

***THE WOMAN IN WHITE***

**Editions and Changes**

**By**

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## THE WOMAN IN WHITE - EDITIONS AND CHANGES

*The Woman in White: a Chronological Study*<sup>1</sup>, published by the WCS in 2011, detailed the numerous early editions of Collins's most famous novel. The book was originally serialised in *All the Year Round* in 40 parts from 26 November 1859 to 25 August 1860. The US edition of *All the Year Round* was published by Emerson, Fitch & Co. with identical text.

*The Woman in White* was also serialised in America by Collins's authorised publishers, Harper and Brothers, in *Harper's Weekly* with 42 parts from 26 November 1859 to 8 September 1860.

In book form, *The Woman in White* was first published in England by Sampson Low in three volumes. There were seven numbered editions (impressions) in 1860, followed by a New Edition, also in three volumes, in the same year. A one volume edition from the same publisher appeared early in 1861 and was reissued in 1863. Subsequent English editions were published by Smith, Elder between 1865 and 1873; and by Chatto & Windus from 1875.

The first US edition followed the first English by about two weeks, on or about 30 August 1860. It was published by Harpers using the text in double columns taken from *Harper's Weekly*. 'The Woman in White - a Bibliographical Postscript'<sup>2</sup> has now identified four distinct states of the first US edition, distinguished by their advertising matter (See Appendix). Several subsequent Harpers editions, employing exactly the same text from *Harper's Weekly*, have been located from 1861, 1862, 1864 and 1865. The preface from the English edition was not included until 1862. A further reset Harper's edition followed in 1873 as part of its *Illustrated Library* and was reprinted until the early twentieth century.

It has recently been possible to locate and examine most of the English and Harpers editions in order to follow corrections in the errata of the eight three volume English editions published between August and November and analyse changes in the critical dates in Collins's narrative found between serial, English and US editions.

Although it has been possible to locate all of the English three-volume editions, the number of copies examined of each is necessarily limited because of their scarcity. Mixed sets identified as such on the title-age are common and it is quite possible that in the rush to issue another edition, sheets of one edition have been included in earlier or later ones depending on the stock received by the binders.

### A. ERRATA

Most of the errata were recorded by Parrish<sup>3</sup> but some others have been found which were introduced subsequent to the first English edition.

## B. CHRONOLOGICAL CHANGES

The plot of *The Woman in White* depends on Collins's chronological structure of the novel into which he inadvertently introduced errors in the dates of the various narratives.

1. The first key error was noted by *The Guardian* of 29 August 1860 where the reviewer writes '...and it is almost a compliment to point out a slip in vol. iii, where an important entry in a register, assigned in p. 149 to September, is given in p. 203 to April.'<sup>4</sup>
2. The most well known error of chronology is that first described in *The Times* of 30 October 1860. The plot relies on the fact that Laura's departure for London took place the day after Anne Catherick had died under Laura's name. In the first edition the date of death was 26 July whereas as the reviewer points out '...we could easily show that Lady Glyde could not have left Blackwater Park before the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> of August. Anybody who reads the story, and who counts the days from the conclusion of Miss Halcombe's diary, can verify the calculation for himself.'<sup>5</sup>

Further chronological errors, as well as the full extent of textual changes between *All the Year Round* and the first edition in three volumes, were documented in the 1969 Riverside edition of *The Woman in White*<sup>6</sup>:

3. Miss Halcombe's Diary at Limmeridge House commences on 8<sup>th</sup> instead of 7<sup>th</sup> November.
4. In Miss Halcombe's Diary for 27 November, Laura's marriage date is changed from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> December.
5. In the Narrative of the Tombstone, the dates of Laura's marriage and death are changed from 23 December 1849 and 28 July 1850 to 22 December and 25 July.
6. In the Narrative of the Doctor, the date of death is similarly changed from 28<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July 1850.
7. In Fosco's Narrative, the dates of Anne Catherick's death and Lady Glyde's arrival from London are changed from 28<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July 1850.
8. In Mr Fairlie's Narrative, however, 'The fifth, sixth or seventh of July' in *All the Year Round* is changed to 'towards the middle of July' in the English three volume editions but 'at the end of June, or the beginning of July' in the 1861 edition.

A further anomaly occurs in the position of Laura's letter to Mrs Vesey.

The results of the analysis are presented in the table below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1	<b>THE WOMAN IN WHITE</b>			<b>ERRATA AND CHRONOLOGICAL CHANGES IN THE TEXT</b>															
2																			
3				ENGLISH EDITIONS										HARPER EDITIONS					
4				ALL THE	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	FIFTH*	SIXTH	SEVENTH	NEW	1 VOLUME	HARPER'S	1860	1861	1862	1865	1873
5	PAGE	LINE	FEATURE	YEAR ROUND										WEEKLY					
6	English 1st																		
7	<b>VOLUME I</b>																		
8																			
9	22	7	second r in extraordinary missing	-	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	22	16	y in my missing	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	29	10	second r in rather above line	-	yes	r missing	r missing	r missing	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	119	9	space between <b>was</b> and <b>alone</b> missing	-	yes	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	138	9	<b>s</b> in story mising	-	yes	yes	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	267	6	<b>b</b> in been missing	-	yes	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	267	last	<b>i</b> in in broken	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	292	10	Misplaced <b>D</b> in December	-	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17																			
18	204	8	end of October or beginning of November	Oct/Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	02-Nov	-	Oct/Nov	Oct/Nov	Oct/Nov	Oct/Nov	02-Nov
19	263	1	Diary date	07-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	08-Nov	-	07-Nov	07-Nov	07-Nov	07-Nov	08-Nov
20	291	3	Diary wedding date	23-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	23-Dec	23-Dec	23-Dec	23-Dec	23-Dec	22-Dec
21	311	1	Diary entry date	22-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	21-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	22-Dec	21-Dec
22																			
23	<b>VOLUME II</b>																		
24																			
25	37	11 up	<b>h</b> in his broken	-	yes	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
26	158	1	space between <b>of</b> and <b>the</b> missing	-	yes	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
27	262	1	unnecessary comma after you	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
28	287	6 up	<b>i</b> in in below line	-	yes	corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	294	9 up	<b>f</b> in myself below line	-	yes	yes	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	Corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30	357	5	reduced space between <b>looked</b> and <b>on</b>	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	<b>no</b>	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31																			
32	3	2	Marian's diary dated from 27 June	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	11-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	27-Jun	11-Jun
33	238	13	day or two // week or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	week or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	day or two	week or two
34	238	15	end of June or beginning of July	5, 6, or 7 Jul	mid Jul	mid Jul	mid Jul	mid Jul	mid Jul	mid Jul	mid Jul	mid Jul	Jun-Jul	5, 6, or 7 Jul	5, 6, or 7 Jul	5, 6, or 7 Jul	5, 6, or 7 Jul	5, 6, or 7 Jul	Jun-Jul
35	351	5	Doctor Laura's death date	28-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	28-Jul	28-Jul	28-Jul	28-Jul	28-Jul	25-Jul
36	352	1 up	Tombstone marriage	23-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	22-Dec-49	23-Dec-49	23-Dec-49	23-Dec-49	23-Dec-49	23-Dec-49	22-Dec
37	352	last	Tombstone death	28-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	25-Jul-50	28-Jul-50	28-Jul-50	28-Jul-50	28-Jul-50	28-Jul-50	25-Jul
38																			
39																			
40	<b>VOLUME III</b>																		
41																			
42	10	last	<b>s</b> in his missing	-	yes	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
43	37	top	page number omitted	-	no	no	no	no	<b>no</b>	yes	yes	no	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
44	39	last	<b>wn</b> in <b>own</b> above line	-	yes	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	43	4	period after kind missing	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
46	57	5	<b>t</b> in the misplaced	-	...ingt-he	...ingthe	...ingth-e	...ingthe--	..ingthe--	...ingthe--	...ingthe--	...ingth-e	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
47	97	12 up	<b>s</b> in says above line	-	yes	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	corrected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
48	250	top	page number as <b>50</b>	-	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
49	325	top	page number omitted	-	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50	330	6 up	unnecessary double quote after house	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
51																			
52																			
53	149	3 up	Register date	September	September	September	September	September	September	September	September	September	September	-	September	September	September	September	September
54	203	11	April	April	April	September	September	September	September	September	September	September	September	-	April	April	April	April	September
55	244	xxx	Letter to Mrs Vesey	omitted	present	present	present	present	present	present	present	present	present	-	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	present
56	253	-	Letter to Mrs Vesey	present	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	-	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted	omitted
57	309	5 up	Laura's departure date	29-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	-	29-Jul	29-Jul	29-Jul	29-Jul	26-Jul
58	353	12 up	Fosco Anne's death, tombstone	28-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	25-Jul	-	28-Jul	28-Jul	28-Jul	28-Jul	25-Jul
59	353	8 up	Fosco Laura's arrival in London	29-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	26-Jul	-	29-Jul	29-Jul	29-Jul	29-Jul	26-Jul
60																			
61																			

\* only Volume I of the fifth edition has been examined

## CONCLUSIONS

### A. ERRATA

Typographical corrections to the English three volume editions show no particular pattern. Some are corrected between the first and second, some remain uncorrected throughout all eight editions; some are corrected part way through the sequence. In other cases, errors such as dropped page numbers are introduced part way through the sequence and remain for one or two editions.

Because of the rarity and value of true first editions of *The Woman in White* copies are not uncommonly seen where the edition number has been erased from the title-page of later copies. It might be possible to identify the actual edition of a copy which has been tampered with from the Table. The caveat is that although it has been possible to locate all of the English three-volume editions, the number of copies examined of each is necessarily limited because of their scarcity. Mixed sets identified as such on the title-page are common and it is quite possible that in the rush to issue another edition, sheets of one edition have been included in earlier or later ones depending on the stock received by the binders.

### B. CHRONOLOGICAL ERRORS

The *Guardian* error of 29 August was corrected in the second English edition although Collins had written to his mother on 22 August ‘... the whole of the first impression was sold on the day of publication .....and I hope to hear that the second impression is doing well.’<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Collins had spotted the error himself or had advance notice from the reviewer. It remained unchanged in all of the US editions until the text was reset for the 1873 *Harper's Illustrated Library Edition*.

*The Times* error of 30 October was not corrected until the English 1861 one volume edition and the *Harper's Illustrated Library Edition* in 1873. Collins wrote to his publisher, Edward Marston of Sampson Low, on 31 October ‘If any fresh impression of The Woman in White is likely to be wanted immediately, stop the press till I come back. The critic in the Times is (between ourselves) right about the mistake in time.’<sup>8</sup> This must have been too late for the final, *New Edition*, in three volumes which carried advertisements dated November 1860.

Points 3 to 8 above in *All the Year Round* are changed in the first and all subsequent English editions. The US editions follow the exact text of the English serialisation and are not corrected until the 1873 *Harper's Illustrated Library Edition*.

In Mr Fairlie’s Narrative, ‘The fifth, sixth or seventh of July’ in *All the Year Round* becomes ‘towards the middle of July’ in the English three volume edition but ‘at the end of June, or the beginning of July’ in the 1861 edition.

The position of Laura's letter to Mrs Vesey is changed between *All the Year Round* (Part the Third, Chapter I of Hartright's Narrative) and all English book editions (Chapter III of Hartright's earlier Narrative). It is omitted altogether in Harper's editions until the *Illustrated Library Edition*.

## ***WOMAN IN WHITE* – A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL POSTSCRIPT<sup>2</sup>**

In the 2011 analysis of *The Woman in White*'s publishing history, three states of the US first edition were described. Two of these, (1) and (3), are noted in Parrish's 1940 bibliography whereas (2) had originally been identified in 1942 by the American bookseller and bibliographer, Howard Mott. More recently a fourth state has come to light in a copy in red-brown cloth. Bindings exist for the other states in brown or black cloth, all with the blind stamped figure of a woman at the base of the spine, or in paper wrappers.

The advertisements form part of the collation and the three states already described are:

1. p [261] has 'Muloch' for 'Mulock' and lists nine titles; p [262] advertises *The Mill on the Floss*.
2. 'Mulock' is correctly spelled on p [261], eleven titles are listed and p. [262] advertises *The Mill on the Floss*.
3. 'Mulock' is correctly spelled with eleven titles listed, but p [262] advertises nine titles by Thackeray.

The fourth state has:

On p. [261] 'Muloch' for 'Mulock' and lists nine titles; p. [262] advertises nine titles by Thackeray.

One theory to explain the different advertisements and bindings is that because of the huge demand for *The Woman in White* the novel was produced at different sites or on different presses. Whatever the explanation, we can now record four states for the first US edition although none of these precedes – as is often stated erroneously – the first English edition in three volumes.

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Gasson, *The Woman in White: a Chronological Study*, The Wilkie Collins Society, 2011

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Gasson, 'The Woman in White - A Bibliographical Postscript', The Wilkie Collins Society Newsletter, Winter 2013.

<sup>3</sup> *Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade. First Editions described with Notes by M. L. Parrish with the assistance of Elizabeth V. Miller*. London: Constable, 1940, pp. 139-140.

<sup>4</sup> Page, N., *Collins: The Critical Heritage* London 1974, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Page, N., *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage* London 1974, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> *The Woman in White*, ed. Anthea Trodd Boston 1969.

<sup>7</sup> *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins*, Baker, W., Gasson, A., Law, G. and Lewis, P. London 2005 p.209.

<sup>8</sup> *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins*, Baker, W., Gasson, A., Law, G. and Lewis, P. London 2005 p.209.