocable” (198) nature of sibling bonds in “The Dangerous Brother: Family Transgression in *The Haunted Hotel*.” As Parker observes, the indissoluble strength of these ties is illustrated by the selective hauntings of Collins’s ghost story. Yet the novella also challenges these privileged bonds by revealing “the potential for familial exploitation” and the possibility of “incest predicated upon sisterly self-sacrifice” (202), complicating the division between sibling and marital relations, as did the debate over the Deceased Wife’s Sister Bill. In “Collins on International Copyright: From ‘A National Wrong’ (1870) to ‘Considerations’ (1880),” Graham Law compares two essays on the issue of international copyright, placing them in their immediate contexts, foregrounding the “sophistry” of Collins’s stance, illuminating “the private motives” behind his arguments, and cleverly identifying the first article as itself a “piratical” publication (188, 185).

The final section, on “Collins, Theatre, and Film,” includes Richard Pearson’s “‘Twin-Sisters’ and ‘Theatrical Thieves’: Wilkie Collins and the Dramatic Adaptation of *The Moonstone*,” Janice Norwood’s “Sensation Drama? Collins’s Stage Adaptation of *The Woman in White*,” and Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier’s “Detecting Buried Secrets: Recent Film Versions of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*.” Making a case for Collins’s plays, too often dismissed by critics, Pearson foregrounds their success on the stage, despite “Collins’s anxieties about dramatic authorship” and its illegitimacy (211), describes his dramas as “twin-sisters” to the novels, without which “we see only part of the scene” (209), and focuses on the dramatic version of *The Moonstone*, its notable deviations from the novel, and its potential to “sully” Collins’s literary identity (220). Norwood provides a history of stage adaptations of *The Woman in White* and considers Collins’s own in relation to the genre of “sensation drama,” prominent elements of which he “deliberately avoided,” instead pointing toward “the more psychological dramas” of the late 1800s (226, 229). Considering recent film versions rather than nineteenth-

century adaptations, Brusberg-Kiermeier uses the work of Victor Shklovsky to show how these films heighten sensation among viewers, enabling them to experience Collins's novels "in a defamiliarised way" (238).

In her *Afterward*, Janice M. Allan emphasizes the liminal in Collins's writing and the challenge it poses to boundaries of various types. Crossing disciplinary lines as well as those of literary genres and periods, the essays here address and often value Collins's complexities of meaning as well as his ability to destabilize meaning itself, aptly seen by Allan as "a source of exciting possibilities" for readers and critics (258) and a powerful source of attraction in Collins's work.

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*Bates College*

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**Andrew Mangham. *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture*. Basingstoke, Hampshire/New York/: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. pp. x + 247. ISBN 0-230-5421-1.**

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Based on a doctoral thesis at the University of Sheffield supervised by Sally Shuttleworth, with Jenny Bourne Taylor as external examiner, *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction* is the first monograph by Andrew Mangham, who has recently taken up a tenured position at Reading University. The result is in many ways a worthy successor to Taylor's *In the Secret Theatre of Home* (1988) and Shuttleworth's *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996). In his book, Mangham treats the idea of the violent woman as it is encountered not only in works of fiction of the mid-Victorian period, but also in contemporary accounts of cases in the criminal courts and in the prevailing medical discourses of mind and body. In attempting to draw all three strands together into a single "complex web" (210), Mangham is above all concerned to investigate the challenges that this pattern of representation created for a domestic ideology centring on Patmore's image of the "angel in the house".

The violent women in question are found in a range of around thirty sensational works, principally from the 1860s and by Wilkie Collins, Ellen Wood, and Mary Braddon. They begin with but are by no means restricted to the "usual suspects", Lydia Gwilt in *Armada*, Isabel Vane from *East Lynne*, and Lady Audley herself. As recorded in his bibliography, Mangham makes significant use of more than a dozen criminal trials. These of course include notorious examples like the Madeline Smith case of 1857 (the poisoning by arsenic of a lover in Glasgow), and the Constance Kent case of 1860 (the bloody murder of her little brother in Road, Somerset), which coincided with the sensation boom and have often been considered in relation to it in recent criticism; but also dealt with in some detail are earlier and lesser known examples, such as the Maria Manning case of 1849 (the battery and fatal shooting of a soldier in London's East End) and the Mary Ann Brough case of 1854 (the cut-throat massacre of six of her own children in Esher, Surrey). Mangham also cites around fifty medical sources, including journal articles as well as single volumes, almost all written by male professionals for a specialist male readership. The most prominent are the works of Jean Esquirol in the 1830s, Forbes Winslow in the 1840s and 50s, and Henry Maudsley in the 1860s and 70s, all of which engage to a greater or lesser extent with the complex question of the relations between the female body, mental disorder, and legal responsibility.

The book thus opens with two chapters where the primary focus is on court records and clinical theories; literary echoes and parallels are duly noted here but are assigned a subsidiary role. The first deals with general legal and medical profiles of

three phases of female violence, from childhood and adolescence, through maternity and motherhood, to aging and senescence. The second describes the main preoccupations during the lengthy press coverage of the Road Murder case, before analyzing how those representations of female aberrance are refracted consciously and unconsciously in three specific literary works: Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* (1863), Wood's *St Martin's Eve* (1866), and Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868). The remaining three chapters dwell in turn on the dangerous feminine in a range of works by that trio of writers, in each case drawing attention explicitly to parallel problematics in medical and legal writings. It is perhaps only because her work has received the least sustained critical attention that the chapter on domestic disruption in Wood's novels seems to cover most new ground (the section on "evil heritages" in *The Shadow of Ashlydat* is especially acute); there is also much that is highly original in the treatment of sexual violence in Braddon, and of mental disease in Collins. Altogether, Mangham's meticulously researched, neatly organized and carefully argued thesis represents the most stimulating contribution to sensation fiction studies to have appeared for quite some time.

Yet Mangham's study does have its weak points. Often the delight in metaphorical correspondence prevents sustained attention to a particular train of thought, so that, for example, the distinct medical discourses of Esquirol, Winslow and Maudsley all seem to merge into a single symphonic refrain, making it difficult to detect dialectic or development. Sometimes the close textual analysis of literary symbolism seems to derive less from mid-Victorian psychological preoccupations than from classical Freudianism. This is especially true in the Braddon chapter, where the lush metaphorical pastures of her prose provide a rich harvest if you wish to gather sexual signs in the shape of orifices or protuberances. For me, though, the biggest problem concerns the casually ahistorical employment of the third term in Mangham's triadic sub-title, "popular culture". It is simply not the case, as claimed in the Introduction, that Braddon, Wood and Collins "were the best-selling writers of their period" (3). As Collins himself noted perceptively in "The Unknown Public", the family magazines in which their work was typically serialized, such as *All the Year Round* and *Temple Bar*, reached a bourgeois readership measured only in the tens of thousands, whereas penny-fiction-journals like the *Family Herald* and *London Journal* addressed a proletarian audience measure in the hundreds of thousands. Mangham's book has nothing to say about the representations of women in the serial stories found in the columns of periodicals such as these. (The most luridly melodramatic tales that Mangham discusses, Braddon's first novel *Three Times Dead* (1860) and Mary Fortune's "The White Maniac" (1867), were in fact addressed to a proletarian audience, respectively in weekly penny parts and in the Melbourne *Australian Journal*, a cheap fiction weekly, but Mangham shows no awareness of this and indeed cites the stories in modern editions based on later versions.) In the same way, if this volume were truly concerned with popular culture, the author would have needed to consult reporting of violent crimes by women, not only in a prestigious journal of record like *The Times*, but also in cheap papers like the *Illustrated Police News*. In sum, while the author is outstanding at drawing parallels, he is less successful in tracing series; he enjoys plumbing psychological and ideological depth but tends to avoid charting historical continuity or change. All the same, the fact that I am inclined to make such unreasonable demands of promising young scholar should be taken as a sign of the high expectations aroused by this stimulating book. I look forward to Mangham's subsequent work.

Graham Law  
Waseda University

# WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY JOURNAL



The *Wilkie Collins Society Journal* (ISSN: 0897-2982) is an annual volume, sponsored jointly by the Wilkie Collins Society and the Wilkie Collins Society of North America, and is dedicated to original scholarly essays and reviews of publications relating to Wilkie Collins, his writings, and his culture.

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