In the Victorian period, the British novel reached a wide readership and played a major role in the shaping of national and individual identity. As we come to understand the ways the novel contributed to public opinion on religion, gender, sexuality, and race, we continue to be entertained and enlightened by the works of Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, Trollope, and many others. This second edition of the Companion to the Victorian Novel has been updated fully, taking account of new research and critical methodologies. There are four new chapters and the others have been thoroughly revised, as has the guide to further reading. Designed to appeal to students, teachers, and readers, these essays reflect the latest approaches to reading and understanding Victorian fiction.


A complete list of books in the series is at the end of this book
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CLARE PETTITT is Professor of Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture at King’s College London. Her books include *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (2004) and “Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?”: Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers and Empire (2007). She is currently writing a book entitled
Notes on contributors

Distant Contemporaries: The Creation of a Shared Present in the Nineteenth Century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Union of England and Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Battle of Trafalgar; Lord Nelson dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Atlantic slave trade outlawed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1812 | War with America  
Charles Dickens born |
| 1815 | Napoleon defeated at Waterloo by British and Prussian troops; Congress of Vienna redraws map of Europe  
Corn Law passed, establishing protective tariff on imported grain |
| 1818 | Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* published  
Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* published |
| 1819 | Peterloo Riot  
Stamp Act taxes periodicals  
Princess (later Queen) Victoria and Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) born  
Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* published |
| 1820 | Death of King George III; George IV accedes to the throne |
| 1830 | Death of George IV; William IV accedes to the throne |
| 1832 | Passage of the First Reform Bill, doubling the electorate  
Charles Lyell's *Elements of Geology* published  
Slavery abolished throughout the British Empire  
Poor Law Amendment Act forces able-bodied poor into workhouses in order to receive assistance |
### Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Houses of Parliament severely damaged by fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Factory Act limits children under thirteen to no more than forty-eight hours per week in textile mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Charles Dickens’s <em>The Pickwick Papers</em> begins serialization (volume publication 1837)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Death of William IV; Victoria accedes to the throne, formally beginning the era that bears her name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Benjamin Disraeli elected to Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Charles Dickens’s <em>Oliver Twist</em> begins serialization in <em>Bentley’s Miscellany</em> (volume publication 1838)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Great Western Railway opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Custody of Infants Act gives woman separated from husband right to see and seek custody of children under seven; first legal recognition of women as independent entities under the law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>First Chartist petition presented to Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Thomas Carlyle’s <em>Chartism</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Penny Post established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Thomas Hardy born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>London Library established</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td><em>Punch</em> begins publication</td>
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<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Mudie’s Circulating Library opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Pentonville model prison opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>London police establish detective department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Chadwick’s <em>Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>First telegraph line in service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Factory Act limits women and children under eighteen to a twelve-hour work day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Charles Dickens’s <em>Martin Chuzzlewit</em> begins serialization (volume publication 1844)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Irish potato crop fails; beginning of the Great Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Benjamin Disraeli’s <em>Sibyl; or the Two Nations</em> published</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chronology

Friedrich Engels’s *The Condition of the Working Class in England* published

Charles Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* begins serialization (volume publication 1848)

Ten-hour Act limits women and children under eighteen to ten-hour work day in textile mills (maximum of fifty-eight hours per week)

Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* published

Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* published

William Makepeace Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* begins serial publication (volume publication 1848)

1848

Revolutionary upheaval in France, Vienna, Berlin, Parma, Rome

Cholera epidemic

Queen’s College, Oxford, founded to train and examine governesses, opening higher education to women

Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* first printed in London

Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* published

Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* published

Corn Laws abolished

Henry Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor* begins publication in *The Morning Chronicle* (two volumes published 1852; four volumes 1862)

Charles Dickens’s *David Copperfield* begins serial publication (volume publication 1850)

1849

1850

Public Libraries Act

1851

The Crystal Palace Exhibition

William Thompson (later Lord Kelvin) publishes first and second laws of thermodynamics

Cambridge University adds degree in natural sciences

1852

New Houses of Parliament open

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* published and becomes a bestseller in England and America

Charles Dickens’s *Bleak House* serial publication begins (volume publication 1853)
Chronology

1853  Cholera epidemic
      Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* published

1854  Crimean War begins; Earl of Cardigan leads the Charge of
      the Light Brigade at Balaclava that inspires the Tennyson
      poem of the same year
      Construction of London Underground (the first subway) begins
      Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South* begins serialization
      (volume publication 1855)
      Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times* begins serialization in
      *Household Words* (volume publication also 1854)

1855  Stamp Tax abolished, making newspapers more
      widely affordable
      Charles Dickens’s *Little Dorrit* begins serial publication
      (volume publication 1857)

1857  Indian Mutiny
      Matrimonial Causes Act makes divorce available without a
      special act of Parliament
      Lionel de Rothschild seated in Parliament despite failure to
      take Christian oath; opens door for Jewish civil rights in
      England
      Property qualification for election to the House of Commons
      abolished
      Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* published
      Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* begins serialization in
      *All the Year Round* (volume publication 1860)
      George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* published

1860  George Eliot’s *Mill on the Floss* published
      John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* published
      Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations* begins serialization in
      *All the Year Round* (volume publication 1861)

1861  Prince Albert dies of typhoid
      Louis Pasteur publishes germ theory of disease
      Duty on paper abolished, making published material widely
      affordable
      Ellen Price (Mrs. Henry) Wood’s *East Lynne* published
Chronology

1862
- Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley's Secret* published
- Death of William Makepeace Thackeray

1864
- First Contagious Diseases Act passed, mandating registration, compulsory medical examination, and detainment of prostitutes in garrison towns
- Charles Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* begins serial publication (volume publication 1865)
- Reform League founded to promote extension of the vote for working-class men
- Women’s suffrage petition presented to Parliament by John Stuart Mill
- Last major cholera epidemic
- Atlantic telegraph cable completed
- George Eliot’s *Felix Holt* published
- Passage of the Second Reform Bill, further reducing property qualification for the vote; Mill’s amendment to substitute “person” for “man” defeated
- Disraeli, then Gladstone, serve as Prime Minister, beginning a long-standing rivalry: Benjamin Disraeli (Conservative) becomes Prime Minister in February, but loses the office to William Gladstone (Liberal) in December. Gladstone holds post through 1874, but is then succeeded by Disraeli, who holds it until 1880. Gladstone regains power until 1885, when Liberal Party splits over Irish Home Rule; he serves a final term from 1892 to 1894
- Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* serialized in *All the Year Round* and then published in volume form
- Suez Canal opens
- Debtors Act abolishes imprisonment for debt
- Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* published
- John Stuart Mill’s *On the Subjection of Women* published

1870
- Education Act makes elementary education available to all children in England and Wales
- First Married Women's Property Act: women gain right to their own wages earned after marriage
Chronology

Home Government Association founded in Ireland
Death of Charles Dickens

1871
Trade unions legalized
Charles Darwin’s *Descent of Man* published
George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* begins serial publication (volume publication 1872)
Anthony Trollope’s *The Eustace Diamonds* begins serial publication in *Fortnightly Review* (volume publication 1872)

1872
Voting by secret ballot instituted

1874
Anthony Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now* begins serial publication (volume publication 1875)

1876
George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* published

1877
Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India
Transvaal (Boer) Republic annexed to British Empire
Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh tried for publishing inexpensive book on birth control. They are acquitted of obscenity charge, but Besant loses custody of her seven-year-old daughter

1878
Zulu War; Second Afghan War
Matrimonial Causes Act allows judicial separation for cruelty and assault
University of London opens all degrees and prizes to women
Electric lights installed on some streets in London
Charles Stewart Parnell founds Irish National Land League
General public granted unrestricted access to British Museum
Elementary education made compulsory from age seven to age ten
Employer’s Liability Act makes employers liable for injuries to workers obeying the orders of superintendents
First South African War
Death of George Eliot

1881
Irish Land Acts provide some land reforms in Ireland
Flogging abolished in the army and navy
## Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1882 | Married Women’s Property Act: women have the right to all their property earned or acquired before or after marriage.  
      | Death of Charles Darwin  
      | Third Reform Bill extends franchise to all male householders  
      | Steam turbine for generation of electricity invented  
      | Criminal Law Amendment Act raises the age of consent for girls to sixteen and makes sexual acts between males illegal  
      | Wilhelm Gottlieb Daimler invents the internal combustion engine  
      | Khartoum falls after insurrection in Sudan; General Gordon killed  
      | H. Rider Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* published |
| 1886 | Irish Home Rule bill defeated in the House of Commons  
      | Contagious Diseases Acts repealed  
      | Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* published  
      | Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee  
      | Match workers’ strike  
      | “Jack the Ripper” murders five women in London |
| 1889 | London Dock Strike, the first major success by male unskilled workers  
      | Cecil Rhodes given Royal Charter for British South Africa  
      | Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act prohibits employment of children under ten |
| 1891 | United States Congress passes the Platt-Simonds Bill (also known as the Chace Act) ending years of literary “piracy” by affording British authors copyright protection in America  
      | Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* published  
      | Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* published  
      | First automatic telephone switchboard  
      | Irish Home Rule Bill passed by Commons but defeated in the House of Lords  
      | Miners’ strike successfully resists 25 percent paycut  
      | George Gissing’s *The Odd Women* published |

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Chronology

1895  Oscar Wilde’s trial results in his conviction and imprisonment
      Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* published
      Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* published

1896  Cinema begins at Empire Theatre, London
      Both Oxford and Cambridge reject proposals to grant degrees to women

1897  Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee
      First volume of Havelock Ellis’s *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* published
      Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* published
      Death of William Gladstone
      Boer War
      School attendance mandatory to age twelve
      Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* begins serialization in *Blackwood’s* (volume publication 1902)

1900  British Labour Party founded
      Sigmund Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* published

1901  Victoria dies; Edward VII accedes to the throne
      Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* published