



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

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‘VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCES - PART THREE REDISCOVERED’

Some exciting news from Graham Law reveals a previously unknown short story by Wilkie Collins

‘In November 1884 the publishers of a popular weekly family paper, *The Youth’s Companion* of Boston, Massachusetts, approached Wilkie Collins to write two or three short sketches for the paper, illustrating miscarriages of justice due to the misuse of circumstantial evidence. By a curious coincidence, the Boston firm went by the name of Perry Mason and Company. Up to now Collins scholars have understood that only two stories, ‘A Sad Death and Brave Life’ and ‘Farmer Fairweather’, were ever written and published. But work by Graham Law on the correspondence between Collins and the literary agent A. P. Watt has revealed that, in early June 1886, Collins in fact wrote a third story in the series. This eventually appeared in the Boston paper in the spring of 1887 under the title ‘The Hidden Cash’. After a century and a quarter, that story will be reprinted for the first time as a supplement to the Summer Newsletter of the Wilkie Collins Society, together with an essay by Graham Law discussing how ‘The Hidden Cash’ was lost and found, and the light it sheds on the mysterious business of late Victorian publishing.’

The first two pieces were republished by the WCS in November 1992 but are now out of print. They can, however, still be found in *Wilkie Collins: The Complete Shorter Fiction*, edited by Julian Thompson and published by Robinson Publishing in 1995.

This is a useful place to make two corrections to the entry in Andrew Gasson's *Wilkie Collins: An Illustrated Guide*. The second sketch, 'Farmer Fairweather' in fact appeared in *The Youth's Companion* on 16 December 1886 (not 19 August), and in *The Boy's Own Paper* on 26 February 1887 (not 26 September).

UNEQUAL PARTNERS

Recently published by Cornell University Press is Lillian Nayder's *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship* (ISBN 080 I 439256, cloth, £23.50).

Lillian Nayder's books annoys, informs, delights, and amazes. As in her *Wilkie Collins* (Twayne 1997) she gives a higher purpose to what seem like straightforward writings. In this book she analyses the literary collaborations of Collins and Dickens and sees them as playing out their relationship in the nine works they wrote together and even in the play where they first met. In *Not So Bad As We Seem* Dickens and Collins are master/servant. They progress to captain/mate (*Wreck of the Golden Mary*), fellow officers (*The Frozen Deep*) and then gentlemen of different but equal tastes (*The Lazy Tour*). They use their collaborations to pursue their own different social agendas - Collins his own continuing concern with class and gender inequities, and with imperial wrongdoing: Dickens a whole range of things including exonerating arctic explorers of cannibalism in the face of starvation in *The Frozen Deep*. In the most detailed chapter Nayder analyses variants of that story and the back and forth interplay of the two writers trying to make the work say what each wanted. It was a battle that Collins only won by republishing it as he wanted four years after Dickens had died. Meanwhile, she sees *Edwin Drood* not as a novel influenced by Collins but as a response to *The Moonstone*, the final non-collaboration where Dickens sets out his own views in a novel intended to be better but left unfinished at his death.

Nayder collates numerous diverse and in many cases new sources to provide a compelling narrative which challenges the view that Dickens was a benign genius helping young writers along. Her conclusion is that Dickens finally showed his mastery over Collins by imitating him.

THE LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

Oxford University Press have announced the publication of *The Letters of Charles Dickens - Volume Twelve, 1868-1870*, edited by Graham Storey, Margaret Brown and Kathleen Tillotson (ISBN 0-19-924596-7, £80 hardback).

This concluding volume covers the final two and a half years of Dickens's life and also contains items of new information which came to light too late for earlier volumes. It includes a cumulative index of correspondents for all twelve volumes; an index of names and places; addenda and corrigenda for vols. I to XI; and numerous other details of Dickens's public readings, appeals and publishing agreements.

HARRIET COLLINS'S DIARY

Angela Richardson, a member of the Wilkie Collins Society and the moderator of the Wilkie Collins e-mail list, is currently transcribing the manuscript journal of Harriet Collins. In September 1836 the Collins family set off for Italy and Harriet kept a daily journal for the first fifteen months of their visit. It contains fascinating references to the people they met along the way (including Wordsworth) and tiny details of their domestic life. Angela will be giving a talk on her work at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London - which holds the diary - on Monday 7th October at 1pm and will be trying to interest a publisher into making this hidden work available to all.

WILKIE'S LIBRARY RECONSTRUCTED

A new work by professor William Baker, due out in April 2002, will reconstruct the books in Wilkie's own library. Using sale catalogues and other unpublished material, Baker examines the books Collins owned, analyses their significance, and discusses how they and his pictures were dispersed after his death. *Wilkie Collins's Library: A Reconstruction*. Greenwood Publishing, 2002 ISBN 0313313946 price \$74.95.

WILLIAM TINSLEY

Published at the end of last year was *William Tinsley (1831-1902): Speculative Publisher* by Peter Newbolt (Ashgate Publishing, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 3HR; and in the United States 131 Main Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401-5600; £59.95 with a 15% discount if ordered online at www.ashgate.com; ISBN 0754602915).

The book describes Tinsley's rural upbringing, his early days in London buying and selling books as a bookseller's runner and the setting up of his publishing business with his brother Edward in 1854. There is also a chapter on the Circulating Libraries and the three-decker system of publishing for Victorian

novels. Tinsley's first three-decker was published in 1859 followed by Sala's *The Seven Sons of Mammon* in 1861.

These were followed by the incredibly successful *Lady Audley's Secret* in 1862 and Collins's *The Moonstone* in 1868. Wilkie is discussed in Chapter thirteen, 'Harrison Ainsworth and Wilkie Collins'. There are brief biographical and publishing details but most of the Collins section repeats the material found in Tinsley's own memoirs, *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher* (1900) and Edmund Downey's *Twenty Years Ago* (1905). These give different versions of the disagreement between Wilkie and Tinsley over the publishing of a second edition of *The Moonstone*.

The book continues with publishing details of the numerous other Tinsley authors. There is a chronology of the history of the firm and a detailed check-list of all books published by Tinsley Brothers. There are eight illustrations and a comprehensive index. Overall a sympathetic account and a useful insight for those with an interest in nineteenth century publishing

NO THOROUGHFARE

A note in the Winter 2001 issue of *The Dickensian* (No. 455, Vol. 97, Part 3) records that the Christchurch (New Zealand) branch of the Dickens Fellowship, finding that there was no other text available for study by its members, has recently published an edition of *No Thoroughfare* (ISBN 09582249 0 0). There is a short introduction and a commentary on editorial procedures. Copies of this and their other Dickens publications may be obtained from The Christchurch Dickens Fellowship, PO Box 21-392, Otautahi, New Zealand 8030 (price NZ \$20 including postage).

WORDSWORTH EDITIONS

Wordsworth continue to publish their low cost editions (in the £1 to £1.50 range) with two Collins titles. *The Woman in White* features in their Top 50 Classic Best-Sellers. It is complete and unabridged but has only a brief introduction. *The Moonstone*, however, is listed as having both introduction and notes. The full list is available from Wordsworth Editions, Cumberland House, Crib Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9ET (01920 465167) enquiries@wordsworth-editions.com).

OTHER NEW EDITIONS

A new edition of *The Woman in White* edited by Anne Perry with notes by Chris Willis was published by Modern Library in January (ISBN 0375759069) price £5.99. Another edition of this popular book is promised by Penguin in June. Signet has published a new edition of *The Moonstone* with an introduction by Frederick Karl (\$6.95 ISBN 0451528298). Ulverscroft, the large print publisher, has added *The Evil Genius* (ISBN 0708993281 £17.99) to its Collins collection. It published *The Black Robe* last January and has large print and audio versions of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*; see www.ulverscroft.co.uk. A new kind of publisher, www.indypublish.com, claims to have available a number of out of print Collins works including *After Dark* and *Antonina*. They are available hardback or paperbound, though it is not clear how these are published or by whom. All these titles can be obtained online through www.amazon.co.uk or www.amazon.com

The BBC has published Peter Ackroyd's *The Mystery of Charles Dickens* performed by Simon Callow on two cassettes lasting 1 hour 40 minutes (ISBN 0563536500 price £9.99).

BOOKS ON LONDON

Wilkie continues to be included in books on London. The latest edition of Macmillan's *The London Encyclopaedia*, edited by Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, has several entries under Collins in the 'people index'. It gets most facts right, mentioning Gloucester Place and Hanover Terrace as residences. Under Clarence Terrace in Regent's Park, however, the authors suggest that Wilkie Collins 'was living at No. 2 in 1859, the year in which he launched *All the Year Round*': Dickens seems to have been relegated to the role of co-editor. But we do learn that the same house was later occupied by Louis Macneice from 1954-1963. The book also perpetuates the myth that Wilkie lived for a while in Church Row, Hampstead. It also notes that he used to visit the well known Hampstead coaching inn, Jack Straw's Castle and made occasional trips to the Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich.

John Russell's *London* (Thames and Hudson) has a nice quote in the chapter on 'The Spirit of the Place': 'The Novelist Wilkie Collins got that right once and for all when he wrote in his *Basil* in 1852 that the London omnibus was "a perambulatory exhibition-room of the eccentricities of human nature."' Both Wilkie and Charles Collins are mentioned in the section on Regent's Park but if all is to be believed there was a third brother called William!!! – also a 'very

good painter'. Otherwise it is a very nice publication with excellent colour illustrations.

FINGERSMITH

Fingersmith is the third novel by prize-winning author Sarah Waters. It has been widely compared in the press to a Wilkie Collins novel and for once this praise is warranted. Sarah writes beautifully, tells her tale with mastery, unfolds her mystery with eye-popping skill, and leads you by the hand round the last corner to her conclusion.

Set in the 1860s, there is something of the plot of *The Woman in White* – a conspiracy to marry an heiress and steal her fortune, a lonely country house, an eccentric uncle more concerned with his books than with people, a handsome young visiting artist who mounts his prints, and plans to hide a woman by locking her up in an asylum.

There are also tantalizing references to Wilkie's life including a reference to the artist George Morland – Wilkie's father's tutor: 'praise Morland over Rowlandson - he thinks Rowlandson a hack.' One of the doctors committing people to the asylum is named Graves – perhaps after Wilkie's lover Caroline Graves whose story was claimed to be the origin of *The Woman in White*.

Although this book seems designed to echo Collins, it is in fact a hellish antithesis of him. No-one is what he or she seems, the plot turns darker with each page, and the mystery, once finally revealed, is as appalling as it is Collinsian. Ultimately, though, like any good Victorian sensation novel, it is a love story and at the end... but enough has been said about the plot already. It may not have the complexity or the subtlety of *The Woman in White*, nor indeed of many other Collins novels, but it deals with the Victorian period in a contemporary and interesting way and has those unguessable heartstopping moments that sensation fiction needs. If you love Wilkie, *Fingersmith* will not disappoint (Virago Press 2002 ISBN 1860498825 £12.99).

THE RAG & BONE SHOP

The Rag and Bone Shop by Jeff Rackham purports to be 'a novel of Charles Dickens's very real, but little known, excursion outside the bounds of conventional Victorian morality; an engrossing tale that illuminates the warring demands of public propriety and private libertinism.' Part love story, part morality tale', the book tells the story of Dickens's affair with Ellen Ternan as

narrated by Wilkie Collins, Georgina Hogarth and the actress herself. Immorality tale would probably be a better description with most of the salacious parts reserved for Wilkie. Much of his supposed private life is revealed with a curious mixture of biographical fact and preposterous invention. Caroline shares Wilkie's opium and Martha is willingly seduced in Great Yarmouth and they all conspire to avoid scandal with a simple-minded Joseph Clow to dispose of Dickens's and Ellen's illegitimate child. The author is apparently another professor of English but obviously in the William Palmer school of absurd fiction. For those that must, the book is published by Zoland, 384 Huron Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138; www.zolandbooks.com. (ISBN 1581951051 available at \$25 through www.amazon.com where you can read reviews and download a sample chapter - allegedly by Wilkie Collins.)

WILKIE'S ART

Wilkie was encouraged to draw and paint by his father, the artist William Collins RA, and one of his pictures was hung in the Royal Academy's annual exhibition in 1849. There is no evidence, however, that he ever thought of art professionally. Three of his drawings can be found in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. One of these was reproduced by Peters in her biography (*The King of Inventors* 1991, pl.6). But the three are otherwise unrecorded. All date from the time when he signed himself W.W. or W. Wilkie Collins. One is of a church in Granada, another a country scene with a bridge and a house, the third a tower by a river clearly in Europe and dated April 1841. A fourth picture, ascribed by Pierpont Morgan to Wilkie but unsigned, is of 21 characters from Dickens. Subject to copyright permission images of these pictures will shortly be available on www.wilkiecollins.com.

JOHN ELLIOTSON

An advertisement for *Royal Society of Medicine: Portraits, Paintings and Sculptures* by Alex Sakula features a portrait of John Elliotson, MD, FRCP (1791-1868). The accompanying text relates that 'he was born in Southwark, the son of a wealthy druggist. He was educated at Edinburgh University and Jesus College, Cambridge and qualified in medicine in 1816. Despite opposition, he was, in 1817 appointed to the staff of St Thomas's Hospital as physician and in 1831 to the Chair of Medicine at University College London. He carried out pioneer studies in allergy and was famed as a clinical teacher. He was elected FRCP in 1822. In 1837, he became deeply interested in the cults of mesmerism

and phrenology, which invoked considerable criticism by the medical establishment: his reputation suffered, and he was forced in 1838 to resign from his Chair at University College.' The book is available from the Library of the Royal Society of Medicine in Wigmore Street, London.

Collins was well acquainted with Elliotson who in 1863 tried, unsuccessfully, to use hypnotism as a substitute for laudanum to control the pain from Wilkie's rheumatic gout. The interest in mesmerism was shared by Collins, Dickens and Chauncy Hare Townshend. Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone* calls Elliotson 'one of the greatest of English physiologists' and uses a case history in his *Human Physiology* as the inspiration for the attempt to find the missing diamond by administering a second dose of opium to Franklin Blake. Elliotson writes on page 646 that 'The curious occasional circumstance of our not remembering the points of a dream till dreaming of the same thing again, has been strikingly noted in the sleep-waking.'(sic). He then describes the case of 'an Irish porter to a warehouse, who forgot, when sober, what he had done when drunk: but being drunk, again recollected the transactions of his former state of intoxication. On one occasion, being drunk, he had lost a parcel of some value, and in his sober moments could give no account of it. Next time he was intoxicated, he recollected that he had left the parcel at a certain house, and there being no address on it, it had remained there safely, and was got on calling for it.'

We also learn from the latest issue of *Mr Dick's Kite* (Alan Watt's regular Newsletter to members of the Dickens Fellowship) that Elliotson was amongst the first of the medical profession to discontinue the practice of attending patients in evening dress which would have included knee-breeches and black silk stockings.

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

The February edition of *The Magazine of The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery* announces that their Open Day will this year take place on Saturday 13 July. This is always an interesting excursion with several annual events and attractions. These usually take place close to where Wilkie's Grave is located and the day provides an excellent opportunity to visit his last resting place (Grave number/Square/Row 31754/141/1). The FOKGC shop will also have on sale *The Origins and Development The General Cemetery of All Souls, Kensal Green, London, 1824-2001* edited by James Stevens Curl. This is the definitive work on Kensal Green and contains a wide range of essays by experts on different aspects of the cemetery (Phillimore & Co). There are also thematic

maps of Kensal Green, two of which may be of particular interest to WCS members: 'The Dickens Connection' and 'Royal Academicians'.

WILKIE IN THE PAPERS

The last four months have produced more references to Wilkie in the press than ever. Many are book reviews using his name as the standard by which modern crime or thrillers are judged (and every review of *Fingersmith* refers to Wilkie) but others are more substantial.

The Victorian specialist and writer John Sutherland wrote a thoughtful piece in *New Statesman* (17/12/01) comparing Victorian and Blairite Britain through the publishing history of Trollope. He asserted that Trollope's star was waning and that the new favourite is Wilkie Collins'.

A silly piece (20/12/01) about Collinses in *The Daily Telegraph* pretended that Joan had married Wilkie and 'his best known work *The Woman in Nothing*' was based on this liaison.

A review of *An Athletics Compendium: An Annotated Guide to UK Literature of Track and Field* (British Library £30) is the unlikely place for a short but good review of *Man and Wife* 'a vivid picture of a Victorian athletics meeting.' (*The Times* 21/12/01)

Wilkie's birthday on January 8th was remembered in *The Times* and *The Birmingham Post*.

Le Monde on 11 January reviewed a new edition of *Basil* in French saying 'all the impulses of the Victorian novel are there, so gripping you cannot stop reading.'

Jack Adrian Bradnum is not a name normally associated with Wilkie Collins but his obituary (*The Independent* 18/1/02) reminds us that he was a writer of radio dramatisations who brought us 'an excellent *Dead Secret* in six hour long episodes.' He also wrote *A Terribly Strange Man* a portrait of Wilkie in 1868, broadcast on Radio 4 in 1971. Bradnum died on 25 December 2001 aged 81.

A bizarre piece in *The Washington Post* (23/1/02) for America's National Pie Day (promoted by the American Pie Council) reminds us that Gooseberry, while tracking down Godfrey Ablewhite in *The Moonstone*, goes to an eating house. 'He had a shilling in his pocket; and he dined sumptuously, he tells me, on a

black-pudding, an eel-pie, and a bottle of ginger-beer. What can a boy not digest?’

Steven Johnson writing in the *Scotsman* (31/1/02) about the ‘manor house whodunit’, looked at the context of the new film *Gosford Park* and then says ‘Do away with the Jamesian psychological intricacies ... borrow the inspector from Wilkie Collins ... and *voilà*, you have your Agatha Christie drawing-room mystery.’

A review of the BBC version of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* by arts critic and broadcaster Mark Lawson claims that ‘Dostoevsky is often credited with creating the genre of psychological crime-writing - with his English sidekick Wilkie Collins whose *Moonstone* came out two years later.’

An essay in *The Guardian* (23/2/02) on marketing and genres of modern and Victorian literature by John Mullan of University College, London says of sensation fiction ‘The most successful practitioners were Charles Reade and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, though Wilkie Collins made the genre into something like literature.’

A review of *The Last Opium Den* by Nick Tosches lists works created under the influence of that drug and ‘One might also mention the later work of Wilkie Collins, who became addicted to the drug in the form of laudanum (tincture of opium); the marked falloff in quality of his later fiction may well be attributable to the drug’s ravages.’

Finally Peter Conrad writes in *The Observer* (3/3/02) about sleepwalking in the context of a play *The Prince of Homburg* and an opera *La Somnambula* both on in London in March, to remember that ‘the plots of Charles Brockendon Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* (1799) and Wilkie Collins’s Victorian whodunit *The Moonstone* depends on sleepwalkers who betray themselves during their nocturnal digression.’

E-TEXTS

More of Wilkie’s work is available on e-text, mainly through James Rusk’s website at www.blackmask.com/jrusk/wcollins. He has added *Hide and Seek* Next will come *The Fallen Leaves* followed by *Heart and Science* and *Blind Love*. That will complete Wilkie’s novels apart from *Ioláni* where there may copyright problems. He has also recently added some plot summaries to the site,

taken from *Author's Digest* 1908. A complete list of known Wilkie e-texts can be found at www.wilkiecollins.com menu option 5.

James Rusk has also made available the text of *Not So Bad As We Seem*, the play by Bulwer Lytton in which Wilkie acted in 1851. Dickens offered him the part of Smart the Butler which Wilkie accepted leading to their meeting and lifelong friendship. The play is at jrusk.tripod.com/bulwer/bad.html

WEB NEWS

A new section has been added to Hans Noordam's website which contains biographies of Wilkie and his brother Charles together with links to some of their contemporaries. Many contain links to Hans's pictures of their graves, including a nice picture of Wilkie's grave in Kensal Green Cemetery. There is also a picture of Ada Cavendish's grave in the same cemetery – she acted in some of Wilkie's plays. The address is www.androom.com then select "index" under the Biographies Section.

CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK

The Christie's New York sale (1104) on 17 April is Part 1 of 'The Detective Fiction Library of Richard M. Lackritz, M.D.' Apart from the original typescript manuscript of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the collection features several Collins first editions, including *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, *No Name* and *The Queen of Hearts*. The catalogue is available from Christie's and details of the various lots can be viewed on their website.

DICKENS FELLOWSHIP – CENTENARY CONFERENCE

The Centenary Conference of the Dickens Fellowship is being held in London from 18-25 July at University College. One of the themes of the meeting is 'London' and the opening session will introduce participants to London as Dickens - and no doubt Collins - knew it. Further papers will explore the way the city has changed since the nineteenth century. There will then be a showing of the 1920 silent version of *Bleak House* at the National Film Theatre. Apart from the numerous lectures, other events include visits to museums, houses with literary and artistic connections, Highgate Cemetery and a tour of the British Library. Further information from The Dickens Fellowship, 48 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LX; www.dickensfellowship.org/

WILLIAM COLLINS

On his 39th birthday, 18 September 1827, Wilkie's father, the artist William Collins RA, wrote in his journal 'Cuyp's...pictures are entirely free from this blackness, and have, I believe, consequently great breadth, glow, and power; and do not require absolutely, as mine certainly do, to be seen with a very strong light.' Now, 175 years later, a wonderful exhibition of the pictures of the Dutch artist Aelbert Cuyp (1620- I 691) is on show at the National Gallery in London. The influence on William Collins is immediately apparent in Cuyp's treatment of skies and horses, his love of evening and morning sunlight, and his broad sea compositions. The exhibition runs to 12 May and entry is £7.

A SPECTRUM OF FANTASY

WCS members interested in fantasy fiction will welcome the publication of the third and final volume of *A Spectrum of Fantasy* by George Locke (£90, hardback). The complete series, arranged alphabetically, provides bibliographical and descriptive information on a huge range of titles from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There are now appendices on original artwork and manuscript material, together with indices to all authors, illustrators and titles. Collins features in Volume I with a just a single entry for *After Dark*. Further information from Ferret Fantasy, 27 Beechcroft Road, Upper Tooting, London SW17 7BX (020 8767 0029).

PESCA

A recent trip to Antarctica revealed that the first whaling company in those parts was set up at the turn of the twentieth century in Argentina and operated out of South Georgia. It was called Pesca, the same name as Wilkie's eccentric Italian professor in *The Woman in White*.

LEDBURY

This year's Ledbury Poetry Festival will be held from 4-14 July and will feature amongst several others Andrew Motion and Matthew Sweeney. There is the usual Poetry Competition and further details can be had from Town Council Offices, Church Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1DH (0845 458 1743, <https://ledburypoetry.org.uk>)

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