

The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins: Addenda and Corrigenda (10)

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Wilkie Collins Society
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Introduction

This pamphlet is the tenth in the series of updates to *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters*, published in four volumes by Pickering & Chatto in 2005. This update is published by the Wilkie Collins Society.

The editorial principles, transcription conventions, and abbreviations employed here remain consistent with those described in pp. ix-lxii of Volume I of *The Public Face*.

The editors are working 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* in chronological order. The letters in ‘Last Things’ in *Public Face* vol. IV between WC’s relatives and friends during his final illness and after have also been numbered as X001 to X011. One more was added in A&C7. The table below summarises the numbering.

Publication	Sequence	Pages	Numbers
<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	Last Things	387-393	[X001]-[X011]
<i>Public Face</i> IV	Addenda	401-404	[2982]-[2987]
‘Addenda’ (1) 2005	Chronological	<i>WCSJ</i> VIII 48-54	[2988]-[2998]
‘Addenda’ (2) 2006	Chronological	<i>WCSJ</i> IX 59-68	[2999]-[3016]
‘Addenda’ (3) 2007	Chronological	<i>WCSJ</i> X 34-61	[3017]-[3076]
‘Addenda’ (4) 2008	Chronological	2-29	[3077]-[3116]
‘Addenda’ (5) 2009	Chronological	3-18	[3117]-[3146]
‘Addenda’ (6) 2010	Chronological	3-16	[3147]-[3171]
‘Addenda’ (7) 2011	Chronological in 2 sequences	5-36 37-45	[3172]-[3199], [X012]
‘Addenda’ (8) 2013	Chronological	3-22	[3200]-[3232]
‘Addenda’ (9) 2014	MacKaye	3-16	[3233]-[3248]
	Anderson	17-28	[3255]-[3270]
	Others	29-33	[3249]-[3271]
‘Addenda’ (10) 2016	Chronological	3-21	[3272]-[3310]

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 A&C3, pp. 68-9, numbered [0229], [2975], [2977], [2979], and the letter [3097] deleted by A&C8, p. 25, and a further letter [0100] deleted as part of the digital project, remain as blanks in the series.

This tenth *Addenda & Corrigenda* has been updated to December 2016 and includes 39 new letters. They have been found at auctions, in book trade catalogues, in libraries, in collections of signatures, in contemporary publications, and pasted into books. We have also taken the opportunity to add a small number of previously ignored undated scraps to unidentified recipients.

The 39 new letters take the numbers [3272] to [3310] in chronological order. Deducting the four letters deleted by A&C3 and the single letters deleted by A&C8 and the digital project, there are 3304 letters in the sequence to date. A total of 323 newly identified letters have now been published in the *Addenda* series since the original four volume publication.

Letters marked * have not been published before. Full or partial publication in auction house and dealer catalogues has been ignored. The editors are grateful to owners who have provided texts or given permission for their inclusion.

The *Corrigenda* (pp. 22-25) comprises three letters where complete texts from original manuscripts have become available and two others – one with a significant change of date, the other with a significant identification of the recipient. Numerous minor changes are being held over for the digital project.

The editors welcome all comments and corrections by e-mail to paul@paullewis.co.uk.

(A) Addenda

[3272]* To WILLIAM CULLENFORD,¹ 31 MARCH 1852

MS: Morrab Library, Penzance (Cornish Special Collection, C914.2370481 SP), pasted into a copy of the second edition (1852) of *Rambles Beyond Railways*.

17. Hanover Terrace | Regents Park
March 31st 1852

Sir,

I shall be happy to take a Ticket for the Dinner of the General Theatrical Fund, on the 5th of April.²

I remain, Sir, | Your obt servt | W. Wilkie Collins
To Wm Cullenford Esq

1. William Cullenford (d. 1874), co-founder in 1839 of the Royal General Theatrical Fund and Secretary from 1845 to 1873 (Wendy Trewin, *The Royal General Theatrical Fund*, London: The Society for Historical Research, 1989).

2. The Fund recorded a donation of £1-1s by WC on the evening of 5 April 1852. He donated £5-5s on 4 April 1863. On 12 April 1865 he took the chair and donated £10-10s. His bank account at Coutts – which was opened in 1860 – shows two payments to the Fund. £5-5s on 1 April 1863 and £15-9s on 15 April 1865.

[3273]* To RICHARD JAMES SPIERS, ESQ.,¹ 21 JULY 1854

MS: Lewis Collection.

The Garrick Club.² | July 21st 1854

My dear sir,

Many thanks for your kind invitation. I should be delighted to avail myself of it – if I had not already accepted an invitation to visit some friends at Boulogne.³ I leave London on the 24th, and do not return for a month.

I am very happy to have this opportunity of thanking you for the pleasant evening you afforded us on the night of the “Reception” – and I hope to have a future opportunity of improving the acquaintance which began under your hospitable auspices.⁴

If I were writing from home, I am sure I should be charged to present my mother’s kind regards to The Mayoress.⁵

Believe me | My dear sir | very sincerely yours | W. Wilkie Collins
To | Richard James Spiers Esqre

1. Richard James Spiers (1806-1877) was Mayor of Oxford, 1853-54.

2. WC uses the note paper of the Garrick Club, with the simple heading “Garrick Club” embossed within an oval. He joined the Garrick in the early to mid 1850s; other members included Dickens, Fechter and Reade. WC resigned in 1858 over the “Garrick Club Affair” concerning Edmund Yates, subsequently rejoined, but resigned again with Dickens when their candidate, W. H. Wills, was blackballed. to the Secretary of the Garrick Club, [0624] 25 February 1865, [0626] 5 March 1865, and [0630] 10 March 1865.
3. Referring to an invitation by Dickens to join him in the Villa du Camp de Droite, Boulogne (CD to WC 12 July 1854, *Pilgrim* VII pp. 367-368).
4. For an illustration of the Reception and a description of the event, see the *Illustrated London News*, 1 July 1854.
5. See [0211] to Mrs Spiers of 7 June 1855, where WC declines a further invitation. See Corrigenda, p. 24, below.

[3274]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ 14 MAY 1858

MS: Unknown. On sale: Jarndyce (Catalogue CCXXI, Winter Spring 2016-2017, item 88).

Friday, May 14th 1858

From “The Dead Secret”, by
Wilkie Collins²

1. The 443 word extract describing Miss Sturch was probably written for Mary Ann Maria Teresa Garment. At this time WC was staying with his friend Joseph Stringfield, a doctor who lived in Weston-super-Mare, prior to a sailing trip to Wales – see [0282] to Harriet Collins, 3 June 1858. Nearly six months after this extract was written, Mary Ann became Stringfield’s second wife on 4 November 1858 just three days after her 21st birthday. WC was a witness. We conjecture that she was living with Stringfield in Weston-super-Mare at this time. His first wife had died and this second marriage ended in judicial separation ordered on 27 June 1867 on grounds of cruelty. Mary Ann subsequently married Michael Daly in 1882 and died 29 August 1908.

2. Wilkie wrote many extracts from his books for fans and friends but this is the earliest example known, one of the longest, and one of only two known from *The Dead Secret*. The extract differs from the published work only in the first line – ‘the Vicar’s governess’ rather than as published ‘the governess’.

‘Miss Sturch, the Vicar’s governess, may be briefly and accurately described as a young lady who had never been troubled with an idea or a sensation since the day when she was born. She was a little, plump, quiet, white-skinned, smiling, neatly dressed girl, wound up accurately to the performance of certain duties at certain times; and possessed of an inexhaustible vocabulary of commonplace talk, which dribbled placidly out of her lips whenever it was called for, always in the same quantity, and always of the same quality, at every hour in the day, and through every change in the seasons. Miss Sturch never laughed and never cried, but took the safe middle course of smiling perpetually. She smiled when she came down on a morning in January, and said it was very cold. She smiled when she came down on a morning in July, and said it was very hot. She smiled when the bishop came once

a year to see the Vicar; she smiled when the butcher's boy came every morning for orders. She smiled when Miss Louisa wept on her bosom, and implored indulgence towards errors in geography; she smiled when Master Robert jumped into her lap and ordered her to brush his hair. Let what might happen at the vicarage, nothing ever jerked Miss Sturch out of the one smooth groove in which she ran perpetually, always at the same pace. If she had lived in a royalist family, during the civil wars in England, she would have rung for the cook, to order dinner, on the morning of the execution of Charles the First. If Shakespeare had come back to life again, and had called at the Vicarage at six o'clock on Saturday evening, to explain to Miss Sturch exactly what his views were in composing the tragedy of Hamlet, she would have smiled and said it was extremely interesting, until the striking of seven o'clock; at which time she would have begged the Bard of Avon to excuse her, and would have left him in the middle of a sentence, to superintend the housemaid in the verification of the washing book. A very estimable young person, Miss Sturch (as the ladies of Long Beckley were accustomed to say); so judicious with the children and so attached to her household duties; such a well-regulated mind, and such a crisp touch on the piano; just nice-looking enough, just well-dressed enough, just talkative enough; not quite old enough perhaps, and a little too much inclined to be embraceably plump about the region of the waist – but, on the whole, a most estimable young person – very much so, indeed.'

[3275]* To RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, AUGUST 1860

MS: Trinity College Library, Crewe Bequest.

R. Monckton Milnes | from Wilkie Collins | August 1860¹

1. At the top of the title page of a first edition of *The Woman in White*, possibly written in the week of publication. The book was advertised as published on 15 August 1860, but the day before that Wilkie wrote: 'The book ... is done to the last fragment of correction and will certainly be finished this week.' ([0368] to Charles Ward, 14 August 1860). So it is possible that WC was sent copies late that week and took this copy to Milnes's house on the visit for which he set off on Friday, 17 August (mentioned in the same letter).

[3276]* To RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, 16 APRIL [1861]

MS: Trinity College Library, Crewe Bequest.

12. Harley Street

April 16th

A photograph for your copy of the book – if it is worth the trouble of sticking it in. – ¹

W.C.

1. Pasted in facing the title page of a first edition of *The Woman in White* dedicated to Milnes – see [3275] to him. The photograph by Cundall, Downes & Co. of 168 New Bond Street is a square print of the usually oval photograph pasted in to the first one volume edition which was published in April 1861, which determines the year of the letter.

[3277]* To HARRIET COLLINS, 22 JULY 1861

MS: Morgan (MA 3150), envelope only.¹

Mrs Collins | at Mrs Taylor's | Canewood Farm | near Tunbridge Wells²

1. Postmarked 'LONDON-W | 6 | JY 22 | 61' and endorsed in Tunbridge Wells the following day. At Morgan the document is found, among other unattached envelopes without a unique MS number, between items MA 3150/88 and 3150/89.

2. On Reynolds Lane, St John's, Tunbridge Wells.

[3278]* To JOHN PALGRAVE SIMPSON, 14 JULY 1862

MS: Lewis Collection.

The Fort House | Broadstairs | Kent

July 14th 1862

My dear Palgrave Simpson,

One line to thank you for your kind letter, and to say how glad I am to hear that your "part" justified your belief in it, and that the play altogether went off well. I was sincerely sorry to miss it – but the dire necessity of getting on a little faster with "No Name" drove me from London – and here I am, with the sea on three sides of me and a garden on the fourth, working in blessed seclusion from all London interruptions. I make a holiday of every Sunday (as a concession to the principles of a brother-writer – Moses, author of "The Ten Commandments" &c &c) – and if you feel inclined this summer or autumn to try the Kentish Coast from Saturday to Monday, let me know a day or two

beforehand – and you will find a bed here very much at your disposal – I only mention from Saturday to Monday because my Sunday holiday leaves me at the disposal of my friends.¹ If you don't mind my being shut up till 3 P.M. the rest of the week is as much yours as Sunday.² There are some pretty walks hereabouts, and fine sailing in a lugger I can answer for, if you like the sea.

Ever yrs | Wilkie Collins

1. WC writes on a Monday.
2. WC clearly sets out his work pattern: he sits at his desk until 3pm every day from Monday to Saturday.

[3279] * TO HARRIET COLLINS, 22 JULY 1861

MS: Morgan (MA 3150), envelope only.¹

Mrs Collins | care of John Bullar Esqre | Basset Wood | near Southampton

1. Postmarked 'LONDON-W | [?] | AU 24 | 63' and endorsed illegibly. At Morgan the document is found, with another unattached envelope without a unique MS number, at the end of the series of letters to his mother, after item MA 3150/117.

[3280] * WILLIS & SOTHERAN,¹ 19 JULY 1864

MS: eBay, January 2016 (#141882441709 keithhartwell@blueyonder.co.uk).

12 Harley Street. W
July 19th 1864

Dear Sirs,

I enclose a cheque for the amount of my account.² Please return me the bill receipted.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Messrs Willis & Sotheran

1. Bookdealers of Covent Garden and Charing Cross.
2. A cheque to Willis & Co for £10-3s was debited to WC's account at Coutts on 21 July 1864.

[3281]* TO MRS M. UNDERHILL,¹ 30 JUNE 1865

MS: eBay, August 2015 (#400985046161, in large lot).

9. Melcombe Place | Dorset Square | London
June 30th 1865

Dear Madam,

Pray excuse an unavoidable delay on my part in acknowledging the receipt of your note, and in then complying with your wish to possess my Autograph.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins
Mrs M. Underhill

1. Otherwise unidentified, but from the form of the return address an autograph hunter living outside London.

[3282]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ 23 JUNE 1867

MS: Lewis Collection.

9. Melcombe Place | Dorset Square | N.W
June 23rd 1867

Mr Wilkie Collins presents his compts to...²

prevent him from being present at the dinner on Saturday next.³

1. From the dateline a correspondent in London. The fragment is a small cut piece, 74x113mm. Across the top is written in pencil:

Wilkie Collins – Author of Woman in White &c &c

2. The small cut slip ends at this point. The missing portion presumably reads along the lines of “[name] but [regrettably] [reasons]”.

3. This line is on the verso which has been glued to an album sheet but is legible through the recto. WC writes on a Sunday so the invitation relates to Saturday 29 June.

[3283]* TO W. P. FRITH, 27 JULY 1868

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.¹
Monday Jul 27th 1868

My dear Frith,

One line to say that I have not forgotten your kind invitation. But I have returned to town today, with my foot once more useless to me. Whether it is

gout, or whether I have been using the foot too much, I cannot say till the doctor sees me. The fact is that I cannot cross the room without help and that the pleasure of dining with you, this month, is another pleasure sacrificed to the demon who tortures me.

I must get away from England, if I am carried away, as soon as this new disaster is set right. And I hope you will give me another chance, when we all return to London.

Yours ever | Wilkie Collins

1. On black-edged mourning paper, following the death of his mother on 19 March.

[3284]* TO ISABELLE FRITH, 27 DECEMBER 1869

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.

Decr 27th 1869

Dear Mrs Frith,

Thank you for your kind invitation.¹ I accept it with the greatest pleasure.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. Probably for Monday, 10 January. If so, WC did not in fact attend, see [0947] to Isabelle Frith.

[3285]* TO THOMAS D. GALPIN, 11 OCTOBER 1871

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.

11th October 1871

My dear sir,

I shall be very happy to see you here on Friday morning next – at 10, or at any later hour which may be more convenient to you.¹

Believe me

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

Thos. D Galpin Eqr

1. WC writes on a Wednesday, so the appointment is for Friday 13th. Thomas D. Galpin, of the publishers Cassell, Petter & Galpin, wanted to negotiate for the publication of WC's

novels in penny parts. The meeting is referred to in [1138] 17 October 1871 to George Smith. The answer was ‘no’. See [1149] to Galpin, 30 October 1871.

[3286]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, LATE 1871-EARLY 1872¹

MS: Lewis Collection.

The play begins punctually at a quarter to eight.
With best regards | yours always truly | Wilkie Collins

1. Cut from the end of a letter. The dating comes from the only other example of the phrase ‘punctually at a quarter to Eight’ – see [1155] to Allston Brown, 6 November 1871. We thus conjecture that it is for the dramatic performance of *The Woman in White* which ran at the Olympic Theatre from 9 October 1871 to 24 February 1872. The paper is appropriate to that era.

[3287]* TO CHARLES DICKENS JNR¹, 16 JANUARY 1872

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.
16th January 1872

Dear Charley,

My doctor forbids me to go to dinner-parties, and orders me out of town as soon as I can get away. The truth is that I have been working too hard. My nerves want quiet and my digestion has struck work.²

I am sincerely sorry not to be able to accept your kind invitation for the 28th of this month. But, as things are, I can only trust to your kindness to forgive my absence and to accept the expression of my regret.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. WC addressed only two correspondents ‘Charley’. His brother was always ‘My dear Charley’ and signed off ‘Yours affly’. The other was Charles Dickens Jr – see for example [3218] 10 November 1874 and [1663] 29 January 1877.

2. For another example of this odd phrase ‘struck work’ see [2106] to Chatto & Windus, 31 January 1883: ‘my brains struck work, some days since’.

[3288]* TO GEORGE BENTLEY, 3 JUNE 1873

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.¹

3rd June 1873

Dear Mr Bentley

A line to thank you for your kindness. Mr Beard's son is unfortunately suffering from illness – and he has no choice but to ask you to defer the interview until he is well enough to wait on you.² He will write to you himself.

(In great haste)

Yours always truly | Wilkie Collins

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1. Centred Gothic type with full mourning border, following the death of CAC on 9 April.
 2. Nathaniel Beard, younger son of WC's doctor, Francis Carr Beard, who became George Bentley's chief clerk. Presumably the letter refers to the postponed interview which secured him the post and indicates WC had a part in his appointment. For Nathaniel Beard's reminiscences of WC see 'Some Recollections of Yesterday' *Temple Bar*, vol. 102, July 1894, pp. 315-339.

[3289]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ OCTOBER 1873

MS: Lewis Collection

New York
October 1873

Wilkie Collins

-
1. For an autograph hunter. WC was in New York more than once in October, finally leaving on 28th for Boston (Susan R Hanes, *Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-4*, 2008, p.104).

[3290]* TO MME FECHTER,¹ 23 APRIL 1874

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.

23^{me} avril

Chère Madame

Merci milles fois de votre aimable lettre.

J'attendrais l'honneur de vous recevoir ici Lundi [*sic*] avec le plus vif plaisir.²

Wilkie Collins³

1. The year and recipient are inferred from WC to Mme Fechter [3179] 21 April 1874. This is a reply to her reply to that letter.

2. WC writes on a Tuesday.

3. Translation

Dear Madam

Thank you a thousand times for your kind letter. I shall await the honour of receiving you here on Monday with the greatest pleasure.

[3291]* TO REVD DOCTOR LEARY¹, 11 APRIL 1876

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.²

11th April 1876

My dear sir,

Pray accept my thanks for your kind letter. The Memoir in “Men of The Time” is I think correctly written as to facts and dates.³ I can add nothing to it which would be in the least likely to interest the public.⁴ The last “event” in my life was my time in America in 1873-4. I read in public two of my shorter stories (“The Dream-Woman” and “The Frozen Deep”) – and I met with a reception from the people of the United States which I shall remember gratefully to the end of my life.

This is really all that I can say to any purpose about myself. My only claim to the honour of a memoir is represented by my books. I am glad to hear that I may count you among my indulgent readers.

Believe me | vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

The Revd Doctor Leary

1. Thomas Humphrys Lindsay Leary (c1827-1906). He is the only possible candidate in *Crockford's Clerical Directory* of 1878 (p.428 [21]). In 1876 he was curate at St George's, Camberwell (1874-1881). His census entries indicate he was born in Ballybay, Co. Monaghan, Ireland c.1827 and apart from his clerical work he describes himself in the 1871 Census as ‘journalist and reviewer’ (R.G.10 1333). He married Marian Marston 11 January 1855 in Derby (GRO and *Armagh Guardian*, 19 January 1855, p. 8b). From 1858-1865 he was Headmaster at Derby Grammar School but left after he was summonsed to support the child of a former servant, Maria Gee. Despite witness accounts from other servants the summons was dismissed (*The Nottinghamshire Guardian*, Friday 7 April 1865, supplement, p.1f).

2. Written at the top of the letter in another hand, ‘Wilkie Collins’.

3. *Men of the Time* was first published by David Bogue in 1856 with a short entry on WC which contained several errors, including giving his birth year as 1825 and stating his mother was the daughter of a painter. He sent corrections to the new editor Edward Walford [0411] 17 April 1861 and it is presumably the revised 1862 edition to which he refers.

4. It is not clear why he wanted the information. It was not used in his known publications around that time (*Wellesley Index*, vol. V, p. 455).

[3292]* TO ALFRED CAPPER¹, 20 APRIL 1876

MS: Unknown. On sale: Dreweatts Bloomsbury Auctions, Maddox Street, London (4 September 2015, lot 13).

April 20th 1876

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins²

1. Although WC does not give an addressee, the item is on a small piece of cut paper in an album of more than 100 signatures, letters, and envelopes. Where there is an addressee it is A. Capper or Alfred Capper or Alfred O. Capper, and one preserved envelope gives his address as Beechwood, Hill Lane, Southampton. The 1871 and 1881 Censuses record Alfred O. Capper at this address as a scholar aged 12 (RG10/1199) and Merchant's Clerk aged 22 (RG11/1221). He was born Alfred Octavius Capper in Q3 1858 (Southampton 2c40). His autobiography *A Rambler's Recollections and Reflections* (London 1915) records 'When at school I also collected autographs. I wrote to nearly every celebrity, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope, and I have in consequence, a very valuable collection, including Tennyson, Gladstone, Ruskin, Anthony Trollope, Millais, Wilkie Collins, Sothorn, Phelps, Buckstone, and hundreds of others.' (p. 21). See <https://archive.org/details/ramblersrecollec00capp>

2. The date is added after the signature as is usual when WC responds to an autograph request from a stranger.

[3293]* TO UNIDENTIFIED TRANSLATOR¹, 12 JANUARY 1877

MS: Lewis Collection.

Londres | 12 Janvier 1877

Mon cher monsieur,²

Je vous prie d'accepter mes remerciements sincères pour l'intéressante [*sic*] addition que votre bonté vient de faire à ma bibliothèque. Votre traduction du chef d'oeuvre [*sic*] de l'un des plus grands écrivains de toutes les époques ou de toutes les nations est, autant que je puis en juger, admirablement réussie. Je suis surtout frappé de la manière dont vous avez rendu les saveurs (si je puis m'exprimer ainsi) de la

délicatesse exquise du style de [Herne]³. La réussite en pareille matière devait être excessivement difficile à obtenir et vous y êtes parvenu.

Je peux déjà prévoir le plaisir que j'éprouverai à voir mon petit roman traduit [*sic*] dans votre langue.

Croyez moi votre bien dévoué

Wilkie Collins.

Je ne veux pas fermer ma lettre sans féliciter l'artiste de les [*sic*] charmantes illustrations. Leur execution [*sic*] est magistrale. Ce sont des tableaux dans le meilleur sens du mot.

1. Apparently to someone who was to translate one of WC's shorter works.

2. Translated with some errors possibly by a friend fluent in French and written in another hand with what seems to be WC's own signature.

London | 12 January 1877

My dear sir,

Please accept my sincere thanks for the interesting addition your kindness has just made to my library. Your translation of the masterpiece of one of the greatest writers of all ages or nations is, as far as I can judge, admirably successful. I am particularly struck by the manner in which you have rendered the flavours (if I may so express myself) of the exquisite delicacy of the style of [Herne]. Success in such matters must be exceedingly difficult to obtain, and you have succeeded.

I can already foresee the pleasure I will experience seeing my little novel translated into your language.

Believe me your devoted | Wilkie Collins.

I do not want to close my letter without congratulating the artist on the charming illustrations. Their execution is masterly. These are paintings in the best sense of the word.

3. Reference unidentified.

[3294]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ 18 AUGUST 1877

MS: Lewis Collection.

London
August 18th 1877

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. Probably to an autograph collector, as the place and date are written at the foot of the page.

[3295]* TO SIDNEY FRANCES BATEMAN¹, 24 AUGUST 1877

MS: Unknown. On sale Hansons Auctioneers (2 April 2016, Lot 730) with many letters and effects relating to the Bateman sisters.

90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W.

24th Augt 1877

Dear Mrs Bateman

Pray accept my thanks for your very kind letter, and my heartiest good wishes for the success of the piece.

I should be only too glad to profit by the opportunity which you are so good as to offer me – if my health would permit it. But with “The Moonstone” rehearsals to look after in the day time, I am obliged to give my evenings up to the rest which I sorely need by that time. The day after the piece is produced, I go to try the mountain air in the Tyrol.²

If you will kindly let me have three seats for the first night – or two if three should be too many – I shall have a full report of the public reception of The Dead Secret, and, it is needless to say, of the acting as well.

Once more – May you succeed! and may I see the piece when I return from the Continent!

Always truly yours |Wilkie Collins

1. American born actress (1823-1881), who played Sarah Leeson in a dramatization by E. J. Bramwell of *The Dead Secret* which opened at the Lyceum on 29 August 1877. It received poor reviews in *The Times* (3 September 1877 p. 10e) and *The World* (5 September 1877). Both praised Collins but did not like the adaptation or Miss Bateman’s acting. Its last performance was 10 November (*The Times* of that date p. 8e). Despite the programme’s claim to the contrary, the play was adapted without WC’s permission. See [3049] to Jane Ward, 27 August 1877.

2. It is not clear if WC was making up an excuse or if he did go for a week in the Tyrol. In [3049] to Jane Ward, 27 August 1877 he wrote ‘I will try hard to call and say goodbye.’ But he was certainly back in London on 8 September (see [1698] to Fanny Devonport of that date).

[3296]* TO EUPHEMIA MILLAIS,¹ 11 JUNE 1879

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.

11th June 1879

Mr Wilkie Collins accepts with great pleasure the honour of Mr and Mrs Everett Millais’ invitation for July 25th at 8 o’Clock

1. Euphemia Chalmers Millais née Gray (1828-1897) known as Effie married John Everett Millais 3 July 1855. Invitations were normally sent by the woman of the house to whom WC replies.

[3297]* TO CHARLES THOMAS, OCTOBER 1878 - JUNE 1879¹

MS: Unknown. Envelope only with Robert Temple Books.

90. Gloucester Place. W.²

Mr C. Thomas | Messrs Robson & Sons | 20 Pancras Road
Wilkie Collins

1. Dated from the time when WC was sending proofs by post to Thomas, the printer of *The Fallen Leaves* in *The World*. See to him, [1786] 24 October 1878 and [1861] 23 June 1879.

2. The address and signature are written at the left foot of the envelope surrounded by a wavy line. The reverse of the envelope has WC's wax seal with his initials. The empty envelope is apparently unopened.

[3298] TO THE EDITOR OF THE *SPIRIT OF THE TIMES*,¹ 29 JANUARY 1880

MS: Unknown. Published: (New York) *Spirit of the Times*, 14 February 1880. p. 36c.²

LONDON, Jan. 29, 1880.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES:

DEAR SIR: In your weekly number, dated Jan. 17, you quote a paragraph from a newspaper called the *Detroit Free Press*, asserting that "The Devil's Spectacles" is a plagiarism from a work written by Mr. George William Curtis.³

The curious form of human stupidity which exhibits itself in charges of this sort, is so common and so contemptible that I only propose to reply by stating a plain fact, in justice to the proprietor of the Christmas Number of THE SPIRIT, who arranged with me for the publication of my story in the United States.

I not only never read Mr. Curtis' story of "Tidbottom's Spectacles," I never even heard of the work, until your journal reached me in due course of post this morning. Believe me, dear sir, faithfully yours,

WILKIE COLLINS.

1. WC's friend Edward Buck, who arranged for a copy of the popular New York weekly to be sent regularly to the author in London.

2. WC's published letter is both preceded and followed by extensive editorial comments, concluding, 'we are sure that the *Detroit Free Press* will give the full denial of Mr. Wilkie Collins as prominent a publicity as that which it bestowed upon the letter charging him with

plagiarism.’

3. Signed only ‘G.P.G.’, the original letter began: ‘Plagiarism is perhaps no more common now, proportionately, than it was centuries ago, but the discoveries of it are of more frequent occurrence now than heretofore. I have recently made what seem to me two rather interesting discoveries.’ (‘Literary Larcenies’, *Detroit Free Press*, 4 January 1880, p. 10). The first involved the French sage Michel de Montaigne back in the sixteenth century, while the second was WC’s story in the special Christmas issue of the *Spirit of the Times* for 1879. The paragraph cited in the *Spirit of the Times* (17 January 1880, p. 589a) read:

There is another most glaring and audacious case of literary priggish that came under my eye on glancing over the Christmas number of THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES, in which was printed, after much flourishing of advertising trumpets, a Christmas story by Wilkie Collins, entitled ‘The Devil’s Spectacles.’ In that story Mr. Collins disposes of two Arctic explorers who are lost from their shipmates in an effort to get a glimpse of the open Polar sea. One freezes to death and the other eats his remains. The Devil comes along and gives the survivor a pair of spectacles, on looking through which the wearer reads the most secret thoughts of those persons on whom they are focused. I had a vivid recollection that those identical spectacles were inherited by a certain ancient assistant book-keeper, and that the brilliant George William Curtis told their curious story in one of his charming ‘Prue and I’ sketches, entitled ‘Tidbottom’s Spectacles,’ many years ago. I wrote to Mr. Curtis regarding it. In reply he says: ‘My “Tidbottom’s Spectacles” was an old fancy of mine, obvious enough, yet I do not recall it elsewhere. I used it first in a fairy story, which I wrote thirty-five years ago for my younger brothers which is not published. I have not seen Wilkie Collins’ paper.’

Both here and in subsequent issues (14 February 1880, p. 36c, and 21 February 1880, p. 61b), the *Spirit of the Times* expressed outrage, demanding either evidence to back up the accusation or an apology from all responsible parties. *Prue and I*, by the distinguished American author George William Curtis (1824-92: *DAB*), had in fact been published by Dix, Edwards & Co. of Broadway, New York, back in 1856, including the whimsical tale ‘Titbottom’s Spectacles’ (*[sic]* pp. 99-138). In the end, the *Detroit Free Press* seems to have reprinted WC’s letter and withdrawn the accusation, though it exonerated Curtis of any responsibility and laid the entire blame on the anonymous correspondent, at the same time criticising the *Spirit of the Times* for its ‘ill-tempered’ approach to the issue (*Spirit of the Times*, 28 February 1880, p. 85b).

[3299]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ 18 AUGUST 1877

MS: Lewis Collection.²

6th October 1880

“Why are we to stop her, sir? What has she done?”

“Done! She has escaped from my Asylum. Don’t forget: a woman in white. Drive on.”

Wilkie Collins

1. Presumably a member of the London theatrical community.
2. In an album of theatrical signatures and notes dated 1878-1888.
3. The quote is from *The Woman in White*. It is the conclusion of the first part in *All The Year Round*, 26 November 1859, vol. II, p. 104.

[3300]* TO MRS CAMPBELL¹, 26 OCTOBER 1880

MS: Lewis Collection.

90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.²

26th Oct: 1880

My dear Mrs Campbell

Thank you most sincerely for the photograph of your charming little child. I may perhaps claim a sort of Godfatherly interest in her, after the compliment which you have so kindly paid to the other “Magdalen” in the book.³

The production of the play is deferred – for many reasons too numerous to mention – and I am still pledged to certain engagements made long since.⁴ All that I can now say is, that I will not forget your letter. In the mean time, I congratulate you on the success announced in the newspaper slips – and I hope for another opportunity of seeing you on the London stage.⁵ Latterly, I have not been able to see anything of the “modern drama”. The damp weather has found its way to the rheumatic side of me, and I cannot leave the house at night.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

-
1. An unidentified actress. Probably not the Mrs Campbell he wrote to sixteen years earlier in [0586] 1 July 1864.
 2. On green headed paper with logo ranged left and address ranged right.
 3. Presumably the child was a girl named Magdalen, after Magdalen Vanstone in *No Name* published in 1862.
 4. Perhaps Mrs Campbell was enquiring if WC intended to stage *No Name* (which he never did in England).
 5. We have found no mention of Mrs Campbell in a play in London in *The Times* or *The Era* around this time.

[3301] TO E.A. BUCK, 6 NOVEMBER 1880

MS: Unknown. Facsimile: (New York) *Spirit of the Times*, 27 November 1880, p. 425.¹

90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.²

London | 6th November 1880

Dear Mr Buck,

Here is the title of the new story: –

=
Who Killed Zebedee?³
=

yours ever | Wilkie Collins

To Mr E.A. Buck

1. The facsimile appears on the front cover under the heading ‘A New Christmas Story, By Wilkie Collins’. On the leader page appears the following explanation: ‘Wilkie Collins, with characteristic kindness, sends us the title of the story he is writing expressly for THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT in such a form that we are able to present it to our readers in fac-simile. “Who killed Zebedee?” will be the literary question of the holidays.’ (*Spirit of the Times*, 27 November 1880, p. 434b). A couple of weeks earlier, readers had been promised ‘a letter, which we shall publish next week, from the greatest living novelist, Wilkie Collins, in which he declares that, like Maud S. and St. Julien [famous race horses], he intends “to beat the record” with his new story’ (13 November 1880, p. 388b). Presumably the promise was made before the letter was received.
2. WC uses printed stationery with his monogram ranged left. He writes in portrait format to complete the address and date lines, then turns the paper round to landscape format to write the rest of the letter. The facsimile itself is printed in landscape format.
3. There is in fact quadruple underlining in the middle of each of the three words.

[3302] TO THE EDITOR OF THE *SPIRIT OF THE TIMES*, 15 NOVEMBER 1882

MS: Unknown. Facsimile: ‘Wilkie Collins’ System and Story’, (New York) *Spirit of the Times*, 9 December 1882, p. 525.¹

90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.²

London | 15th Nov 1882

9.A.M. – Dear Editor, Bed at night is a capital place to sleep in. Bed in the morning is a capital place to think in. The title has just come to me, and the story shall follow.

Fie! Fie! | or | The Fair Physician.

=

Yours ever | Wilkie Collins

1. After the facsimile comes this editorial comment:

The above facsimile of a note which we have just received from the greatest of living English novelists explains itself, so far as the title of the new story, written by Wilkie Collins especially for THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, is concerned. But it is also interesting and valuable as affording a clue to the system upon which the great novelist works. He is as punctual as a clock and as exact as a railway time-table. His stories are mapped out

months, and even years, ahead. So many pages a day of “copy” are produced; the novel will be finished in so many days – these are his precise calculations. Two months ago, talking with the Editor of THE SPIRIT in London, Wilkie Collins said: “I shall finish my present serial on the 15th of November, and will then begin my Christmas story for my favorite SPIRIT.” The date of the above note shows that, on the very day named in this conversation, Wilkie Collins commenced his annual contribution to our columns by selecting his title. “The Fair Physician” indicates the direction which the story will take and the character of its heroine. Wilkie Collins has observed the remarkable increase in numbers, usefulness, and popularity of the lady-doctors, and he has chosen one of them, this year, as the central figure of the latest creation of his genius, and thus, as usual, leads the way to a new field for romance. It is characteristic of Wilkie Collins that, while his style has not varied for years, his characters, plots, and incidents are always as novel as the day’s news, abreast with the progress of the age, and perfect reproductions of the most recent issues of the inexhaustible mint of Nature. Of all writers in the world, therefore, Wilkie Collins best embodies in fiction, and finds his most appropriate place in, THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

2. WC uses printed stationery with his monogram.

[3303]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ 24 AUGUST 1867 TO 24 FEBRUARY 1888

MS: Lewis Collection.

Wilkie Collins
90 Gloucester Place | Portman Square | London

1. On a small square of yellowed paper glued to an album sheet presumably for a collector. Dated from WC’s time at Gloucester Place, probably from the earlier part.

[3304]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ UNKNOWN DATE

MS: Lewis Collection.

accept my best thanks, and believe me,
vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. Apparently cut from the end of a letter.

[3305]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ UNKNOWN DATE

MS: Lewis Collection.

of being ...you in the exercise of your art. Let me...
always truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. On two sides of a fragment cut from the end of a letter

[3306]* TO CARRIE BARTLEY¹, UNKNOWN DATE

MS: Lewis Collection.

To H.E. Bartley² | from | Wilkie Collins

1. On a small piece of white paper pasted to a black card.
2. Harriet Elizabeth, the daughter of Caroline Graves, married William Powell Bartley 12 March 1878. WC was a witness.

[3307]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ UNKNOWN DATE

MS: Lewis Collection.

...months past. But, even in the face of illness, I am an obstinate man – and I don't yet give up the hope of improving an acquaintance which I remember with sincere pleasure.

Believe me | Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. The final leaf torn from a three-page letter.

[3308]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ UNKNOWN DATE

MS: Lewis Collection.

Very truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. Possibly the end of a letter, though it is very neat and could be simply a signature for an autograph hunter.

[3309]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ UNKNOWN DATE

MS: Lewis Collection.

With Mr Wilkie Collins's Compliments

1. On a small piece of white paper. Distinct from [3310].

[3310]* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,¹ UNKNOWN DATE

MS: Unknown. eBay 4 April 2015 #261827255053.

With Mr Wilkie Collins's Compliments

1. On a small piece of yellow paper. Distinct from [3309].

(B) Corrigenda

[0017] TO HARRIET COLLINS, SUMMER [1841/1843]

I p. 8: This letter should be redated to [SUMMER 1848] for the following reasons

- *the salutation is Dear Mother rather than Dear Mama which pointed to an earlier date;*
- *it mentions the married Charles Ward which places it from early 1845 onwards;*
- *it does not mention WmC at all, which, while he was alive, is unusual in the letters written to HC;*
- *it mentions the enclosure of some Prospectuses which must surely have been for the Memoirs.*

[0211] TO MRS SPIERS,¹ 7 JUNE 1855

I, p. 124. And A&C5, p. 19.

New footnote identifying her.

1. Wife of the former Mayor of Oxford, Richard James Spiers. See [3273] to him, 21 July 1854. Victorian etiquette suggests that a reply to a domestic invitation would be directed to the woman of the house – see [0457] to Mrs Jacure, 13 February 1862, or [0603] to Henrietta

[3083] TO ANNABEL MILNES¹, 17 MAY 1862

The MS has been located and the whole text should be replaced.

MS: Trinity College Library, Crewe Bequest (pasted into first edition of *No Name* 1863).
Published (all with some errors): Thomas Wemyss Reid, *The Life, Letters, and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes, first Lord Houghton* (2 vols, London: Cassell, 1890), II, pp. 79-80;² W. Teignmouth Shore, *Charles Dickens and his Friends* (London: Cassell, 1909), pp. 209-10; A&C4, p. 6.

12. Harley Street, W.

May 17th 1862

Dear Mrs Milnes,

I have always had a pagan 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 hope 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 door-step 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

-
1. Wife of Richard Monckton Milnes (married 1851). At this time he was a Member of Parliament before being made Lord Houghton in 1863. She died in 1874.
 2. Sir Thomas Wemyss Reid (1842-1905: *ODNB*) was a distinguished parliamentary journalist. The biography mentions several occasions when Collins was a guest at the Milnes's house. See also [0591] to Richard Monckton Milnes, 6 August 1864.

[1457] TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 5 JUNE 1874

III, p. 36: The MS has now been identified and copied so the whole text should now read:.

MS: Unknown. On sale: antiquariat.de 31 March 2016 with a photograph by Sarony.
Published: BGLL, III, p. 36 (summary only)

90, Gloucester Place | W.
5th June 1874

My dear sir,

Many thanks for your kind invitation.

I have two engagements for the 16th, already – and, under these circumstances, I fear I have no alternative but to ask you to accept my apologies, and the expression of my regret.¹

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

1. No other engagements at this time are mentioned in his letters.

[2609] TO J. MARQUAND SAUNDERS,¹ 7 SEPTEMBER 1886

IV, p. 190: The MS has now been located so that, with the recipient corrected, the source changed, the text completed, and the notes amended, the whole text should now read:.

[2609] To J. MAYNARD SAUNDERS,¹ 7 SEPTEMBER 1886

MS: Lewis Collection, with envelope.² Published: BGLL, IV, p. 190 (partial text and as to ‘J. Marquand Saunders’).

90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.³

7th September 1886

Dear sir,

When I take up my pen, after breakfast, I take up my cigar with it. When I return to my pen, after lunch, I return to my cigar. When I do my best, in the evening, to digest my dinner (N. B. I am sixty two years old) my cigar helps me. I have only to add that I feel the most unfeigned pity for those unfortunate persons who do not smoke.

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

J. Maynard Saunders, Eqr.

1. The only candidate in the records is John Maynard Saunders (8 August 1863-1949), listed in the parish register as born in Marylebone (father John Saunders, mother Georgiana Wiggington), and in censuses as a ‘journalist’ in 1891 and 1901, and a ‘Journalist foreign editor’ in 1911.

2. Directed to ‘J. Maynard Saunders, Esqr. | 48. Francis Road | Edgbaston’, initialled W.C in bottom left corner, and postmarked recto and verso ‘London’ and ‘Birmingham | 8 September 1886’.

3. Ranged right with monogram on left, watermarked ‘Hieratica | J. S & Co.’

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21 HUSON CLOSE, LONDON NW3 3JW
4 ERNEST GARDENS, LONDON W4 3QU