

# The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins Addenda and Corrigenda (4)

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**Wilkie Collins Society**

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## Introduction

This pamphlet is the fourth 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 pp. ix-lxii of Volume I.

The editors are beginning to work towards publishing the entire sequence of the known letters in digital form. As part of that process each letter is being given a permanent unique number. The numbers run consecutively in order as the letters have been published. So the 2987 letters listed in *The Public Face* are numbered as published in sequence in those volumes. The numbers then continue sequentially for the new letters in subsequent Addenda and Corrigenda. The table below summarises the numbering.

<b>Publication</b>	<b>Sequence</b>	<b>Pages</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
<i>Public Face</i> I	Chronological	3-335	[1]-[614]
<i>Public Face</i> II	Chronological	3-430	[615]-[1400]
<i>Public Face</i> III	Chronological	3-455	[1401]-[2245]
<i>Public Face</i> IV	Chronological	3-382	[2246]-[2972]
<i>Public Face</i> IV	Letter fragments	383-385	[2973]-[2981]
<i>Public Face</i> IV	Addenda	401-404	[2982]-[2987]
'Addenda' (1) 2005	Chronological	WCSJ VIII 48-54	[2988]-[2998]
'Addenda' (2) 2006	Chronological	WCSJ IX 59-68	[2999]-[3016]
'Addenda' (3) 2007	Chronological	WCSJ X 34-61	[3017]-[3076]
'Addenda' (4) 2008	Chronological	2-29	[3077]-[3116]

Any subsequent deletions or revisions to dating will not change the assigned number. Hence the four letters identified in *The Public Face* which were deleted by Addenda & Corrigenda (3) (2007), pp. 68-9, numbered ([229], [2975], [2977], [2979]), remain as blanks in the series.

This edition of Addenda & Corrigenda includes forty new letters. They represent items from auction or dealers' catalogues, libraries and collections which had previously been overlooked, some which have recently come to light from various other sources, plus a small number held over from A&C (3) for more detailed research.

These letters take the numbers [3077] to [3116]. Deducting the four letters deleted in A&C (3), there are currently 3112 letters in the sequence.

In the Corrigenda are noted a few substantive corrections and omissions. Minor corrections are being held over for the digital edition. The editors welcome corrections and comments – e-mail [paul@paullewis.co.uk](mailto:paul@paullewis.co.uk).

## (A) Addenda

### [3077] \* **TO SIR JAMES EMERSON TENNENT, 12 NOVEMBER 1860**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Maggs Bros catalogue,<sup>1</sup> vol. 1243 (date unknown) no. 25.

... I have been away in Cornwall with Dickens since my return from Paris – and this is the first opportunity of writing to you.<sup>2</sup> On what day and at what hour may I see you at the Board of Trade? I only wait to hear what time I shall least inconvenience you with my copyright grievance ...<sup>3</sup>

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. Extract including facsimile valediction and signature from the Maggs Bros catalogue.

2. WC went to Paris on 14 October and returned on the 30<sup>th</sup>. He and CD went to Devon and Cornwall on 1 November. They visited Bideford and Liskeard researching ‘A Message from the Sea’, the Christmas number of *All The Year Round*. They – or at least CD – returned on the 5<sup>th</sup> (Pilgrim IX pp.334-336). It is possible that WC travelled back from Cornwall later than CD. Otherwise it is not clear why he would wait a week to write to Tennent to make an appointment he was keen to have.

3. Concerning the copyright of *The Woman in White* in the Colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc.), see to Tennent of 8 October 1860.

### [3078] \* **TO JOSEPH CUNDALL,<sup>1</sup> 15 FEBRUARY 1861**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Jarndyce Catalogue, vol. 93 (Summer 1993), no. 1.<sup>2</sup>

Mr Wilkie Collins presents his compliments to Mr. Cundall, and begs to say that he will be happy to call in Bond Street at eleven o'clock on Wednesday next for the purpose of having his portrait taken.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Joseph Cundall (1818-1895), photographer, then of Cundall, Downes & Co. of 168 New Bond Street. See: David Simkin, ‘Professional Photographers in East Grinstead (A-D)’, <<http://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/EGrinsteadPhotgsAD.htm>>. Visited: 16 September 2007.

2. The Jarndyce catalogue states: ‘10 lines on 1p. 8vo. Section of mount along edge of verso.’

3. WC writes on a Friday so the appointment is for Wednesday 20 February. The portrait was used for the one volume edition of *The Woman in White*. For a copy of this image see <[www.wilkiecollins.com](http://www.wilkiecollins.com)>.

[3079] \* **To C. D. COLLET,<sup>1</sup> 16 FEBRUARY 1861**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Christie's (4 June 2008, LO7590, lot 140).<sup>2</sup>

12 Harley Street, W. | February 16<sup>th</sup> 1861

Sir,

I regret that I was not able to receive you personally when you did me the favour of calling this morning.

Will you oblige me by thanking the Committee of your Association,<sup>3</sup> in my name, for the honour which their invitation confers on me?

If I could agree with the conclusions which your report sets forth, I should gladly have done my best to assist the objects of the Association. It is a matter of regret to me to differ with many gentlemen whose convictions on the subject of the tax upon paper are entitled to every respect. But, for reasons which I need not trouble you by mentioning in this letter, I cannot honestly say that I think the repeal of the Paper Duty is, in any sense, one of the urgent public wants of the present time.<sup>4</sup>

Under these circumstances, I can only again thank the Committee for distinguishing me by their proposal, and request them to accept my apologies in the same frank spirit in which I offer them.

I have the honour to be | Sir, | your obedient servant | Wilkie Collins  
To/ | C.D. Collet Esqre

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1. Collet Dobson Collet (1812-1898) a radical and tax reformer who campaigned against the duties which affected newspapers. The tax on advertisements had been repealed in 1853 and Stamp Duty in 1855.

2. In an album containing approximately 140 letters from various people mainly relating to his campaign to repeal indirect taxation on newspapers.

3. The Association for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge of which Collet was secretary from 1851 to 1870. He was probably asking Collins to speak at the Association's tenth annual public meeting on 13 March 1861. In the event George Augustus Sala spoke. See C. D. Collet, *History of the Taxes on Knowledge* (2 vols; London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), II, p. 109.

4. At this time Collet was campaigning hard for the repeal of the final 'tax on knowledge', the Duty on Paper – an import tax which he believed put up the price of newspapers and books. The repeal of this duty was proposed by Gladstone in the 1861 Budget and came into effect on 1 October 1861. As the duty had raised nearly £1.5 million a year and was replaced by income tax it was not a universally popular move. See Collet, *op. cit.*, II, ch. 20.

[3080] \* **TO MISS COOKE,**<sup>1</sup> **5 SEPTEMBER 1861**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Sotheby's Catalogue N08012, NY (16 November 2005, lot 502).<sup>2</sup>

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>3</sup>

From *The Woman in White*

By Wilkie Collins, September 5<sup>th</sup> 1861

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1. Unidentified.

2. With envelope directed, 'Miss Cooke With Mr. Wilkie Collins's Compts'.

3. From 'The Story Begun by Walter Hartright', IX.

[3081] \* **TO W. H. WILLS, 27 JANUARY 1862**

MS: UCLA, Wills Papers 720/1. Extract: Virginia Blain 'The Naming of *No Name*' WCSJ 4 (1984) pp. 25-30.<sup>1</sup>

**12. Harley Street, W.** | Jan'y 27<sup>th</sup> 1862

My dear Wills,

Many thanks for your kind note, and for the returned book. I am inhumanly rejoiced to hear of that midnight sitting.<sup>2</sup> Dickens too writes me word that he likes the story and feels certain of its success.<sup>3</sup> It is a great relief to find that my work has not been thrown away.

The Title! "Under a Cloud"<sup>4</sup> (which would have been a very good one) has been used by some miscreant or other who has "said our good things before us".<sup>5</sup> Dickens sends several titles – some very good – but I hardly think the title has been found yet.<sup>6</sup> I am going to Forster tomorrow to see if he is in town and can help us. Anyhow, the question must be decided ~~on~~, as soon as Dickens gets back. We will only consider it now deferred, until we three can get together and finally settle it at our next sitting. You and Dickens shall appoint the day. On Saturday, Sunday, and Monday next, I am disengaged.<sup>7</sup>

Ever yrs | W.C.<sup>8</sup>

Charley ought to make something good of that terrible colliery subject.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Blain shows that after the title 'No Name' had been decided on, WC went through the manuscript adding references to the fact that Magdalen Vanstone had 'no name'.

2. Presumably to read the manuscript of the opening of *No Name*, which Dickens had passed on to Wills – see to WC, 24 January 1862 (Pilgrim, X, p. 20).

3. See CD to WC, 24 January 1862 (Pilgrim, X, pp. 20-1) in which he praises the book highly and lists twenty-six possible titles.

4. Blain argues this was Wills's suggestion but points out that Frederick Greenwood published a three volume novel under the title *Under a Cloud: a Novel* in 1860. Dickens lays claim to the title in a letter to Wills of 28 January 1862 (Pilgrim, X, p. 33) but says that he rejected it because it was "semi-slang".

5. From the Latin tag, 'Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt' ('Perish those who said our good things before us'), attributed by St Jerome to Ælius Donatus (c. 360 A.D.).

6. WC annotates the list in CD's letter of 24 January. See Pilgrim, X, p.21, n.aa.

7. WC writes on a Monday so is suggesting February 1, 2, or 3. The matter was urgent as *No Name* was to start publication on 15 March 1862 as the lead story for the first issue of vol. VII. If the meeting took place it did not find the title. Although the whole of the first volume was set in type by 4 February the title had still not been decided and WC writes on that day "it must be settled tomorrow." See WC to Harriet Collins, 4 February 1862.

8. A filing note in another hand upside down on the blank fourth sheet reads: 'Wilkie Collins | [W] 27 Jan. 1862 | With thanks for letter & satisfaction of M<sup>r</sup> Dickens' approval of what he had written &c &c'.

9. CAC was by this time writing for *All The Year Round* quite frequently. WC must refer to 'The Cost of Coal' published in *All The Year Round*, 15 February 1862, VI, pp. 492-6. It is probably the piece referred to by Dickens when he writes, "The longer Charley Collins paper ... would be quite thrown away and lost, if delayed." (To Wills, 29 January 1862, Pilgrim, X, pp. 26-7) which implies that it is a news story. 'The Cost of Coal' is a report of the New Hartley colliery disaster of 16 January 1862, when 220 men and boys lost their lives after the steam engine broke and plunged down the pit, hitting the cage containing miners returning to the surface, and cutting off the air to the miners below who suffocated to death. Pilgrim identifies the piece Dickens refers to as 'The Trial at Toulouse', but perhaps only because it is the longest piece in the issue. This retells an historical event of 1847 and could happily be held over for a week. In fact CD must refer to the longer of two pieces by Charles Collins. The shorter – presumably published in a subsequent number – remains unidentified.

## [3082] TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 25 MARCH 1862<sup>1</sup>

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

### 12. Harley Street, W. | 25<sup>th</sup> March 1862

Mr Wilkie Collins will be obliged if the Manager will send him the same quantity of Ice as usual, either tomorrow or next day.<sup>2</sup>

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1. This letter appears to have been kept on a spike and later cut to remove the signature.

2. From January 1863 WC's bank account shows annual payments to the Wenham Lake Ice Company, the first being for £6-11s- 6d.

[3083] **TO ANNABEL MILNES, 17 MAY 1862**

MS: Unknown. Published: Thomas Wemyss Reid,<sup>1</sup> *The Life, Letters, and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes, first Lord Houghton* (2 vols, London: Cassell, 1890), II, pp. 79-80; and W. Teignmouth Shore, *Charles Dickens and his Friends* (London: Cassell, 1909) pp. 209-10.

*12, Harley Street, W., May 17th, 1862.*

DEAR MRS MILNES, – I have always had a foreign tendency to believe in *Fate*. That tendency has now settled into a conviction. Fate sits on the doorstep at 16, Upper Brook Street, and allows all your guests the happiness of accepting your hospitality with the one miserable exception of the Doomed Man who writes this letter. When your kindness opened the door to me on the occasion of your “At Home,” Fate closed it again, using as the instrument of exclusion a neuralgic attack in my head. Quinine and patience help me to get the better of this, and Mrs Milnes (with an indulgence which I am penitently conscious of not having deserved) offers me a second chance. Fate, working with a postman for an instrument on this occasion, sends me a dinner invitation for Thursday, the 22nd, one day before I receive Mrs Milnes’s kind note. No guardian angel warns me to pause. I accept the invitation, and find myself engaged to dine on the 22nd, *not* in London, for I might then have asked permission to come to Brook Street in the evening, but at Richmond, where there is no help for me.

I think this “plain statement” really makes out my case. I have not the audacity to ask you to accept my apologies. My aspirations are limited to presenting myself as a fit object for your compassion. The ancients, in any emergency, were accustomed to mollify Fate by a sacrifice. I am quite ready to try the experiment. If I presented myself on the doorstep of your house with a portable altar, a toga, a live sheep, and a sacrificial knife, would it be convenient? I fear not. A crowd might collect; the Animals’ Protection Society might interfere at the moment of divination, and Mr Milnes might be subjected to annoying inquiries in the House of Commons. My only resource left is to ask you to exercise the Christian privilege of forgiveness, and to assure you that I deserve it, by being really, and not as a figure of speech, very sorry.

Believe me, very truly yours, | WILKIE COLLINS

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1. Sir Thomas Wemyss Reid (1842-1905: *DNB*) was a distinguished parliamentary journalist. His book mentions several occasions when Collins was a guest at the Milnes’s house. See also p. 32 below, [0591] To Richard Monckton Milnes, 6 August 1864.



[3084] \* **TO JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS, EARLY JULY 1863**<sup>1</sup>

MS: Unknown.<sup>2</sup> On sale: Christies (12 November 2007, LO5141, lot 139).

(under the name of Magdalen) who is to appear in your illustration<sup>3</sup> – and read the chapter towards the end of Vol II which describes the scene at the window.<sup>4</sup> There ...

... before you put her on paper.

Yours ever | Wilkie Collins

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1. Dating and recipient from content. This letter is almost certainly that to Millais referred to in WC's letter to Sampson Low Jr of 11 July 1863.

2. Fragment only, approx. 7x9cm, cut from a letter on pale blue laid paper.

3. Millais drew the frontispiece to the 1864 one-volume edition of *No Name*, which shows Magdalen at the window at the pivotal moment when she contemplates suicide.

4. In fact the scene is described at pp. 37-9 in Vol. III of *No Name* as published by Sampson Low in late 1862.

[3085] \* **TO CHARLES READE, 13 FEBRUARY 1867**

MS: Parrish (II, 21/15, Reade vs. Seaman).<sup>1</sup>

9. Melcombe Place | N.W. | Feby 13<sup>th</sup>

My dear Reade,

Dickens's own work has hitherto got in the way of his reading yours. He is going to take "Griffith Gaunt" with him, on his present trip, and to write to me as soon as he has read it. In the meantime, he begs me to "say everything that is brotherly in Art" from him to you.

He will be reading in Scotland during the present sitting of the Court. But I hear from Mr Keen that the action is not likely to be tried this month. So there is nothing lost any way.

Dickens also writes that he "doubts such evidence (as his or mine) being allowed – on the ground that the onus probandi<sup>2</sup> lies with the reviewer and that it is not disproof that is required". I am not lawyer enough to know whether there is, or is not, force in this point. I only mention it for consideration.<sup>3</sup>

On Friday (15<sup>th</sup>) I go to stay for a few days with my mother.<sup>4</sup> All letters forwarded from 9. Melcombe Place, if you want to write to me. On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>, I go to Paris.<sup>5</sup>

Ever yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. Four-page cream folded notepaper with embossed Athenæum Club seal. Superscript to right of seal reads: '13 Feby 1867 | Reade | Seaman | Reade'.

2. *Onus probandi* – burden of proof (Latin).

3. As recounted in Malcolm Elwin's *Charles Reade: A Biography* (1931), pp. 185-7, Reade's *Griffith Gaunt*, which ran as a serial in the *Argosy* in Britain and the *Atlantic Monthly* in the United States from January 1866, had been described in the New York weekly *The Round Table* as 'vicious and immoral', whereon Reade undertook a libel action through the Wall Street lawyer William D. Booth (see WC's letter to him of 15 April 1867) and won nominal damages. The *Round Table* comments were also reprinted in the 'Literary Gossip' column of the *London Review* on 11 August 1866, and Reade commenced a similar action against the manager, Isaac Seaman, through his legal representatives, Laurie and Keen, of 3, Deans Court, Doctors Commons. Both CD and WC were asked to attest in court to the novel's virtues, though the action was eventually withdrawn on the journal's publishing a favourable review of *Griffith Gaunt*. For CD's letter to WC of 12 February 1867, see Pilgrim XI, pp. 312-3; after reading *Griffith Gaunt*, Dickens confessed to WC that he found some of the scenes 'extremely coarse and disagreeable' and would find it difficult to speak for the novel in court (20 February 1867, Pilgrim, XI, pp. 317-8).
4. WC seems to have returned to town around 20 February; see to Felix Moscheles of that date.
5. WC writes to HC from Paris on 26 February.

[3086] \* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 9 SEPTEMBER 1868**

MS: Unknown. On Sale: Heritage Auction Galleries, 3500 Maple Avenue, 17th Floor, Dallas, Texas 75219-3941 (Books & Manuscripts no. 683, 4 June 2008, lot 57412).

[*Dated this*] 9<sup>th</sup> [*day of*] September [186]8  
 [*Signed*] Wilkie Collins<sup>2</sup>

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1. Tipped into a presumably unrelated copy of the 1868 Harper & Bros edition of *The Moonstone* between the frontispiece and the title page.
  2. WC has filled in a printed form the purpose of which is unclear.

[3087] \* **TO WILLIAM D. BOOTH,<sup>1</sup> 3 APRIL 1869**

MS: Parrish (I/91, Reade vs. Roundtable).<sup>2</sup> In an extra-illustrated copy of Charles Reade, *Griffith Gaunt* (Boston: 1869), along with other letters, clippings, etc., collected by Booth.<sup>3</sup>

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.**  
 London. | Saturday April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1869

Dear Sir,

I send you, as I promised, in my letter of March 30<sup>th</sup> last,<sup>4</sup> a second copy of "Black and White", embodying all the latest corrections. This should be the acting copy, if the play is represented in America – the alterations not having been all made in the copy previously sent.

In case of accidents by post, I will briefly recapitulate the points contained in my letter of March 30<sup>th</sup>.

“Black and White” is offered to any American manager who will undertake to provide for its representation, not only in New York or in any other town in which that manager may have a theatre, but also all over the United States.

A third share of the profits is offered to any manager who accepts the play – on these terms the other two thirds to be taken by the two authors.

This proposal has been made by me to Mr Lester Wallack.<sup>5</sup> I have received no answer. I authorise you to apply for the answer – to arrange the necessary agreements if Mr Wallack accepts – to close the negotiation, to withdraw the piece, and to offer it to any other manager at your own discretion, if Mr Wallack refuses.

To these points, I have only now to add, that since I wrote to you, I have heard from Mr Fechter that he is in treaty for making a professional appearance in New York, in the ensuing autumn, with Mr Tayleure of Pike’s Opera House.<sup>6</sup> It is for you to consider – if the negotiation with Mr Lester Wallack be broken off – whether it is desirable, under the circumstances I have just mentioned, to offer the piece, on the conditions already stated, to Mr Tayleure; informing him, of course, that “Black and White” must be immediately produced, and must not wait the event of Mr Fechter’s possible appearance in the United States. For it seems to be perfectly clear that the authors can only hope to gain anything in America, by acquiring the priority of representation, before pirated versions of “Black and White” may find their way to that country.

You will understand, I hope, that in mentioning Mr Tayleure, I am merely offering a suggestion for you to act on, or not, exactly as you think most desirable. The question of disposing of the play – if Mr Wallack does not accept the terms – remains unreserved at your discretion.

Believe me dear sir | Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

W.D. Booth Esqre

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1. Wall Street lawyer specializing in intellectual property matters – see to him of 15 April 1867.

2. On full mourning paper.

3. These documents include nine autograph letters addressed to Booth from Charles Reade, plus the following one from Charles Dickens:

**Gad's Hill Place, | Higham by Rochester, Kent**  
Thursday Twenty Fifth March 1869

My Dear Sir

I beg to acknowledge the safe receipt of your enclosures N<sup>os</sup> 1 and 2; that is to say:

N<sup>o</sup> 1. The papers originally procured while I was in America, since then forwarded to you, and now duly returned to me.

N<sup>o</sup> 2. The final papers disposing of the claim upon me for Income Tax in the States.

I beg you to accept my cordial thanks for your valuable professional and personal services in this matter. I entreat you to believe that I consider the charges very moderate indeed, and that I am in all respects more than satisfied.

Before you receive this, I trust the amount in which I am indebted to you (in point of money) will have been forwarded to you on my account of Mess<sup>rs</sup> Field Osgood and C<sup>o</sup>. I wrote to them a few mails ago begging them to discharge my liability before I knew its amount, because I had the highest confidence in you and wished to avoid a mere dry business spirit.

I notice that you are exactly right in your prediction as to Charles Reade's case, and that you did get a nominal verdict.

Believe me, Dear Sir | Very faithfully yours | Charles Dickens  
William D. Booth Esquire

This letter is not found in the Pilgrim edition, which mistakes references to Booth, the Wall Street lawyer, in letters to Fields, Osgood & Co. of 2 March and 9 April 1869 (Pilgrim, XII, pp. 301 & 330) for references to the American actor Edwin Thomas Booth (1833-93: *DAB*).  
4. This letter has not been traced.  
5. On Wallack, see WC's letter to Booth of 15 April 1867.  
6. Samuel N. Pike's Opera House had started up on Broadway in October 1868. However, it reopened as the Grand Opera House on 31 March 1869 under the management of Clifton W. Tayleure (1831-87), dramatist and former actor.

[3088] \* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 5 APRIL 1869**

MS: Unknown. On sale: <[www.profilesinhistory.com](http://www.profilesinhistory.com)> (September 2007, no. 23097).<sup>2</sup>

“– Then I saw the raging sea, and the rollers tumbling in on the sand-bank, and the driven rain sweeping over the waters like a flying garment, and the yellow wilderness of the beach, with one solitary black figure standing on it – the figure of Sergeant Cuff.”<sup>3</sup>

(Copied) From “The Moonstone” | By | Wilkie Collins | April 5th 1869

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1. Apparently done for an autograph hunter or friend.
  2. Subsequently removed from the website and apparently sold.
  3. From *The Moonstone*, ch. 19.

[3089] \* **TO WILLIAM D. BOOTH, 15 JUNE 1869**

MS: Parrish (I/91, Reade vs. Roundtable). In extra-illustrated copy of Charles Reade, *Griffith Gaunt* (Boston: 1869).

90. Gloucester Place | Portman Square | London | June 15<sup>th</sup> 1869

My dear Sir,

I duly received your last letter, and communicated it at once to Mr Fechter.<sup>1</sup> You have no doubt heard by this time from Mr Fechter's agent in London.

Mr Lewis Baker has also written to me on the subject of "Black and White".<sup>2</sup> I am quite sure the interests of the piece could not have been placed in better hands.

These matters being, so far, disposed of, I have now to ask you certain questions, relating to copyright in America. I may preface these questions by telling you that I am now engaged in drawing the first outlines of a new story – and that this story lends itself equally to development in dramatic form, as a play – and in narrative form, as a novel. I may ultimately write it in both forms – or in either form – and if it comes out as a novel, I may possibly publish it in America, on a plan not hitherto attempted by any English author.<sup>3</sup>

These being the circumstances, here are my questions: –

1. Can an English citizen confer copyright in his book on any American publishers, by any means whatever? – or, to put it still more strongly, by any sacrifice whatever of his interests as an English writer?

2. Can an English citizen confer copyright in America – consistently with taking the following precaution to preserve, at the same time, his copyright in England: –

Precaution (1)

An edition of the Englishman's book – not exceeding twenty copies, such twenty copies to include the copies which the English law requires the author to deposit at the British Museum and at the universities – is published, and sold, in London, simultaneously with the first publication of the same book in America. Assuming that the Englishman can (under any circumstances) confer copyright on the American publishers, would this formal protective edition in London, vitiate the American publisher's copyright in the book?

3. Suppose the precautionary measure attached to question 2 to be abandoned, and suppose the English author protects his copyright in England in the following manner: –

Precaution (2)

The author simultaneously with the writing of the novel, writes a dramatic version of the story. The titles of the novel and of the play are the same, the names of the characters are same, the succession of the principal

scenes is the same, and the language used in the dialogue is the same. A few days previously to the publication of the novel in the United States, he either produces the play at a London Theatre, or prints and registers it as his copyright at Stationers' Hall. In either of these cases, if an English publisher re-prints in England the novel published in America only, the author can proceed against him, by English law, for a piracy of the play. Assume such a precautionary measure as this to be taken here, would the taking of it in any way interfere with the interests of the American publisher, or in way [sic] vitiate the copyright conferred on him – if copyright can be conferred on him, by the English writer.

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These questions will show you what I am driving at. They all amount to this: –

1. Can I confer copyright in my next book, on an American publishers – by consenting to delay the publication of that book in England for a sufficient time to allow of a large American sale?

2. Can I protect my copyright here – in either of the two ways proposed – without sacrificing the American publisher?

3. Can I – if I only take Precaution Number 2 – protect myself by any process known to American law, against importation of American copies of the book into England. By the English law, it is doubtful whether I could protect myself from this, except by taking Precaution number 1.

Please let me hear by return of mail that you have received this letter. I do not of course expect an answer to my questions until you have had due time to consider them – or to suggest some other plan which, in my ignorance of the subject, may not have not [sic] occurred to me.

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

W.D. Booth Esqre

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1. No letter to Fechter has been traced, and the content of the communication remains uncertain.

2. The distinguished New York actor-manager Lewis Baker (1823-73); no New York production of *Black and White* has been traced.

3. Referring to *Man and Wife*, published in volume form in both England and the US in mid-1870.

[3090] \* **TO WILLIAM D. BOOTH, 14 JULY 1869**

MS: Parrish (I/91, Reade vs. Roundtable). In extra-illustrated copy of Charles Reade, *Griffith Gaunt* (Boston: 1869).

Private

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.** | London | July 14<sup>th</sup> 1869  
My dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for your prompt answer to my questions relating to copyright in America.

If your ingenuity and experience should succeed in finding some equivalent for the American copyright, it may not be amiss for me to tell you, in the meantime, how I stand towards American publishers – whose cooperation in this matter may be of some importance to us, if we can get it.

I have hitherto (like other English writers) only secured from America the sums paid me for advance-sheets of my novels during their first periodical publication. My dealings have hitherto been exclusively with Messrs Harper – who have treated me with great kindness and liberality.

Some months since, personal application was made to me by Messrs Appleton, and again by Messrs Putnam for the advance-sheets of my next work. I informed them 1<sup>st</sup> – that I had no work then ready and could only undertake to bear in mind, in the future, that they had applied to me. 2<sup>ndly</sup> that, in the event of any future dealings, I should feel it due to Messrs Harper to tell them of the application made to me, and to accept Messrs Harper's proposal, in the event of its reaching the same amount as the amount that might be offered by their rival Firms. On the other hand, if either of the rival Firms happened to offer more than Messrs Harper, I should, in justice to myself, accept that offer. There, the matter ended – and thus I stand towards the principal publishing houses of New York.<sup>1</sup>

In this position – with a large American circulation of my works, and a “brisk demand” for them among American publishers – I want to do two things, if I can: – In the interests of my art, to help (so far as one man may) in pressing the question of international copyright with England, on the notice of the American government. And, again, in my own interests, to receive a far larger share than I have ever received yet – or than I could possibly receive for advance-sheets only – of the sum which a new book of mine may gain, on its publication in America. To achieve this object, I am willing to address my next novel exclusively to American readers, (in the first instance) – and to publish it exclusively in America (in the first instance) – preserving my copyright here by one or other of the means which I have already stated to you; and preventing the publication of my book in England, during a sufficiently long

period to allow of a remunerative sale to both author and publisher, in America.

I must apologise for inflicting this long letter on you. But, in the aspect which the matter now assumes, it seems desirable that you should know my views and motives as well as I know them myself.

I may add that the new story which I am now putting together, will lend itself to development in the dramatic form quite as well as in the novel-form. And unless I have the prospect of a far larger return than I have ever received yet from my popularity with American readers, it is quite possible that I may present the story, this time, in the dramatic form only. There is less labour to writing in that form – (and this is, of itself, a consideration with me, in the present circumstances of my health) – and there is in England, under existing circumstances, a larger pecuniary return for a successful play than for a successful novel. This latter fact will help you to understand the apparently-exaggerated importance which I attach, on the present occasion, to my American market.

You have now, my dear sir, all the help that I can give you towards considering this question of an equivalent for the American copyright – so far as I am concerned in it. I shall await your next letter, during the summer vacation with great interest.

Believe me | Truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
To | Wm. D. Booth Esqre

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1. See the letters to Harper & Brothers and G.P. Putnam of 10 August 1869.

[3091] \* **TO WILLIAM D. BOOTH, 25 SEPTEMBER 1869**

MS: Parrish (I/91, Reade vs. Roundtable). In extra-illustrated copy of Charles Reade, *Griffith Gaunt* (Boston: 1869).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.**  
Saturday. London. Sept 25<sup>th</sup> 1869

My dear Sir,

I received your kind letter by the last mail. And I have received the “opinion” by the American mail delivered here tonight.<sup>1</sup>

I say, at once, after twice reading it, that the Opinion is, to my thinking, singularly acute and ingenious, – and I have only to add for myself, that if I can try the experiment, I will.<sup>2</sup> Your idea is entirely new to me. It is excellently expressed, as to clearness – and most thoroughly and logically thought out. I shall take an early opportunity of showing this Opinion to Mr Charles Reade – and, after I have talked the matter over with him, I will write to you again.



In the meantime, the work of fiction which I contemplated when I last wrote to you, has been purchased here for periodical publication in Cassell's Magazine – beginning in November next – and the advance-sheets have been sold to Messrs Harper. It was impossible to decline the proposals made to me – at a time when the question of my securing copyright in America was doubtful. I had the story “in my head” – I had written part of it – and I could not keep it from finding its way into publishers’ and printers’ hands, while the question of publishing exclusively in America was a question involved in doubt, and while I had your authority to satisfy me that I could not sell the MS. on its own merits as a protected literary commodity in the United States.

In the spring of 1870 this story will come to a conclusion – and I shall be free to consider, in the meanwhile, the question of trying the entirely new plan which you suggest, in the United States. We shall be none the worse for having time before us to communicate in, and time also (if you approve) to feel the pulses of certain American publishers, and to discover whether they will make assist in making it worth my while to try the experiment. It also strikes me, that the book ought to have more direct appeal to popular interest in America than is contained in the book which I am now writing. On all these grounds, I don't think it is to be regretted that we must wait a little, and consider, before we take the first decisive step in a matter which appears to me (after reading your Opinion) to be of no common importance.

So much for the future.

As to the present, there are three points which strike me in the legal bearings of this case.

1. I believe there is no doubt that “Precaution No 2” would secure the copyright in England. But, I will obtain reliable opinions on this point, in due course of time.

2. As to the question of the American translation from – what I will call – the author's French original.

Have you, in the United States, an international copyright with France? If you have, there is not more to be said. If not, it seems to me that there is nothing to prevent a bone fide French translation being made in Paris from the American translation (into English) – and this French translation might (as I suppose) be translated back into English in America, and so compete with the authorized translation. This would (granting the premises) certainly happen in my case. For all my books are translated and sold in Paris. I know (from the “Opinion”) that the authorized American translation would be protected. But I am not sure, whether a second translation, made under the circumstances here supposed, might not also legally claim protection, as a second book – differing throughout in matters of style and expression, and which might also be made to differ in other ways, by having a new title, and giving to the characters other

names. This sounds, and is perhaps, absurdly hypercritical. But it is a doubt on my mind – and, right or wrong, I express it.<sup>3</sup>

3. Is it necessary that the author himself should transfer his English into another language? or may he get it done for him?

If the latter, I have no hesitation in saying that it would be infinitely preferable to translate from the English into German, instead of into French. The French could never be made to follow the English literally – but the German might.

Neither Reade nor I understand German. Hence my questions.

It would also be an immense saving of time as well as pains to get the translation made by another person. He might work with the original writer, and the two versions might be almost completed together.<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, your own proposal for securing the copyright in England, by taking advantage of the decision in “Low v. Routledge”, seems to me to be excellent.<sup>5</sup> I will obtain the opinion of my own lawyer, here, on this point – and will communicate it to you, when I write again, after talking over the whole matter with Reade.

For the present then I will once more thank you for the Opinion – and leave the few remarks which it has suggested to me to be considered by you for what they are worth – if they are worth anything.

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

P.S. – I shall, of course, for the present, keep your discovery a secret between Reade and myself – and my legal adviser here.

To | Wm. D. Booth Esqre

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1. A sixteen-page manuscript copy of Booth’s ‘Opinion’, dated 14 September 1869, is also found in the extra-illustrated copy of *Griffith Gaunt* at Parrish.

2. Booth’s novel idea was that if the author created a literal translation of his own work into, say, French, and that that version were re-translated into English by a publishing house in the United States, a form of American copyright could be acquired in the work.

3. In an eight-page manuscript copy of his response, dated 12 April 1870, and also found at Parrish, Booth stated that there was no need to worry about such a possibility, as it would infringe the established American right.

4. In his response of 12 April, Booth stated that there would be no problem with the scheme even if the translation were by a hand other than that of the author.

5. Decided at the House of Lords in 1868, the case appeared to confirm that English copyright could be acquired by a foreign author regardless of his or her place of residence, as long as the publication itself took place on English soil.

[3092] \* **TO WILLIAM D. BOOTH, 28 APRIL 1870**

MS: Parrish (I/91, Reade vs. Roundtable). In extra-illustrated copy of Charles Reade, *Griffith Gaunt* (Boston: 1869).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W. | London | April 28<sup>th</sup> 1870**  
My dear Sir,

Since I last wrote to you, I have been laid up by a serious illness – rheumatic gout. Now that I am better, I have my serial story (“Man and Wife”, appearing in New York in Harpers Weekly) to work at until it is done. All the little spare time I have, is occupied in taking care of my health. Until this story is done, it is impossible for me to give my mind to anything else. And, after it is done, I am told by the doctors that I shall have serious reason to regret it, if I fail to take a rest.

Under these circumstances, I can only thank you for the answers to my questions. I have not yet had time to read them with the attention which they deserve. But they shall be duly placed in Mr Reade’s hands, and in the hands of my legal adviser here. I will also send your letter on to Mr Reade. I have some time since placed your Scheme for a Quasi-International-Copyright in his possession – and he has it still.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the whole, it appears to me that there is but one weak point in the position. We are attempting to create a right of property in the United States which the law of the United States refuses to recognize. Query – on trying the experiment – whether we should, or should not, be made the subjects of a special enactment declaring your ingenious discovery to be a breach of the law?

There is, as I have already said in my former letter, plenty of time to get opinions, and to learn what the United States’ publishers would do towards helping us to try the experiment. I must finish “Man and Wife”, and get some rest, before I can do anything in the matter – for the very simple reason that I am too weary to invent a new story yet a while. I will remind Mr Reade that you are waiting to hear what his view is – and, as soon as I have finished my present work, I will send you the opinion of my legal adviser here.

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. In his letter of 12 April 1870, Booth had claimed: ‘I feel confident that the result will demonstrate that we have solved the great difficulty of foreign authors and domestic publishers and found a quasi International Copyright.’ In fact, nothing further seems to have come of the lawyer’s ingenious scheme.

[3093] **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 26 JULY 1871**

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins | 26<sup>th</sup> July 1871

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1. A small piece of paper torn straight on three sides, glued lightly by the edges to a larger card with nothing on the reverse; possibly the end of a letter or a compliment slip for an autograph hunter.

[3094] \* **TO CHARLES A. CALVERT,<sup>1</sup> 3 NOVEMBER 1871**

MS: Rylands (Acc. 1999/014, Box 8, p. 13).

**90, Gloucester Place | Portman Square. W.** | London | 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1871  
Dear sir,

I am not, at present, free to negotiate for the production of the Dramatic “Woman In White” at the Prince’s Theatre.<sup>2</sup>

I can only beg you to accept my thanks for the proposal your letter contains.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins  
C. A. Calvert Esqre

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1. See to him of 17 December 1862, refusing to allow him to produce *The Red Vial* or *No Name*.

2. *The Woman in White* had opened at the Olympic Theatre on 9 October 1871.

[3095] \* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 25 JANUARY 1872**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Heritage Auctions (29 August 2007, lot 90632), in a collection of thirty documents, mainly American Mss. Listed on eBay: no. 170138323375.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins | Jany 25<sup>th</sup> 1872<sup>2</sup>

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1. Written on a small oblong of paper, probably simply a signature for an autograph hunter.  
2. The text is followed by some pencil notes in another hand.

**[3096] TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, [FEBRUARY] 1872**

MS: Unknown. Extract: 'Foreign Intelligence', *Boston Daily Globe* (18 March 1872) p. 3.<sup>1</sup>

My visit to the United States depends entirely on the decision of my medical adviser. My health has been a little shaken of late years by some severe attacks of rheumatic gout. I am slowly getting over the liability to this malady. But I am not yet considered to be equal to the strain of continuous public appearances. There is every reason to hope that I may be able to pay a visit to my good American readers and friends, but the time cannot yet be definitely appointed. This is really all that I know myself in relation to my contemplated trip to America. I am sincerely anxious to find myself among you. I feel a deep interest in your country, and I owe a large debt of gratitude to your people for the hearty reception which they have accorded to my works.

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1. The extract appears under the subheading 'Wilkie Collins' and is prefaced: 'An American gentleman has recently received a letter from Mr. Wilkie Collins, who refers to his projected visit to the United States as follows:.'

**[3097] TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, [EARLY APRIL] 1872**

MS: Unknown. Extract: 'Visits from English Authors', *Chicago Tribune* (22 April 1872) p. 4.<sup>1</sup>

I am refusing all the proposals made to me for writing a new novel, and am determined, during the whole of the present year, to undertake only such literary work as will not fatigue me. All that rest and freedom from literary responsibility can do to fit me physically for a visit to America they shall do. \* \* \* I am seriously bent on doing all that I can to train myself successfully for a visit to the United States. \* \* \* I must be stronger than I am now before I take the serious responsibility of meeting my American readers in public.

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1. The extract is preceded by details of the projected visits of Edmund Yates and J.A. Froude, and is prefaced: 'Wilkie Collins has been appealed to also, but finds that the rheumatic gout stands in the way of his coming at present, and that "Poor Miss Finch," "Miss or Mrs.?" and the dramatic version of "The Woman in White," having all been produced in the compass of one year, he must have rest. He adds a hopeful side to his letter, however:'. The two asterisk sequences presumably indicate omitted passages.

[3098] \* **TO W. H. WILLS, 8 JULY 1872**

MS: UCLA (Wills Papers 720/1).

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.** | 8<sup>th</sup> July 1872

Mr dear Wills

My best thanks for your kind letter. I heartily wish I could write Yes. But, since we met, my foot has been crippled by an attack of gout.<sup>1</sup> The worst is over – but the nerves of the foot are still so tender that I cannot keep it on the ground for than half an hour at a time – and your hospitable dinner-table represents a forbidden luxury. I manage to get some fresh air by driving out and I think I shall soon be all right. If you will let me write again, and report myself, I hope to pay my visit to Sherrards' after a little delay.<sup>2</sup> I am refusing all engagements – and I can suit myself to your convenience in the matter of times.

In the meanwhile, pray give my best remembrances to Mrs Wills,  
And believe me | always truly your | Wilkie Collins

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1. WC was accepting invitations as recently as 3 July so the attack must have happened shortly after that.

2. The house in Welwyn, Hertfordshire to which Wills retired in 1869. See CD to W.C. Macready, 18 October 1869, Pilgrim, XII, p. 424 n.5, and XII p. 725.

[3099] \* **TO THOMAS HYDE HILLS,<sup>1</sup> 1867-1872<sup>2</sup>**

MS: Princeton (Oversize 2005-0044F).<sup>3</sup>

My dear Hills,

Are you disengaged? If Yes, I will reserve you a Stall.  
Yours ever | Wilkie Collins

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1. The only known correspondent whom WC addressed in this way

2. Dating tentative. From the handwriting it is unlikely to be contemporary with the associated playbill (see note 3). The first known letter to Hills which begins in this way is dated 15 January 1868. Prior to that he addressed him as 'Mr Hills'. Though Hills died much later in 1891, the last known letter to him is dated 17 December 1872.

3. Pasted to the reverse of a broadside playbill for *The Frozen Deep*, 4 July 1857.

[3100] **TO THOMAS FAED,<sup>1</sup> 12 MAY 1873<sup>2</sup>**

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

... the subject of an old friend of mine – Mr Edward Pigott – who is a candida[te] for the Secretaryship to the Royal Academy<sup>3</sup>...[If] you can give him your support, you will personally oblige,

Yours vry truly | Wilkie Collins

Thomas Faed Esqre RA

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1. Thomas Faed (1826-1900), RA HRSA, Scottish painter of domestic genre and Highland scenes. Faed moved to London in 1852 and exhibited nearly 100 works at the RA between then and 1893, mainly sentimental scenes of Scottish peasant life (Wood).

2. See similar letters of this date to Millais and Leighton. This partial letter has been cut for the signature leaving a piece approx 80x110mm pasted to a card, but with text on the reverse legible.

3. See also to the Royal Academy, 20 May 1873. WC's lobbying was unsuccessful.

[3101] \* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 27 NOVEMBER 1873**

MS: Unknown. On sale: eBay (16 June 1999) price \$20.50.

Wilkie Collins

27<sup>th</sup> November 1873

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1. Presumably to an autograph hunter as the signature is dated beneath.

[3102] \* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 12 AUGUST 1875**

MS: Unknown. On sale: International Autograph Auctions (9 February 2008, lot 599) together with many other clipped signatures.

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

August 12<sup>th</sup> 1875

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1. Presumably an autograph hunter.

[3103] **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 27 JANUARY 1876**

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
27<sup>th</sup> January 1876

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1. Presumably an autograph hunter.

[3104] **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 15 MAY 1876**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Sotheby's Catalogue N08012, NY (16 November 2005, lot 502).

We both wanted money. Immense necessity! Universal want! Universal want! Is there a civilised human being who does not feel for us? How insensible must that man be! Or how rich!

From Count Fosco's Confession in *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins,<sup>2</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> May 1876

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1. Presumably an autograph hunter.
2. From 'The Count's Narrative'.

[3105] \* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, [5 SEPTEMBER-19 OCTOBER 1876]<sup>1</sup>**

MS: Private.

Welcome ... | arrival at home.  
Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. Undated fragment, cut roughly from the foot of a letter, with no text on the verso. The thin paper appears the same as that used in Collins's letter of 17 October 1876 from the Hotel Westminster, Paris and the tentative dates mark his time there.
2. Removed from an album together with a photographic reproduction of the 1850 J.E. Millais portrait of Collins.

[3106] \* **TO WILLIAM WINTER,<sup>1</sup> 26 JUNE 1877**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Barry Cassidy Rare Books (June 2008).

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.** | 26<sup>th</sup> June 1877  
Dear Mr Winter,

I return the articles with my best thanks – and with sincere admiration of



the keen critical insight which they exhibit, and of the admirably calm unprejudiced tone in which they are written. Your review of that unhappy woman's first attempt at acting might have excited her gratitude – it is so generous as well as so just.<sup>3</sup> But I have seen her and heard her – and nothing she says or does on the stage or off it, will ever surprise me!

I am getting on slowly, but I hope surely, with the help of my baths.<sup>2</sup> I am really vexed that my illness prevents me from giving you the welcome to England which, under happier circumstances, I should so gladly have offered.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
William Winter<sup>4</sup>

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1. Drama critic of the *New York Tribune* from 1865-1909.

2. A reference to the 'electric baths' mentioned in WC's first letter to Winter of 18 June 1877.

3. Anna E. Dickinson (1842-1932), actress, authoress and social reformer. According to the bookseller's description, the letter was accompanied by newspaper cuttings. These included Winter's Boston review of Dickinson's play *Crown of Thorns*, to which she had taken exception.

4. Winter writes in black ink at the top of the page above the address: 'One of the precious letters of my dear old friend Wilkie Collins. – | William Winter'; and in the margin in purple ink: 'Received June 26 | Wilkie Collins | Articles on Miss A. Dickinson are [illegible]'.

[3107] \* **TO CHARLES S. JOSLYN,<sup>1</sup> 3 APRIL 1879**

MS: Syracuse University Library (Oneida Community Collection, Manuscripts and Personal Papers, V-Z).

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

London | 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1879

My dear Sir,

I have been away from London – and I hope you will excuse, on that account, my delay in thanking you for your kind letter.

The hospitable reception which I owed to your kindness at Wallingford is still fresh in my memory. Those traces of my appreciation of a very pleasant and interesting visit to your Community which you perceive in 'The Fallen Leaves', have been purposely made vague traces. As your guest (though only the guest of a day!) I felt that it was part of my duty to you not to associate your Community too plainly with a work of fiction.

I live in the hope of visiting the United States again – though I cannot as yet see my way to a future day of departure from England. But, when I do find myself once more in New York, you may depend on it, I shall not fail to report myself. I am interested in the serious social experiment which has attained so

large a measure of success among your Communistic Societies in America—and I should especially like to see you all at Oneida.

Believe me | Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
To C. S. Joslyn Esqre Secy. O. C.

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1. Charles S. Joslyn (1832-1906) acted as guide for WC's visit to the Oneida community on 4 March 1874. See Susan R. Hanes, *Wilkie Collins's American Reading Tour* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008) pp. 84-8. As WC implies he made use of that visit in *The Fallen Leaves*.

[3108] **TO THOMAS A. JANVIER,<sup>1</sup> 26 SEPTEMBER 1879**

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

Thomas A. Janvier Esqre<sup>2</sup> | The Times Building  
cor: Chesnut and Eighth Streets | Philadelphia | PA | U.S.A  
Wilkie Collins<sup>3</sup>

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1. Thomas Allibone Janvier (1849-1913: Wikipedia), storyteller and historian born in Philadelphia.
2. Envelope only postmarked 'LONDON.W. | D 5 | SE 26 | 79', with postage stamp franked 'W | 19', and countermarked on the reverse 'PHILADELPHIA.PA. | OCT | 7 | 4PM | REC'D'.
3. Signed bottom left and marked off by a curved line. There are some dealer's pencil notes on the obverse.

[3109] **TO E. A. BUCK,<sup>1</sup> 8 NOVEMBER 1881**

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

Registered 8<sup>th</sup> November 1881<sup>2</sup>  
Mr E. A. Buck<sup>3</sup> | Office of "The Spirit of the Times"  
102. Chambers Street | New York (City) | U.S.A.  
Wilkie Collins<sup>4</sup>

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1. Envelope front only with two stamps 4d and ½d both cancelled 'W | 25'. The number 57002 in blue stamp lower down and the number 8 handwritten in green to the left. The envelope is crossed by blue lines indicating it is Registered.
2. Enclosed by a line at the top centre of the envelope.
3. Presumably containing copy for 'How I Married Him', published in *The Spirit of the Times*, 24 December 1881.
4. Enclosed by a line at the bottom left of the envelope.

[3110] **TO NATHANIEL MOAK,<sup>1</sup> 21 AUGUST 1883<sup>2</sup>**

MS: Cornell University Library, Law Library (Trials, KF223.B59).<sup>3</sup> Published: Bernadette A. Meyler, 'Wilkie Collins' Law Books: Law, Literature, and Factual Precedent', in *Secrets of Law*, ed. Austin Sarat (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford UP, 2007).

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

London | 21<sup>st</sup> August 1883

My dear Sir,

I can only trust to the kindness which has presented me with an interesting addition to my little library to excuse this late expression of my thanks.<sup>4</sup> When the "argument" reached me, I waited to write, in the hope of finding a fit opportunity to become one of your readers without much delay. But my literary labours proved to be obstacles in the way – and these at an end, my doctor prescribed a long holiday. I accepted an invitation to cruise in a friend's yacht – and here I am on shore again, reading your pages with the greatest interest, to say nothing of the "agreeable surprise" of finding "The Moonstone" honoured by a favourable allusion, in a Court of Justice.<sup>5</sup> The mental capacity which can make itself acquainted with an immense accumulation of facts – present them one after another in their proper order, and draw from them the logical inferences, all steadily pointing in one and the same direction – is simply a matter of wonder to me. I ask myself all sorts of simple questions relating to you personally. Were you assailed by nervous misgivings – especially on the first day? Did you never feel some little mental confusion here and there? Did the appearance of the jury – their looks and ways – now and then discourage you? And in the intervals of the "argument" could you sleep when you went to bed – and eat and drink and digest, before going to bed? These queer inquiries occur to a novelist – and they are followed by a novelist's complaint. You seize on my interest – and you don't tell me how the terrible tale of guilt ended. I look on to the last pages and see a judge's charge, and a medical writers' "Views" when I want to know whether he was found guilty and hanged. The case was mentioned in our newspapers – but the end has slipped from my memory.<sup>6</sup>

With renewed thanks – and in the hope that I may be excused –

Vy truly yours Wilkie Collins

To Mr Nathaniel C. Moak<sup>7</sup>

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1. Nathaniel Cleveland Moak (1833-1892), a New York lawyer who left his law papers to Cornell University.

2. Mayler gives '1882'; there are several other minor errors in her transcription.

3. Tipped into *Billings' Trial 1878-1881*, with an envelope directed to: 'Mr Nathaniel C. Moak | &c &c &c | Albany | N. Y. | U. S. America'.

4. A presentation copy of *Closing Argument of Nathaniel C. Moak: At Ballston Spa, October 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 1878, on Behalf of the People in the Case of the People against Jesse Billings, Jr.: With the Charge of Hon. Judson S. Landon, Presiding Justice* (Albany, New York: 1879) was in WC's library (Baker 2002, p. 134, no.356).

5. As quoted in Meyler's article, Moak used *The Moonstone* as part of his unsuccessful closing argument for the prosecution: "We may safely study fiction provided we discreetly apply it, for when properly applied it is intended to faithfully represent humanity. In the story of the Moonstone, a jewel had been stolen; detectives had been sent for to ascertain who was the guilty party; a door of the room from which the moonstone had been taken had been newly painted; upon the jamb of the door was discovered a small spot from which the paint had been brushed by a passing garment; the local detectives – or in the language of my learned friend, the 'wolves and hyenas' of the locality – had all passed it as of no importance; the city detective, with the experience of a life-time, regarded it as an important circumstance. I cannot better give you his idea of it than by reading it, for it is an illustration by one skilled in human character, of the importance of a trifling circumstance. ... [quotation from *The Moonstone*] That is a circumstance related in a work of fiction, but said to have been founded on fact – on the experience of an eminent detective. ... It is these small circumstances which lead as unerringly to the guilty party, as if the finger of Providence had pointed directly to him."

6. In fact Jesse Billings, a wealthy man from Saratoga, was found not guilty of the murder of his wife Eliza who was discovered shot in their home. His trial was called at the time the longest and most expensive criminal trial in the history of the United States. See Hollis A. Palmer, *To Spend Eternity Alone: The Trail of Jesse Billings, Jr* (Saratoga Springs, NY: Deep Root Publications, 1999).

7. The name is written above the printed address. There is no room for it on the last sheet which is completely full. The last 45 words are written vertically in both margins.

[3111] \* **TO THE MANAGER OF THE NEW ENGLAND LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY,<sup>1</sup> 10 JANUARY 1884**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Heritage Auctions (29 October 2007, lot 61388).

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

London | 10<sup>th</sup> January 1884

Dear sir,

Be so good as to send the customary notification, relating to the payment of my Premium of Insurance,<sup>2</sup> due 12<sup>th</sup> February next, to my agents Messrs Naylor & Co, 6. Oliver Street, as before, and believe me,<sup>3</sup>

Faithfully yrs | Wilkie Collins

To | The Manager, New England Life Insurance Company | Boston

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1. Presumably the same company that he wrote to as the 'New England Mutual Insurance Company' on 5 January 1885 and 6 January 1887.

2. For details of the insurance policy that WC took out with the Boston firm before leaving the United States in 1874, see to William Tindell, 3 March 1874 (Baker & Clarke, II, p. 381).
3. In the two known subsequent letters Naylor & Co is located in New York City rather than Boston. See to Sebastian Schlesinger, 28 January 1884.

[3112] **TO WILKIE COLLINS BARR,<sup>1</sup> 27 MAY 1885**

MS: Unknown. Extract: ‘Literary Notes’, *New York Times* (29 June 1885) p. 3.

London, May 27, 1885.

Dear Sir:

Two of your names give you a claim to my autograph, which I ought to be the last person living to dispute. But there is another reason for my writing to you. I am especially pleased to hear that you like “Armadale” – for, if I may venture to pronounce an opinion. I think “Armadale” the best book that I have written.

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1. In the *New York Times* (which presumably takes the story from an unidentified British journal), the extract is prefaced: ‘Wilkie Collins has written to a Lancaster boy, who rejoices in the name of Wilkie Collins Barr:’. WC’s inclusion of ‘London’ in the address line probably indicates this letter is sent abroad, so the reference to Lancaster is presumably to one of the places with that name in the USA, the largest being in Pennsylvania. No person of this precise name has been traced in US (or indeed UK) public records. However, there are some people called ‘Collins Barr’ with different first names, and in Reading, Pennsylvania the 1870 Census records a Wilkie Barr born c.1869.

[3113] **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 18 SEPTEMBER 1886**

MS: Lewis Collection. Published: Lewis website.

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
18<sup>th</sup> September 1886

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1. Presumably an autograph hunter.

[31114] \* **TO GEORGE S. J. OLIVER,<sup>1</sup> 6 JANUARY 1887**

MS: UCLA (Bound Mss Coll 170/70), tipped into a copy of *The Guilty River*.<sup>2</sup>

Dear Mr Oliver,

My gratitude is yours for the very interesting photographs which you have so kindly sent to me – and for the period of the year at which you have been happily inspired to favour me with your gift. Snow and sleet on one day – a raw thaw on another – and a fine hard “black” frost on ~~the a another~~ third occasion, which promises to cure the neuralgia troubles produced by the first two varieties of weather, and then fails to keep its promise by developing again into thaw – which is the modern winter climate of England.<sup>3</sup> Thanks to you, I now turn my back on the miserable view out of window [*sic*], and live at Santa Barbara, and waltz with my juvenile grace and alacrity in that primitive and picturesque ball-room. Dana has now (as you will not be surprised to hear) become a precious fragment of antiquity to me.<sup>4</sup> I shall not be surprised to hear of “baffling calms” experienced by sailing vessels off Cape Horn. May I beg you to present my compliments to that interesting old lady? I envied Dana his opportunities when he first told me about her.

The last photographic portrait of me accompanies these lines.<sup>5</sup> Better portraits were taken by the admirable Sarony when I was in New York city – but that was twelve years since,<sup>6</sup> and I am bound in honour (as the saying is) to offer you my likeness as I am now – in my 63<sup>rd</sup> year!<sup>7</sup>

In the intervals of illness, I have been writing a little Christmas book, called “The Guilty River”. This also goes to you (despatched by registered book post) with my kindest wishes for a happy new year.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

George S. J. Oliver Esqre

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1. Unidentified. UCLA has no record of who he might be and no census or other records can be traced.

2. Presumably the one mentioned in the letter.

3. *The Times* reported sleet, snow, mist and darkness in London on that day (Friday, 7 January 1887, p. 6e).

4. Presumably Richard Henry Dana (1787-1879), though both he and his son Richard Henry Dana Jr (1815-1882) were dead by this time. WC had corresponded with Dana about his father’s *Memoirs* in 1848-1850. The purport of this and the following three sentences remains obscure.

5. No longer present. Photographs by Lock & Whitfield and Bassano are known from the 1880s.

6. In fact it was 13 years since WC was in New York.

7. WC was to become 63 in two days time on 8 January.

[3115] \* **TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 25 APRIL 1887**

MS: Unknown. On sale: Dominic Winter (22 July 2008, lot 426).<sup>2</sup>

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins  
25<sup>th</sup> April 1887

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1. Presumably an autograph collector.
2. Part of an album of autographs.

[3116] \* **TO HENRY GRAY,<sup>1</sup> UNKNOWN DATE<sup>2</sup>**

MS: Unknown. Extract: Jarndyce Catalogue, vol. 93 (Summer 1993), no. 8.

[*four lines of text*]

Ever yours | Wilkie Collins  
[Henry Gray Esqre]

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1. Probably Henry Gray (1823-1898), the sixth child of WC's maternal aunt 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. The Jarndyce catalogue states: 'removed from an A.L.S. to Henry Gray Esqre: "Ever Yours Wilkie Collins", with 4 lines of the letter on verso. Traces of mounting.'

## **(B) Corrigenda**

### **[0287] TO HARRIET COLLINS, [MAY 1857-JULY 1858]**

*I p. 165: The date should read [14 APRIL-21 JULY 1858], with note 1 amended to read:*

1. The letter is clearly written between 19 May 1857 when CD took over Gad's Hill Place to the end of WC's use of Harley Place as a lodging at the end of July 1858. But the reference to the reading makes it more likely the date falls between 14 April 1858 and 21 July 1858 – the days before the first and last readings in London by Dickens (Pilgrim, VIII, p. xxiv).

### **[0323] TO EDMUND YATES, 1858-9**

*I p. 186: Third line of transcript should read:*

house – I [*words excised*], or even the remembrance, of serious matters.

### **[0370] TO NUGENT ROBINSON, 28 AUGUST 1860**

*I p. 210: To the source line should be added Extract: Charles Robinson, 'The Confessions of an Autograph-Hunter', Cosmopolitan (January 1893), with note 1 revised to read:*

1. Nugent Robinson (b. 1838), hailed from Ireland but seems to have emigrated with his family to the USA in the 1870s. The 1880 Census records him working as an editor and living in Kings (Brooklyn) with his wife Jennette, sons St John (13), Charles (10), and Eugene (6), plus his own father and mother, Charles and Julia. In 1892 his son Charles Robinson, then aged 22, wrote an eight-page piece for the *Cosmopolitan* claiming it was an account of his own autograph hunting. It quotes WC's letter as if he had obtained it in the last couple of years – by which period WC of course was dead. It seems likely that he was in fact describing his father's techniques of obtaining signatures. His father would himself have been 22 when this letter was written to him. The absence of a 'London' dateline also indicates it is more likely to have been written to someone in the UK than in the USA. Charles Robinson writes: 'instead of emitting the usual stereotyped batch of formal requests for their signatures, I wrote ... "for information" on some topic of supposed interest... My first victim was Wilkie Collins, whom I ventured to address on the subject of his Woman in White, dwelling at some length on Marian Halcombe, the brave woman of the story. The reader may imagine my delight at receiving from the great novelist the following reply:'. He then quotes the entire letter apart from the address, salutation, and valediction.



[0591] \* **TO RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, 6 AUGUST 1864**

*The MS has now been checked and the footnotes corrected. The entire entry should now read:*

MS: Houghton.<sup>1</sup> Extract: Peters, p. 294.

Victoria Hotel | Great Yarmouth | Sunday August 6<sup>th</sup> 1864<sup>2</sup>

Dear Lord Houghton,

I have been cruising about this coast for the last week — and I propose starting from Yarmouth, to pay my visit to Fryston on Wednesday next. If the train is punctual (a very serious “if” on the Great Eastern Railway) I shall get to Peterborough in time for the two oClock train, which reaches Knottingley at 4.44. If there is delay, I must get on from Peterborough by the 4.30 train, which reaches Knottingley at 7. Long and painful study of Bradshaw has convinced me that these are my two alternatives. By one or other of the trains therefore — by the earlier of the two, I hope — I shall have the pleasure of presenting myself at Fryston on Wednesday next.<sup>3</sup>

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

The Rt Honble | Lord Houghton | &c &c &c

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1. A note pasted above the letter reads ‘Wilkie Collins | Author of The Woman in White &c &c’.

2. In fact 6 August 1864 was a Saturday not a Sunday. WC says he plans to arrive at Fryston on ‘Wednesday next’ which was therefore 10 August. That chronology contradicts information published towards the end of the century by Thomas Wemyss Reid: ‘On the 8th of August Mr Bunsen visited Fryston, where he found, among other guests Dr. Smith (of the dictionaries), Mr. Venables, Mr. Spedding, Mr. W. B. Donne, and Mr. Wilkie Collins.’ (*The Life, Letters, and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes, First Lord Houghton*, 2 vols; London: Cassell, 1890, II, p. 127). It is not clear where this specific date comes from. George von Bunsen was invited ‘from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> August’ (Houghton to Bunsen 13 July 1864 *op. cit.* II p. 126). Reid claims to have had access to ‘some thirty thousand letters addressed to Milnes’ (*op. cit.*, I, p. xv). Perhaps it is an example of what Reid calls in his introduction ‘the deficiencies and imperfections of this narrative.’ (*op. cit.* I p. xvi).

3. Citing this letter, Peters suggests this was the moment he met Martha Rudd, who was to become his lover and the mother of his children. She writes: ‘Perhaps the train was late, and Wilkie filled in the time at the Inn next door. As he had charmed the kitchenmaid Virginia in Paris twenty years before, so, with the advantages of fame and maturity, he now made a lasting impression on a girl [Martha Rudd] not much older than his adopted daughter’ (p. 294).

[1839] **TO OLIVE LOGAN SIKES, 10 APRIL 1879**

*III p. 238: Note 1 should be replaced with the following:*

1. Olive Logan (1839-1909: ANB) was born to an acting family and was herself an actress and writer. She married William W. Sikes in 1871. She acted in Augustin Daly's company until 1868 and is credited with writing a dramatisation of *Armadale* in 1866. It is possible that WC met her during his American trip but the formal salutation ('Dear Madam') to this first known letter – changed to 'Mrs Sikes' in his next of 28 May 1879 – argues against that. William W. Sikes was appointed to run the American consulate in Cardiff and it is possible he was based in London as a diplomat at this time. Olive Sikes makes no mention of WC in her autobiography, *Before the Footlights and Behind the Scenes* (San Francisco, Cal.: Bancroft, 1870).



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