

# The Collected Letters of Wilkie Collins: Addenda and Corrigenda (12)

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**Wilkie Collins Society**  
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## Introduction

This pamphlet is the twelfth 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*.

During 2019 the editors intend to publish the entire sequence of the known letters online. As part of that process each letter has been 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 as X012 in A&C7 and another in this update. 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  | Last Things                     | 387-393                | [X001]-[X011]                                   |
| <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]                                   |
| ‘Addenda’ (5) 2009     | Chronological                   | 3-18                   | [3117]-[3146]                                   |
| ‘Addenda’ (6) 2010     | Chronological                   | 3-16                   | [3147]-[3171]                                   |
| ‘Addenda’ (7) 2011     | Chronological<br>in 2 sequences | 5-36<br>37-45          | [3172]-[3199],<br>[X012]                        |
| ‘Addenda’ (8) 2013     | Chronological                   | 3-22                   | [3200]-[3232]                                   |
| ‘Addenda’ (9) 2014     | MacKaye<br>Anderson<br>Others   | 3-16<br>17-28<br>29-33 | [3233]-[3248]<br>[3255]-[3270]<br>[3249]-[3271] |

|                     |                   |       |                |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| 'Addenda' (10) 2016 | Chronological     | 3-21  | [3272]-[3310]  |
| 'Addenda' (11) 2017 | Chronological     | 3-15  | [3311]-[3339]  |
|                     | Extracted letters | 16-18 | [3325]-[3330]  |
| 'Addenda' (12) 2018 | Chronological     | 3-10  | [3340]-[3350], |
|                     | Last Things       |       | [X013]         |

Any subsequent deletions or revisions to dating do not change the assigned number. Hence the four letters identified in *The Public Face* which were deleted by A&C3, pp. 68-6, numbered [0229], [2975], [2977], [2979], the letter [3097] deleted by A&C8, p. 25, [3294] deleted in this publication (p. 20), and three further letters [0100], [2184], [3198], deleted as part of the digital project, remain as blanks in the series.

Apart from deletions some letters have been divided into two or more separate items. They were listed in A&C11 pp. 16-18.

This twelfth *Addenda & Corrigenda* has been updated to December 2018 and includes 12 new letters. They have come on the market with dealers and at auction or have been identified in libraries or collections.

The 11 new letters by WC take the numbers [3340] to [3350] in chronological order. Deducting the nine deleted letters, there are thus 3341 letters in the sequence to date. With the addition of the new 'Last Things' letter [X013], a total of 365 newly identified letters have now been published in the *Addenda* series since the original four volume publication.

Letters marked \* have not been published before. (Publication in auction house and dealer catalogues is overlooked). The editors are grateful to owners who have provided access to letters and/or given permission for their inclusion.

The *Corrigenda* section pp. 11-17 includes two major revisions and one minor after original manuscripts were obtained.

Numerous minor corrections and changes are being silently incorporated into the digital edition.

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

## (A) Addenda

### [3340]\* TO THE BURSAR OF WORCESTER COLLEGE, 14 OCTOBER 1843

MS: Worcester (WOR/BUR1/22/2/33).

446, Strand<sup>1</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> Oct: 1843

**RECEIVED of** The Bursar of Worcester College  
**The sum of Nine Pounds - - | as p<sup>r</sup> Bill delivered –**

**FOR Edm<sup>d</sup> Antrobus<sup>2</sup>**  
W. Wilkie Collins

£9.--<sup>3</sup>

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1. On the printed receipt of Edmund Antrobus. With this document in the Worcester archives are the two bills which this receipt acknowledges payment for. They are dated 25 February and 26 May 1843 and both are for 15 lbs of Suchong Tea at 6/= a pound which is £4-10s-0d, hence the final total here of £9. They are on the headed notepaper of ‘Edmund Antrobus | TeaMan to Her Majesty | and to | Queen Adelaide | No. 446 Strand West’. These bills could also be in the hand of WC but are not signed. Two other bills to Worcester College of 1841 and 1842 are also in the archive. They do not seem to be in WC’s hand.

2. Edmund Edward Antrobus (1806–86) was a prominent tea-merchant, whose children had been painted by WmC. As a friend of the family he gave Wilkie his first job at his office, close to Coutts & Co. at the western end of the Strand. There is more on his business at [www.antrobuspages.co.uk](http://www.antrobuspages.co.uk) where similar documents in other hands can be seen. WC worked as a clerk for the tea merchant from 1841 to 1845 but little evidence of his work there has hitherto emerged in his letters. This receipt and the documents associated with it show that WC did at least attend to some of his duties as a clerk. See also [3147] to [Charles Ward] of [1841–1845] and [0022] and [0026] to Harriet Collins of 4, 5 September and of 13 September 1844.

3. The total is written in a box beneath an engraved drawing of the shop.

### [3341] TO EDWARD LEAR, 9 JUNE 1855

MS: Unknown. Extract: Cited in letter held at Lincolnshire (TRC/LETTERS/5415), our copy text.<sup>1</sup>

... do come & see the last (for us) of John Millais ...<sup>2</sup>

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1. These words are contained in a letter of the same date from Edward Lear to Alfred Tennyson. The paragraph reads:

Collins has just now written to say I will dine there at 6 to meet Millais, who sets out tomorrow for Perth. He says “do come & see the last (for us) of John Millais”. So I throw over a lesserer engagement and shall go. I feel woundily like a spectator – all through my life – at what goes on amongst those I know – very little an actor.

2. Millais was leaving for Perthshire to marry Euphemia Gray – see [0215] to Pigott of 2 July 1855 which invites friends to an eve-of-wedding party.

### **[3342]\* To JAMES BIRTLES, [EARLY TO MID–DECEMBER 1867]**

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

Mr James Birtles  
Beaufort House  
Strand

Wilkie Collins<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. Envelope front only on blue paper probably enclosing revises. See [0791] to Birtles 10 December 1867 and [3123] and [0792] to Birtles of 5 and [12] December 1867.
  2. The signature is at the bottom left of the page, partly enclosed in a curved line.

### **[3343]\* To COUTTS & Co.,<sup>1</sup> 9 JULY 1873<sup>2</sup>**

MS: Lewis Collection.

*[recto]*

Exch<sup>e</sup> for £88 stg. NEW-YO[RK]<sup>3</sup>  
Sixty days after sight after this FIRS[T]  
unpaid) Pay to the Order of Harper  
Eighty eight pounds sterling  
Value received, and charge the same to accou[nt]  
To | Messrs *[illegible]*  
48 *[illegible]* London  
P36921  
Accepted 7 May 1873  
At Mess<sup>rs</sup> Martin & C<sup>o4</sup>

[illegible]

[verso]

Pay to the order of  
Wilkie Collins  
Harper & Brothers  
Wilkie Collins<sup>5</sup>

[illegible]

- 
1. A payable order from Harper & Brothers in New York, in the sum of £88 at sixty days notice, credited to WC's account 9 July 1873.
  2. The date is the date of crediting to WC's account and the last possible date he could have signed it. It is likely he signed it shortly after receipt.
  3. The order is torn in half here. Orders sent by transatlantic post could be torn in half and posted in two separate envelopes.
  4. These two lines are stamped vertically in red ink.
  5. The signature only is in WC's hand. The rest is a mixture of other hands and stamped and printed text.

### **[3344]\* TO JAMES REDPATH, 2 FEBRUARY 1874**

MS: Unknown. On sale AbeBooks, February 2018 by Mark Stolle, Manchester, by the Book, MA. Inscription on the title page of *The Dead Secret*, Harper & Brothers, 1874.

Boston. February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1874

To James Redpath<sup>1</sup> from  
Wilkie Collins<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. WC's agent for most of his tour of America. See [3322] to Redpath, 13 April 1873.
  2. The dateline is written below the signature and below the words on the title page 'A Novel'. Beneath further lines in another hand 'and now the property of' with a heavily crossed out name and another more lightly crossed through but both illegible.

### **[3345]\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT, 8 FEBRUARY 1875**

MS: Lewis Collection.

I have mislaid the Editor's letter. Will this do?<sup>1</sup>  
Wilkie Collins | Feby 8<sup>th</sup> 1875

- 
1. Placing the date at the bottom of the cut sheet indicates this is written for an autograph

collector who perhaps had also asked for another signature.

**[3346] \* TO THE PRINTER OF *THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES*, 23  
NOVEMBER 1878**

MS: Private.<sup>1</sup>

Novr 23/78

Note to Printer

Follow the copy exactly, in punctuation, and for new paragraphs.

WC

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1. A note in pencil on the first page of the manuscript of 'The Mystery of Marmaduke' for the 1878 Christmas number of *The Spirit of the Times* in New York dated 28 December 1878. The story was also published in London in *Temple Bar*, January 1879. WC's note perhaps indicates that there will be no time for him to receive and correct proofs before publication.

**[3347]\* M. D. MACLEOD,<sup>1</sup> 23 MARCH 1882**

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

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.<sup>3</sup>**

London | 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1882

My dear sir,

Your welcome letter has, I can sincerely assure you, pleased and interested me in no ordinary degree. If I am late in saying this, and if my reply is shorter than I could wish it to be, you will, I know, make allowances for me when I tell you that I am hard at work – and that [*del*] my health, sorely tried, by repeated attacks of gout in the eyes, makes it no easy task for me to keep up with the demands of a large correspondence, in my intervals of leisure.

My list of the books that I consulted in writing "Poor Miss Finch" is unfortunately destroyed. My most useful information came, I remember, from conversations with a blind man whom I mercilessly [*del*] examined and cross-examined, and from my doctor. The first has left England, I believe – and the last is himself, I am sorry to say, seriously ill.<sup>4</sup> Many passages in the book – among others the passage which your sympathetic and intelligent criticism has specially remarked – came from my own instinctive sense of what the character portrayed would think and feel. To me, my characters are



living beings, and my mind becomes (in some way quite incomprehensible to me) their mind, in the process of creating them. I make no apology for speaking of myself in this way to you. Such experience as your's [*sic*] of the inner mental mysteries may even be interested in the mental process which produces works of fiction. When I am walking up and down my study, completely [*del*] absorbed in the joys and sorrows of a non-existent person, I am inclined (when the "fit" is over) to ask myself if the line may not be a fine one which divides this sort of excitement from the approaches perhaps of certain forms of insanity? Or, to put it more correctly, from the metaphysical point of view – if the imaginative faculty which works in this way, be not counterbalanced /and controlled/ [*del*] by an equally developed faculty of judgment or reason, or whatever the opposite of imagination may be.

To return to "sound sense", I have to thank you for the pamphlet you have sent to me.<sup>5</sup> I wait to read it for one of my days of rest, when I hope to do it justice. In the meantime, believe me

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins

When "Poor Miss Finch" was first published, a newspaper paragraph was sent to me anonymously, describing a successful operation on a man who had been blind [*del*] for years.<sup>6</sup> In his blind state, he was a harmless person. Restored to sight, he ended in committing some of the lighter crimes and became an irreclaimably bad character. I had no means of [*del*] ascertaining the truth of this.<sup>7</sup>

To MD. Macleod Esqre | &c &c &c<sup>8</sup>

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1. Murdoch Donald Macleod (1851–1908), who qualified as a doctor from Edinburgh University in 1873. Later that year he took up a post as Assistant Medical Superintendent at the Cumberland and Westmoreland Asylum at Garlands, near Carlisle. In 1882 he was appointed to the post of Medical Superintendent at the East Riding of Yorkshire Asylum at Beverley taking over an asylum with more than 250 patients and around 40 staff. He remained in charge until his own illness, which began in 1904, led to his retirement in 1906. He died in Beverley in 1908, aged 56. Macleod was a keen golfer and active in the British Medical Association and the Medico-Psychological Society. He wrote occasional articles for the *Journal of Mental Science*.

2. The letter was sold by Forum Auctions, 29 November 2018, lot 25, with a number of other items from the collection of James Stevens Cox F.S.A. (1910-1997). It was accompanied by the page from the catalogue of the auction on 10 February 1948, where Cox purchased it for £2 along with five other items.

3. WC uses engraved headed paper of a green-blue colour with the monogram ranged left which he employed from autumn 1880 to summer 1882. The letter has at some point before its purchase in 1948 been torn across the horizontal centre fold with no loss of text.

4. Possibly Frank Beard, though there is no evidence that he was ill at this time.
5. The pamphlet has not been identified but in April 1877 Macleod wrote a short article in the 'Clinical Notes and Cases' section of the *Journal of Mental Science*: 'Cases of insanity in which Impairment or Loss of one or more of the Special Senses seemed the exciting Cause of the Disease' (Vol. XXIII, April 1877, pp. 95-97). It gave examples of people who had become blind and then exhibited signs of mental illness. A cutting or offprint of this piece could have been the item Murdoch had enclosed.
6. The newspaper clipping has not been identified.
7. The postscript is squeezed under the valediction and the last sentence is written vertically up the right hand side of the page.
8. The name is written at the top of the first page above WC's monogram.

**[3348]\* WATSON BROTHERS,<sup>1</sup> 9 NOVEMBER 1882**

MS: Lewis Collection.

**90, GLOUCESTER PLACE, | PORTMAN SQUARE. W.<sup>2</sup>**

9<sup>th</sup> Nov 1882

Gentlemen,

I have repeatedly expressed my surprise at the delay which has occurred in the rendering of your account – and the first and only communication on the subject which I have received is your letter of today's date. After inquiry here, I cannot discover that any one in my house is responsible for this state of things. In defence of my own time, I am obliged to close my door on strangers who call without a previous appointment. But why your letters should be the only letters addressed to me which I have not received is a mystery which I should be glad to have cleared up. If your "Commercial Diary" or your "Letter-book" contains entries relating to the writing and posting of letters and accounts, previously addressed to me, I shall /be/ obliged if you will favour me with copies of the same.

In the meantime I enclose my cheque, with the account – which please return receipted.<sup>3</sup>

Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins  
Messrs Watson Brothers<sup>4</sup>

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1. Probably 'Watson Bros, mine agents and sharedealers' of 1 St Michael's Alley (Kelly, 1880). However, no specific buying or selling of shares is recorded in WC's bank account around this time (Coutts: WC). There were two other firms of the same name in London: a bookseller and stationers at 31 Minories, and builders at 5-6 Charlotte Street. The sum paid (of £90-18s, see below) seems high for either of them.

2. WC uses printed stationery with his monogram.

3. The cheque for £90-18s was debited to WC's account on 11 November. WC had in fact

made two previous payments under the same name: £34-11s on 24 November 1879 and £7-10s-6d on 6 August 1881 (Coutts: WC).

4. In another hand 'Cheque on drawer' is written above the WC monogram and 'Wilkie Collins | Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 82' on the otherwise blank fourth page. A number in pencil '84246' above the printed address is clearly modern.

### **[3349]\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 7 MARCH 1884**

MS: Lewis Collection.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins | 7<sup>th</sup> March 1884

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1. Autograph for a collector. Stuck to another card on which has been written in another hand: 'Wilkie Collins d.1889 | Author of "The woman in white" &c'.

### **[3350]\* TO UNIDENTIFIED RECIPIENT,<sup>1</sup> 19 MAY 1885**

MS: Lewis Collection.

Vy truly yours | Wilkie Collins | London | 19<sup>th</sup> May 1885

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1. An autograph for a collector.

### **[X013]\* CARRIE BARTLEY TO HALL CAINE, 1 JULY 1889**

MS: Berg (Z-10342).<sup>1</sup>

Private

**82, WIMPOLE STREET. | W.**

July 1st 1889

Dear sir

I grieve to tell you that dear Mr Wilkie Collins is suffering from severe illness. Yesterday – about 10. o'clock a.m. he had a bad attack of pain in the heart, and paralysis of the left side. Mr Beard remained with him all night – and his condition is very sad – but we hope he is not in pain. He is conscious at intervals – but the oppression on his chest seems suffocating.

I take upon myself, with the doctor's permission, as dear Wilkie's adopted daughter and amanuensis to open his letters. I thought it best not to telegraph under the circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

I am, | Yours faithfully | H. E. Bartley | (Mrs H.B)

- 
1. With an envelope marked 'Immediate' directed to 'W. Hall Caine Esq<sup>re</sup> | The London Library | S. James's Square | S.W.' postmarked 1 July 89 and with the signature of WC surrounded by two lines squaring off a box at the bottom left of the envelope.
  2. Presumably to prevent news of his illness from leaking out via the telegraph office.

## (B) Corrigenda

### [3201] TO HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN,<sup>1</sup> 1 JULY 1858

*A&C8, pp. 3-4, The MS has now been located and the letter consequently redated with minor amendments to the text, source, and notes. The entire entry should be replaced with*

### [3201] TO HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN,<sup>1</sup> 1 FEBRUARY 1858

MS: Copenhagen (NKS 1299 2°, g I, s. 54 nr. 2).<sup>2</sup> Published: Bredsdorff, p. 124, dated July 1<sup>st</sup> 1858; H. C. Andersen album I-V, Lademann, 1980, pp. 182–183; A&C8, pp. 3–4, both also misdated 1 July.

11 Harley Place | Marylebone Road | London  
Feb'y 1st 1858

My dear Andersen,

Thank you for your friendly greeting. I return it most cordially, and my mother joins me.

I have had a sad accident to my ankle – a severe sprain which has quite crippled me, and which still keeps me an invalid in the doctor's hands.<sup>3</sup> In consequence of this misfortune, I shall miss the pleasure of making Mr Grimur Thomsen's acquaintance.<sup>4</sup> I have written to him to apologise for myself and to tell him how unfit I am now, even for the pleasantest society.

Although I am gratefully sensible of your kind intentions towards The Frozen Deep, it is, at present, not in my power to accept your offer, as the play is not yet published, and there is but one copy of it in manuscript. I have not published it, because I am afraid it might get on the public stage, and do me harm with the public by being badly acted there. In the present deplorable state of our stage, there is neither actor or [*sic*] actress for the two principal parts in The Frozen Deep.

This is the frank explanation of how I am situated. I know you will accept it in a kind and friendly spirit.

Cordially yours | Wilkie Collins

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1. Hans Christian Andersen (1804–1875), the Danish writer. He stayed with Dickens at Gad's Hill in June 1857 where WC met him. WC later parodied his visit in 'The Bachelor Bedroom,' *All The Year Round* (6 August 1859), I, pp. 355–360.

2. With an envelope directed To/ Herr Hans Christian Andersen | Copenhagen. At the bottom left of the envelope WC writes inside a curved line 'Forwarded by | Herr Grimur Thomsen'. Beneath Copenhagen another hand has added 'Nyhavn | Hotel Christiania'. A green oval

postmark reads F: P: with the numbers 12, 22, 3, 58 between the bold large capital letters. FP signifies FootPost and the numbers represent the time and date of the stamp ie 1200 on 23 March 1858. This letter must have been enclosed with WC's untraced apology to Thomsen who then posted it to Andersen in Denmark when he returned.

3. WC was apparently still suffering from the ankle sprain incurred while visiting Cumberland in September 1857. He mentioned it nearly two months later in [0275] to Watkins, 20 March 1858. At this time WC consistently spelt the word as 'anle'.

4. Grímur Thomsen (1820–1896) was an Icelandic poet and editor. WC was replying to the following letter from Andersen:

My Dear Collins

The bearer is one of our most important young critics, a man with both heart and soul, Mr Grimur Thomsen, working in the Ministry in Copenhagen. He brings you my warmest greetings, which I beg you will convey also to your mother, if she should still remember me. It was my wish to render *The Frozen Deep* in Danish, and you were kind enough to promise to send me the same. I would like to put it on the stage. Now that is presumably in print, let me have it very soon, please, either by my friend G.T. or by Bentley. Thank you for all your kindness towards me, and remember me, please, to Albert Schmidt and Mark Lemon.

Cordially yours | Hans Christian Andersen

(translation in Bredsdorff, p. 124. The original and an alternative translation is at <http://andersen.sdu.dk/brevbase/brev.html?bid=8957> wrongly dated June 1858)

Andersen met Harriet Collins on 4 July 1857 after the performance of *The Frozen Deep* at the Gallery of Illustration (see Bredsdorff, p. 80).

4. A photograph of the letter was exhibited among several others to and from Andersen as item 283 at 'Hans Christian Andersen, Jubilee Exhibition' at the National Book League in London organised by Bredsdorff on 2 April 1955 to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Andersen's birth (see the Catalogue of the Exhibition).

## **[0978] TO GEORGE M. TOWLE, 21 MAY 1870**

*II pp. 185-186: The Memoir has now been located and the entire entry should be replaced.*

## **[0978] TO GEORGE M. TOWLE, 21 MAY 1870**

MS: Parrish (Box 4/12), letter only; memoir at Yale (Gimbel-Dickens H1239). Published: BGLL, II, p. 186, amended A&C2, p. 69, both without the full memoir though the latter reconstructed parts of it; memoir transcribed (with errors) in Emily Bell, *Changing Representations of Charles Dickens, 1857–1939*, PhD thesis, University of York, August 2017, Appendix.

**90, Gloucester Place, | Portman Square. W. | London Saturday May 21<sup>st</sup>**

1870

Dear Sir,

Your request has unluckily reached me at a time when I am absorbed in finishing “Man and Wife” – and in also writing a dramatic version of the story – both “against Time”. I had not forgotten your note. I had no time to answer it.

To day, I have dictated a Memoir for you, at the breakfast table – which I enclose, and which I hope you will find useful.<sup>1</sup>

(In great haste) | Faithfully yours | Wilkie Collins

To George Makepeace Towle Esq

(Page 1)

Wilkie Collins<sup>2</sup>

I was born on the 8<sup>th</sup> /January,/ 1824, at No 11, New Cavendish Street, Portland Place, London. I am the eldest of two sons (and two only children) of the late William Collins (Royal Academician), the celebrated painter of the coast scenery and cottage life of England.

For the first twelve years of my life, I was taught in the usual way at a well reputed private school. I learnt as little as possible; and that little (consisting mainly of the rudiments of Latin and Greek) has not been of the slightest use to me in my after-life.

In the year 1837, my father decided to go to Italy to find fresh subjects for his brush among the people and the scenery of that country. My mother was to accompany him, and the question was, whether his two boys were to go too.

With two exceptions, all my fathers’ friends declared that it would be madness on his part to interrupt the education of two boys, one 13 years old and one 9, by taking them to a foreign country and exposing them to foreign influences, at a time when they ought to be subjected to the wholesome discipline and restraint of an English school. The two exceptions already mentioned happened, however, to be two very remarkable people, capable of seeing possibilities of education in other systems than the ~~conventional~~ system / [del] conventionally recognized / [del] about them. They were, my Godfather,/ Sir David Wilkie, (the great Scotch painter[]); and the famous Mrs Somerville, /the/ authoress of Physical Geography.<sup>3</sup> These two reminded my father that what his boys might lose in Latin and Greek, they might gain in knowledge of modern languages, and in acquiring

habits of observation among people and scenes entirely [del] new to them. [del] Wilkie was my father's dearest friend; and, for Mrs Somerville's powers, he felt the highest respect. He took us to Italy with him. We remained ~~there~~ abroad for two years; and there, and in that way, I picked up the only education which I /can/ sincerely ~~believe~~ say has been of some real use to me.

Returning from Italy, I went back to school /(a private school),/ and the classics. In due time, it became a question next of Oxford and the classics, or of Cambridge and the Mathematics. My good father left me free to ~~choose~~ /choose/ my own profession; only telling me that, if I liked it too, he would like to see me in the Church. I hardly know which prospect I most disliked – going to a University or going into the Church. To escape both, I declared for Commerce, and at seventeen or eighteen years old, I was placed in a merchant's office.

(2)

Here I remained – I think for four years. [del] I should probably not have remained four days, if I had not had a pursuit of my own to follow which really engaged my interest. In plain English, I was already an author in secret. There is hardly any form of ~~literary absurdity~~ /of audacious literary enterprise proper to my age/, which I did not perpetrate in secret, while I was supposed to be in a fair way of becoming one of the solid commercial props of my native country. Towards the end of the four years, I had ~~become~~ /grown/ wise enough to descend from epic poems and tragedies in blank verse, to unassuming little articles and stories, /some of/ which found their way modestly into the small periodicals of the time. Thus self-betrayed as unfit for /mercantile pursuits,/ ~~commerce~~, I abandoned commerce, and tried reading for the Bar. My reading lasted, as well as I can remember, six weeks – and then I began a novel by way of importing a little variety into my legal /studies/ ~~pursuits~~. I continued/,/ however, to be a member of the Inn of Court (Lincoln's Inn) [del] at which I had been entered as a student; and (no examination being obligatory, in my time) [del] I was five years afterwards called to the [del] Bar. I am now a Barrister of some fifteen years standing, without having ever put on a wig and gown.

To return for a moment to the novel mentioned above, and to the time when I was a student at Lincoln's Inn. I have to report that this work of fiction was actually offered for sale among the London publishers. They all declined it; and, they were quite right. The ~~subject~~ scene was laid in the Island



of Tahiti, before the period of its discovery by European navigators (!). My youthful imagination ran riot among the noble savages, in scenes which caused the respectable British publisher to declare that it was impossible [to put] his name on the title page of such a novel as this. For the momen[t, I was] a little discouraged. [del] /I got over it, and/ began another novel. This time the scene was Rome; the period the fifth century; and the central historical event, the siege of the Eternal City by the Goths. All day, I read ~~at~~ my authorities at the British Museum. In the eveni[ngs] I wrote my book in the quiet and seclusion of my father's painting room. The first volume and part of the second had been completed, when my employment was suspended by my father's death. I put the novel aside, and addressed myself to the writing of another story, which lay far nearer to my heart – the story of my father's life. In the "Memoirs of William Collins, R.A." I saw my name on the title-page of a printed and published book, for the first time.

(3)

After the publication of the biography (in the year 1848) I returned to my romance. The third volume was finished in Paris; and after a preliminary refusal of the manuscript by the late Mr Colburn, the book was published in 1850 by Mr Bentley, under the title of [del] /"Antonina,/ or The Fall of Rome." I instantly stepped into a certain place as a novelist. Such a chorus of praise was sung over me by the critics, as has never been sung over me since. The favourable verdict of the reviews (whether merited or not) was endorsed in time by the readers, many of my literary elders and betters kindly adding their special tribute of [del] encouragement and approval. In short "Antonina" opened to me the career as a novelist which I have continued to follow [del] to the present time.

The rest of the story of my life is simply the story of the books /which/ I have written. Here is a list of them in chronological order.

1. The life of William Collins, R. A. (1848.)
2. Antonina or The Fall of Rome. (1850).
3. Basil. (1852).
4. Rambles beyond Railways. [del] (1852.)\*<sup>4</sup>  
\*(The narrative of a walking tour in Cornwall.)
5. Hide and Seek. (1854).
6. After Dark. (1856.)\*  
\*(collection of short stories.)

7. The Dead Secret. (~~1867~~) (1857)
8. The Queen of Hearts. (1858.)\*  
\*(collection of short stories.)
9. /The/ Woman in White. (1860.)
10. No Name. (1862.)
11. My Miscellanies (1863)\*  
\*(collected sketches and essays.)
12. Armadale (1866)
13. The Moonstone. (1868)
14. Man and Wife (1870.)

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Dramatic Works.

1. The Lighthouse. } Both acted in private at the house of Charles Dickens
2. The Frozen Deep. } And in public at the Olympic Theatre, London
3. The Red Vial. At the Olympic Theatre.
4. No Thoroughfare. (Dramatic version of the Christmas Story.  
written in collaboration with Dickens and  
Fechter. (Adelphi Theatre. London.)
5. Black and White. In collaboration with Fechter. Adelphi The[atre].

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1. Towle's article on WC in (New York) *Appleton's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art*, 4:75 (3 September 1870), pp. 278–281, was based on this memoir. Towle had met WC on 30 June 1868 – see [0840] to him of 26 June 1868.
  2. The memoir is held in the Gimbel Collection at Yale University; see John B. Podeschi, *Dickens and Dickensiana: A Catalogue of the Richard Gimbel Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Library, 1980), p. 478. Both the body of the text and the amendments appear to be in the hand of Caroline Graves; presumably his amanuensis also read the memoir back to WC at the breakfast table so that additions and corrections could be made. See Emily Bell, 'A Lost Autobiographical Sketch', *Wilkie Collins Journal*, 14 (2017), online only [www.wilkiecollinsociety.org](http://www.wilkiecollinsociety.org).
  3. Mary Somerville's *Physical Geography* went through numerous editions both in the UK and the USA. She is not mentioned in *Memoirs*.
  4. The asterisks used here and below represent the dotted saltires which WC inserts (rather redundantly) to indicate the relation with the next line.
  5. To the right of the list of novels, aligned with 'The Queen of Hearts' and 'No Name', appears a long multiplication sum (44 x 14 = 616) in another, unknown hand. Its purpose remains obscure.

**[3220] TO R. C. CARTON, LATE 1875–EARLY 1876**

MS: Unknown. Referred to in Wilbur Dwight Dunkel, *Sir Arthur Pinero* (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., [1941]), p. 16.

*A&C8, p. 16. The recipient has been changed. Detailed notes explaining the change will appear in the digital edition.*

**[3220] TO HENRY HERMAN,<sup>1</sup> LATE 1875–EARLY 1876**

MS: Unknown. Cited: Dunkel, p. 16.<sup>2</sup> Summary: A&C8, p. 16 (as to R. C. Carton).

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

*A&C4, p. 29: An image of the extant MS has now been obtained and the whole entry should be replaced.*

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

MS: Graham Heath.<sup>2</sup> Extract: A&C4, p. 29.

... wisest plan that could have been adopted under the circumstances. If the little assistance I ...<sup>3</sup>

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 Whitton, p. 15, and [0696] to Harriet Collins, 8 July 1866.

2. A scrap torn from a letter for the signature. Beneath the four lines in another hand is written ‘B. 1825 author’ and separately ‘Entered (Williams)’.

3. The assistance remains unknown but it is probably related to [3075] to Henry Gray of unknown date. Both may date from the one known meeting of WC and Gray referred to in [0696] to Harriet Collins, 8 July 1866.

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