



**PETER FENELON COLLIER AND THE
COLLECTED EDITIONS OF WILKIE COLLINS**

BY

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Peter Fenelon Collier and the Collected Editions of Wilkie Collins

Peter Fenelon Collier (1849-1909) was born in County Carlow, Ireland to Robert Collier and Catherine Fenelon. The family emigrated to the USA in 1866 and P. F. Collier began publishing books in 1874. He founded *Collier's Once a Week* magazine in 1888, advertised as a magazine of "Fiction, Fact, Sensation, Wit, Humor, and News." It had a circulation of over 250,000 by the mid-1890s when its name was changed to *Collier's Weekly: An Illustrated Journal*.

The New York imprint of 'Peter Fenelon Collier, Publisher' was used until about 1900 after which it became 'Peter Fenelon Collier and Son'. It subsequently became 'P. F. Collier and Son Company' before merging with Crowell in 1934. The Crowell-Collier Publishing Company was bought by Macmillan in 1960 and finally absorbed by Simon & Schuster in 1994.

There has been no complete edition of Collins's works although there have been several partial collections. Sampson Low during 1861-62 issued a *Cheap and uniform edition* of six titles: *Antonina*; *Basil*; *Hide and Seek*; *The Dead Secret*; *The Queen of Hearts*; *The Woman in White*. They added a one volume edition of *No Name* in 1864 for *Low's Favourite Library of Popular Books*. From 1865 Smith Elder added the copyright of these works to *After Dark* and *Armadale*, publishing nine titles in various cheap editions, mainly pictorial boards or limp cloth. The *popular edition* of 1872 also included *The Moonstone*.

In 1875, Chatto & Windus acquired the copyright to most of Collins's earlier titles (excluding *Armadale*, *After Dark* and *No Name* which remained with Smith Elder until 1890, and Bentley's *A Rogue's Life*); from that time, they published the majority of Collins's new works till 1889. Chatto also issued several cheap editions from 1875 in various formats, including the *New Illustrated Library edition*, *Piccadilly Novels*, and various *Popular Editions*. From 1890 they published twenty-nine titles which continued to be issued well into the twentieth century. On the Continent, Tauchnitz in the *Collection of British Authors* published twenty-eight titles in fifty volumes between 1856 and 1890. In America, Harpers of New York were Collins's main publishers, issuing seventeen titles in a variety of formats between 1873 and 1902. There were also numerous

pirated editions by publishers such as Munro of New York and Peterson of Philadelphia.

The most complete edition, however, was published around 1900 by P. F. Collier in thirty illustrated volumes. This is based almost entirely on Collins's fiction and does not include *The Memoirs of William Collins*, *Rambles Beyond Railways*, *Mr Wray's Cash Box*, *The Guilty River*, or *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices*.

The Wilkie Collins Prospectus

To advertise their edition, Collier published a complete Prospectus issued as a plain hard-back book in the same style as the individual volumes. It consisted of a twenty-four page introduction, a complete set of 142 illustrations with their locations in the designated volumes and the first twenty-eight pages of *The Woman in White*. Apart from the de-luxe binding described in the prospectus, there were at least two other binding styles. The edition omitted Collins's non-fiction and scattered his short stories throughout the thirty volumes as make weights to the full-length novels. The set was re-issued in a rarely seen bright yellow binding in 1972.

The introduction to the Prospectus is partly biographical and partly literary criticism: it provides some interesting commentaries on Collins's work.

Mr. Collins started out with an aggressive originality of work and plan of work in fiction.

Collins excels in originality. He is absolutely unlike any other novelist.

The plots of Collins's novels revolve round a small space, occupy little time – during which and in which every important detail, every motive, every deception, is brought out. He is the only novelist that can rivet the attention of the reader, and go so fully into the vital parts of the case, and array all the important circumstances in such consecutiveness without tiresomeness.

As a high-class novelist, whose stories are intended to be sensational, Mr. Collins stands unrivalled in the language. While he writes the story for the sake of the entertainment it affords the reader, the highly important nature of the subject nature of his plots has caused his novels to become a tremendous power throughout the world in calling attention to many grievous existent wrongs and social cruelties.

The Only Large-Type Edition of Wilkie Collins
to be had in the world.

PROSPECTUS.

THE WORKS OF
WILKIE COLLINS

Complete in Thirty volumes, 12mo, bound in the best English cloth, with gold back stamp. The sides are embossed in imitation of leather. This elegant edition is printed in large type from new electrotype plates, on good paper with wide margins, and is the only complete edition of the works of Wilkie Collins to be had in the United States.

The following is the List of Stories :

ARMADALE.	THE FROZEN DEEP.
AFTER DARK.	THE TWO DESTINIES.
NO NAME.	LAW AND THE LADY.
ANTONINA. BASIL.	THE HAUNTED HOTEL.
HIDE AND SEEK.	THE FALLEN LEAVES.
THE DEAD SECRET.	JEZEBEL'S DAUGHTER.
THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.	THE BLACK ROBE.
MY MISCELLANIES.	HEART AND SCIENCE.
THE WOMAN IN WHITE.	"I SAY NO."
THE HOONSTONE.	LITTLE NOVELS.
MAN AND WIFE.	THE EVIL GENIUS.
POOR MISS FINCH.	THE LEGACY OF CAIN.
MISS OR MRS.?	A ROGUE'S LIFE.
THE NEW MAGDALEN.	BLIND LOVE.

The price for this magnificent set of books is \$20.00; or 67 cents per volume. The whole thirty volumes will be delivered on payment of \$1.00; the balance payable at the rate of \$1.00 per month.

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The following is the full list of Collins's works published by Collier in their respective volumes.

Vol. I - *The Woman in White*, part one, 12 illustrations, 575 pages.

Vol. II - *The Woman in White*, part two, and the short stories: 'The Dead Alive', 'The Fatal Cradle', 'Fatal Fortune', 'Blow up with the Brig', 5 illustrations, 558 pages.

Vol. III - *Man and Wife*, part one, 12 illustrations, 577 pages.

Vol. IV - *Man and Wife*, part two and the short stories: 'Miss or Mrs.?', 'The Frozen Deep', 5 illustrations, 614 pages.

Vol. V - *The Law and the Lady*, 7 illustrations, 559 pages.

Vol. VI - *The Moonstone*, part one, 15 illustrations, 580 pages.

Vol. VII - *The Moonstone*, part two, and *The New Magdalen*, 11 illustrations, 602 pages.

Vol. VIII - *Armadale*, part one, 8 illustrations, 579 pages.

Vol. IX - *Armadale*, part two, 4 illustrations, 575 pages.

Vol. X - *Basil* and from *Little Novels*: 'Mrs. Zant and the Ghost', 'Miss Morris and the Stranger', 'Mr. Lismore and the Widow', 9 illustrations, 576 pages.

Vol. XI - *Hide and Seek*, 9 illustrations, 624 pages.

Vol. XII - *No Name*, part one, 2 illustrations, 576 pages.

Vol. XIII - *No Name*, part two and from *Little Novels*: 'Mr. Cosway and the Landlady', 'Miss Mina and the Groom', 2 illustrations, 576 pages.

Vol. XIV - *The Queen of Hearts* and from *Little Novels*: 'Mr. Lepel and the Housekeeper', with frontispiece, 608 pages.

Vol. XV - *Poor Miss Finch*, 12 illustrations, 656 pages.

Vol. XVI - *The Dead Secret* and *Little Novels*, with frontispiece, 590 pages.

Vol. XVII - *Antonina or The Fall of Rome*, with frontispiece, 656 pages.

Vol. XVIII - *The Two Destinies*, a novel and from *Little Novels*: ‘Mr. Medhurst and the Princess’, ‘Miss Jeromette and the Clergyman’, ‘Mr. Captain and the Nymph’, ‘Mr. Marmaduke and the Minister’, ‘Mr. Percy and the Prophet’, no frontispiece or illustrations, 575 pages.

Vol. XIX - *After Dark*, 4 illustrations, 544 pages.

Vol. XX - *My Miscellanies*, no illustrations, 540 pages.

Vol. XXI - *The Fallen Leaves*, no illustrations, 525 pages.

Vol. XXII - *The Haunted Hotel and My Lady’s Money*, six illustrations, 477 pages.

Vol. XXIII - *The Black Robe*, no illustrations, 448 pages.

Vol. XXIV - *The Evil Genius, A Domestic Story*, no illustrations, 464 pages.

Vol. XXV - *Heart and Science, a Story of the Present Time*, no Illustrations, 539 pages.

Vol. XXVI - *The Legacy of Cain, a Novel*, no illustrations, 480 pages.

Vol. XXVII - *Jezebel’s Daughter*, no Illustrations, 416 pages.

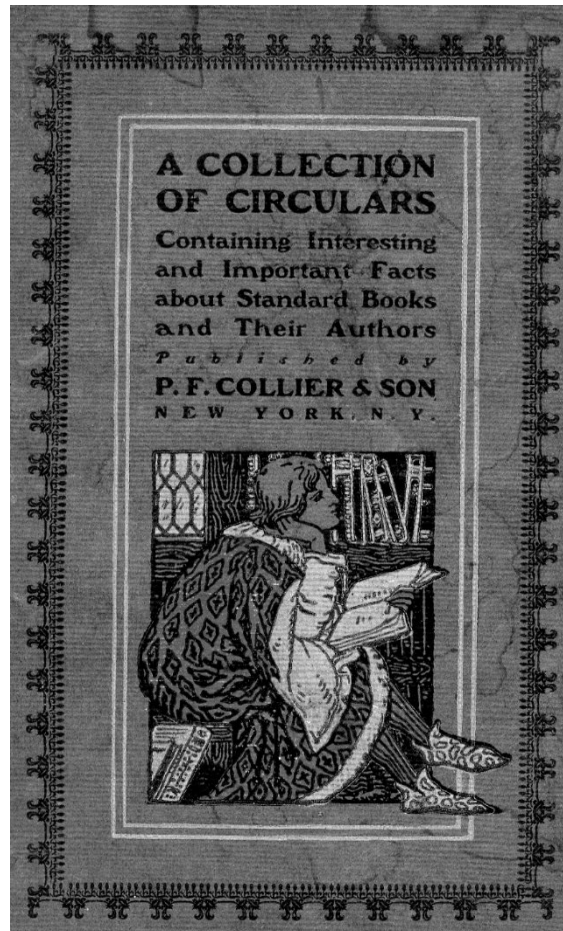
Vol. XXVIII - *Blind Love*, sixteen illustrations, 544 pages.

Vol. XXIX - *I Say No*, no illustrations, 512 pages.

Vol. XXX - *A Rogue’s Life, From His Birth to His Marriage*, and from *Little Novels*: ‘Miss Dulane and my Lord’, ‘Mr. Policeman and the Cook’, no illustrations, 320 pages.

In addition, ‘No Thoroughfare’ was published in Volume XXX of *The Works of Charles Dickens* (c.1900). Collier published a three-volume set of short stories, *A New Collection of Famous Examples from the Literatures of France, England and America*, edited by William Patten, in 1906. Volume II, *Ghost Stories*, contained ‘The Dream Woman’ and Volume III, *Adventure and Romance*, ‘A Terribly Strange Bed’. ‘The Cauldron of Oil’ from *My Miscellanies* was included in *International Short Stories* (1910)

Other Collier Series



Advertising the Range of Collier Authors

Collier's publishing series extended far beyond Collins's works. In 1905 they advertised "A Collection of Circulars, Containing Interesting Facts about Standard Books and Their Authors." The book was overtly commercial and addressed to Collier's agents.

My dear Sir:

Herein you will find a collection of circulars relating to a number of our most important series.

All this material has been prepared with great care and at considerable expense, solely for your assistance in selling the books intensely practical summaries of telling facts and persuasive opinions that can be made use of by every canvasser in arousing interest in the books, and clinching this interest into quick and decisive sales. We desire to place the best literary talent which we command at your service.

Amongst several others, the series consisted of the works of Dickens (30 volumes), Thackeray (20 volumes), Scott (25 volumes), Bulwer Lytton (30 Volumes), Rider Haggard (23 volumes), and Fenimore Cooper (32 volumes). The Collins entry is introduced as:

The Complete Works of Wilkie Collins in thirty volumes – Illustrated, bound in uniform library style and profusely illustrated with the original English engravings – one hundred and forty-two in number.

It is the universal opinion among novel writers as well as novel readers that Wilkie Collins was the greatest master of plot construction in English fiction.

The Collins entry consists of a listing of the 30 titles; a full length, photographic style portrait based on an engraving of Bassano's photograph; synopses of nine of his 'leading novels;' and a critique of Collins under the headings of 'Holds the Reader Breathless', 'A Literary Artist'; 'Lets his Characters Tell the Story'; 'The Man Behind the Book'; 'A Moral in his Novels'; and 'Collins's Theory of Novel Writing.'

Complete Collins sets are fairly commonly available from booksellers; odd volumes and partial sets are frequently advertised on ebay.