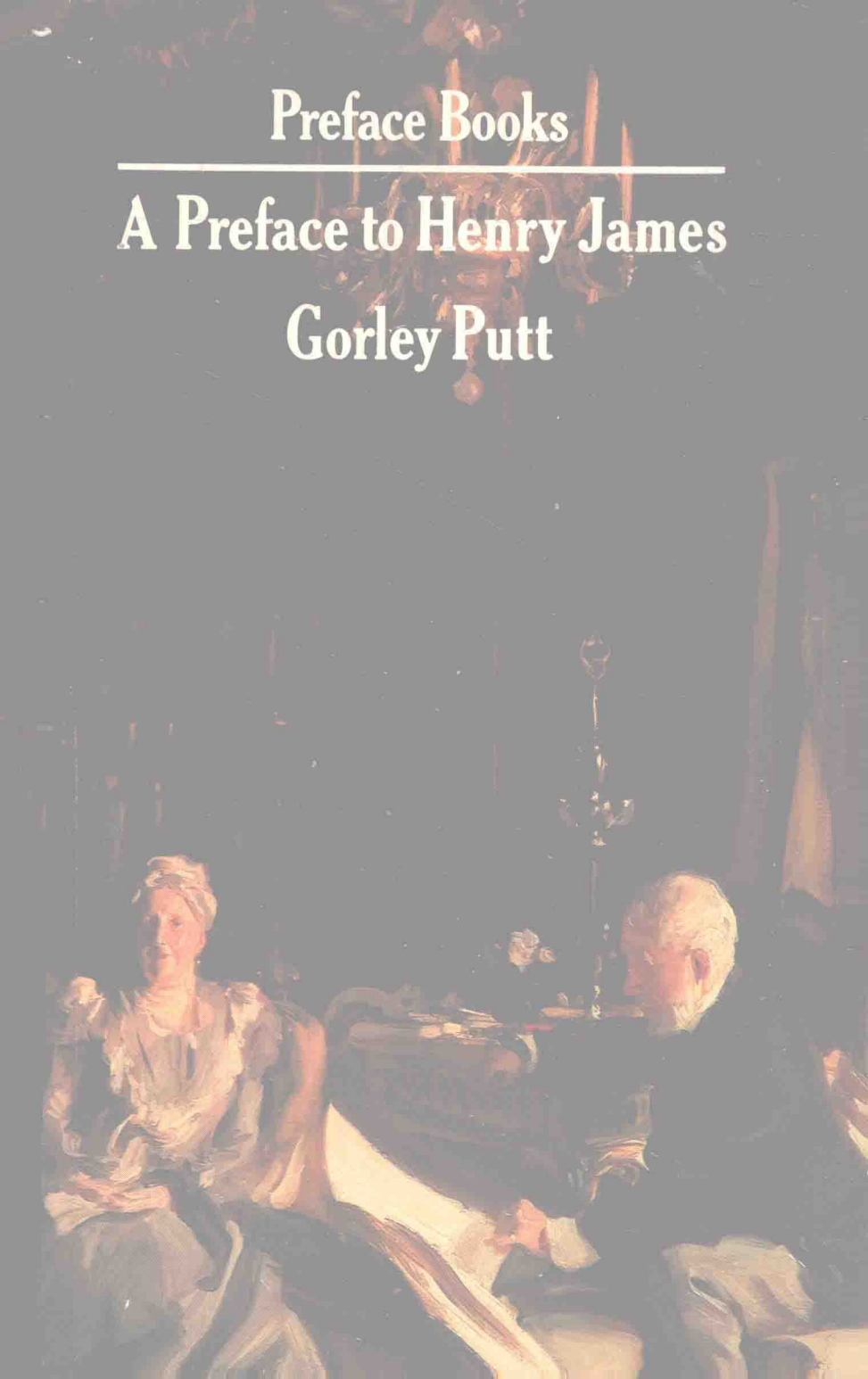


Preface Books

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A Preface to Henry James

Gorley Putt



# A Preface to Henry James

*S. Gorley Putt*



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# To Arthur Mizener

who launched me on the James ocean fifty years  
ago, at Pierson College, Yale.

*In Heaven there'll be no algebra,  
No learning dates or names,  
But only playing golden harps,  
And reading Henry James.*

(Origin undetermined)

# Foreword

Fiction so puzzling in its moral and psychological analysis and its verbal coruscation as that of Henry James was a novelty to Victorian and Edwardian readers on either side of the Atlantic, and that 'unremitting literacy' still extends a stiff challenge to modern readers of intelligence and literary taste and experience. Among the many reasons for his complexity may have been that as a tireless cultural pilgrim he mixed some of the characteristics of European traditions with those from his American upbringing and was not therefore exactly a part of any English-speaking tradition alone. Where others were moulded he was original and he grew. He became, in the years of his residence in England, an original in the social sense, an eccentric, but English readers seem always to have cherished artistic eccentricity and expected to find it.

In this most skilfully observed and written addition to the series Gorley Putt has not been entirely moulded by the format of his predecessors. While he has provided a wealth of fact, especially in Part Three, he is essentially interested in guiding our responses to the fact of the book under discussion. He has therefore minimized the materialistic elements in his survey of James's work. Historical and public issues seem to have played a decreasing part in James's intellectual nature: here was a writer committed to the private world, the arts of leisure and precisely to what we term 'the quality of life'. He was perhaps typical of his generation in one outstanding way; he left the United States for Europe and experienced a kind of colonization in reverse, a discovery of an older world, a west-to-east culture shock.

Mr Putt examines the novels in a prose of great elegance and subtlety pointing exactly to the crucial passage for discussion, the whole of it the fruit of long and devoted study of his subject. Taken altogether this book is a lesson of the master revealing the range of the novels and helping the reader to deepen his sympathies towards the plutocratic Americans visiting the art galleries and fingering their Baedeker guides, not simply the exploiters of Europe, and the aristocratic Europeans, but the true appreciators of their own civilization. We are invited to meet so many of these characters and assess them—all of them, the appreciators and the exploiters alike, sounding remarkably like James himself in their involved dialogue—and to understand them in a context of *salon*, drawing room or palazzo, and not always, as Mr Putt shows, on the *piano nobile*.

MAURICE HUSSEY  
General Editor

# Acknowledgements

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Penguin Books Ltd for adapted extracts from the introductions to *Roderick Hudson*, *The Aspern Papers and Other Stories* and *An International Episode and Other Stories*; Thames and Hudson Ltd for an adapted version of Chapter V from *A Reader's Guide to Henry James*.

I am grateful, as always, for the facilities provided by Christ's College, Cambridge, and especially for the services of the Fellows' Secretary, Mrs Sylvia Sylvester.

S. G. P.

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GORLEY PUTT is a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was Senior Tutor for the decade 1968–78. His O.B.E. was awarded in 1966 'for services to Anglo-American relations' during his work for the Harkness Fellowships of The Commonwealth Fund of New York. His most recent publication was *The Golden Age of English Drama: Enjoyment of Elizabethan/Jacobean Plays* (D. S. Brewer, 1981).

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# Chronological table

This chronological table provides only a skeletal reference guide to Henry James's literary and other activities. All his twenty-two novels and one hundred and twelve tales are recorded, the former in italics and the latter in inverted commas. Dates of novels are of publication (e.g. *The Ambassadors*, 1903, was actually written before *The Wings of the Dove*, 1902). Tales are dated by their first appearance, usually in magazines, though some first saw print in one or other of his volumes of collected stories. Sometimes these collections bore a general title (e.g. *Terminations* or *The Soft Side*), in which case the title is recorded within brackets, the constituent stories having already been recorded. A selection of James's non-fictional volumes, such as critical essays (e.g. *French Poets and Novelists*), autobiography (e.g. *A Small Boy and Others*) and travel sketches (e.g. *Italian Hours*) has also been recorded within brackets, to distinguish them from the fiction.

The right-hand column records only the major geographical locations of the author on his wanderings; shorter trips from his various major bases at New York, the Boston area, London, Paris, Florence and so on, have been omitted. Similarly, in the life of so socially active an author who was devoted to so many friends and members of his kindred, only a few significant meetings and visits are recorded.

Thanks to the devoted labours of Professor Leon Edel, this skeleton chronology may be fleshed by reference to his five-volume biography of Henry James (1953–72), revised and reissued in two paperback volumes (1977); to his *Bibliography of Henry James* (with Dan H. Lawrence, second revised edition 1961); to his twelve-volume *Complete Tales of Henry James* (1962–4); and to his four-volume selection from the *Letters* (1974–84).

## PUBLICATIONS

## JAMES'S LIFE

- 1842 William James, elder brother, born.
- 1843 HJ born, 15 April, New York. Taken to England by family.
- 1844 With family in Paris and New York.

# PUBLICATIONS

# JAMES'S LIFE

- 1845 Brother Garth Wilkinson  
born. Family moves to  
Albany, N.Y.
- 1846 Brother Robertson born,  
Albany.
- 1847 Family returns to New  
York. Sister Alice born.
- 1855 With family in Paris,  
Switzerland, London.
- 1856 London, Paris.
- 1857 Paris, Boulogne.
- 1858 Boulogne, Newport  
(Rhode Island).
- 1859 Newport, New York,  
Geneva.
- 1860 Geneva, Germany,  
Newport.
- 1861 Newport (start of  
American Civil War).  
HJ suffers an obscure  
physical injury.
- 1862 Harvard Law School.
- 1863 Harvard and Boston.
- 1864 'A Tragedy of Error'  
(first printed story)
- 1865 'The Story of a Year'  
(first signed story)
- 1866 'A Landscape Painter'  
'A Day of Days'
- 1867 'My Friend Bingham'  
'Poor Richard'
- 1864 Boston and Northampton  
(Mass.).
- 1865 Summer visits to cousin  
Minny Temple.
- 1866 Cambridge (Mass.).
- 1867 HJ sees Charles Dickens  
in Boston.

## PUBLICATIONS

- 1868 'The Story of a Masterpiece'  
'The Romance of Certain Old Clothes'  
'A Most Extraordinary Case'  
'A Problem'  
'DeGray: A Romance'  
'Osborne's Revenge'
- 1869 'A Light Man'  
'Gabrielle de Bergerac'
- 1870 'Travelling Companions'
- 1871 'A Passionate Pilgrim'  
'At Isella'  
'Master Eustace'  
(*Watch and Ward*, first novel, printed as magazine serial)
- 1872 'Guest's Confession'
- 1873 'The Madonna of the Future'  
'The Sweetheart of M. Brisieux'
- 1874 'The Last of the Valerii'  
'Madame de Mauves'  
'Adina'  
'Professor Fargo'  
'Eugene Pickering'
- 1875 (*A Passionate Pilgrim*, and other tales)  
(*Transatlantic Sketches*)  
*Roderick Hudson*  
'Benvolio'

## JAMES'S LIFE

- 1868 Declines editorship of *North American Review*.
- 1869 HJ (without family) on tour of England, France, Switzerland, Italy.
- 1870 London, Malvern, return to Cambridge (Mass.)  
Death of Minny Temple.
- 1871 Cambridge (Mass.).  
Canadian trip.
- 1872 HJ with sister Alice and aunt Kate tours Switzerland, north Italy, Germany, Paris. HJ remains in Paris.
- 1873 Rome, Florence, with brother William, Switzerland, Bad Homberg.
- 1874 Florence, Baden-Baden, Holland, return to Cambridge (Mass.).
- 1875 New York and Cambridge (Mass.).  
Returns to Paris. Meets Turgenev, Flaubert, other French writers.

## PUBLICATIONS

- 1876 'Crawford's Consistency'  
'The Ghostly Rental'
- 1877 *The American*  
'Four Meetings'
- 1878 (*French Poets and Novelists*)  
*Watch and Ward*  
*The Europeans*  
'Daisy Miller'  
'Rose-Agathe'  
'Longstaff's Marriage'  
'An International  
Episode'
- 1879 *Confidence*  
(*Hawthorne*)  
'The Pension Beaurepas'  
'The Diary of a Man of  
Fifty'  
'A Bundle of Letters'
- 1880 *Washington Square*
- 1881 *The Portrait of a Lady*
- 1882 'The Point of View'
- 1883 (First collected edition of  
novels and stories, 14  
volumes)  
(*Portraits of Places*)  
'The Siege of London'  
'The Impressions of a  
Cousin'

## JAMES'S LIFE

- 1876 Paris. HJ correspondent  
for N.Y. *Tribune*.  
Normandy and French  
provinces.
- 1877 London. English country  
visits.
- 1878 London. English country  
visits. Brother William  
married.
- 1879 London, etc., Paris.
- 1880 London, Florence,  
London.
- 1881 Venice, Rome, Italian  
trips, Switzerland,  
London, return to Boston  
and Cambridge (Mass.).
- 1882 New York, Washington,  
Cambridge (Mass.) and  
Boston, London, tour of  
France, Boston.  
Death of HJ's mother  
and father and brother  
Garth Wilkinson.
- 1883 Boston, New York,  
return to London.

## PUBLICATIONS

- 1884 (*A Little Tour of France*)  
 'Lady Barberina'  
 'The Author of  
 "Beltraffio" '  
 'Pandora'  
 'Georgina's Reasons'  
 'A New England Winter'  
 'The Path of Duty'
- 1885 (*Stories Revived*: three-volume collection of fourteen stories)
- 1886 *The Bostonians*  
*The Princess Casamassima*
- 1887 'Mrs. Temperly'
- 1888 *The Reverberator*  
 (*Partial Portraits*)  
 'The Aspern Papers'  
 'Louisa Pallant'  
 'The Liar'  
 'The Modern Warning'  
 'A London Life'  
 'The Lesson of the Master'  
 'The Patagonia'
- 1889 'The Solution'
- 1890 *The Tragic Muse*
- 1891 'The Pupil'  
 'Brooksmith'  
 'The Marriages'  
 'The Chaperon'  
 'Sir Edmund Orme'
- 1892 'Nona Vincent'  
 'The Private Life'  
 'The Real Thing'  
 'Lord Beaupré'  
 'The Visits'  
 'Sir Dominick Ferrand'

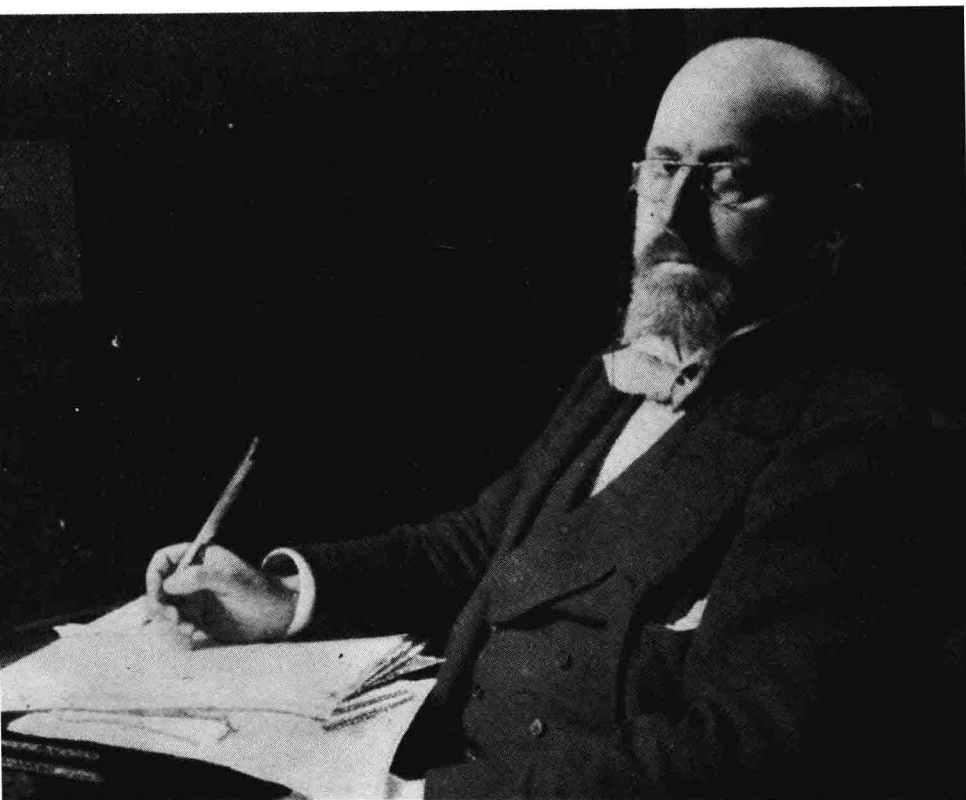
## JAMES'S LIFE

- 1884 London, Paris visit; sister Alice comes to live in England.
- 1885 London, etc., Paris visit.
- 1886 London.
- 1887 Florence, Venice, London.
- 1888 London, Geneva.
- 1889 London, Paris.
- 1890 London. HJ begins to write for the theatre. Brief Italian trip.
- 1891 HJ's dramatization of *The American* produced in English provinces and London. Brief Irish trip.
- 1892 London. Death of sister Alice. Siena, Venice, Switzerland.

## PUBLICATIONS

## JAMES'S LIFE

- 'Collaboration'  
 'Greville Fane'  
 'The Wheel of Time'  
 'Owen Wingrave'
- 1893 'The Middle Years'
- 1894 'The Death of the Lion'  
 'The Coxon Fund'
- 1895 (*Terminations*: four recent stories)  
 'The Next Time'  
 'The Altar of the Dead'
- 1896 (*Embarrassments*: four recent stories)  
*The Other House*  
 'The Figure in the Carpet'  
 'Glasses'  
 'The Way It Came'
- 1897 *The Spoils of Poynton*  
*What Maisie Knew*  
 'John Delavoy'
- 1898 'The Turn of the Screw'  
 'Covering End'  
 'In the Cage'  
 'The Given Case'
- 1899 *The Awkward Age*  
 'The Great Condition'  
 'Europe'  
 'Paste'  
 'The Real Right Thing'
- 1893 London. HJ still writing for the theatre.
- 1894 London; visits to Venice, Rome, etc.  
 Death of HJ's friend Constance Fenimore Woolson.
- 1895 London. Failure of HJ's play 'Guy Domville'.  
 Visits to Ireland, Torquay.
- 1896 Sussex, London.
- 1897 London; visits to Bournemouth, Suffolk.  
 HJ purchases Lamb House, Rye.
- 1898 Visited at Rye by brother William's son Henry, Jonathan Sturges and others.  
 Neighbourhood acquaintances include H. G. Wells and Stephen Crane.
- 1899 Rye. Paris, French Riviera, Venice, Rome.  
 Visited at Rye by Hendrik Andersen and by brother William and family.



*Henry James before shaving off his beard for the new century (compare portrait on p. 173).*



## PUBLICATIONS

- 1900 (*The Soft Side*: twelve recent stories)  
 'The Great Good Place'  
 'The Tree of Knowledge'  
 'The Abasement of the Northmores'  
 'The Third Person'  
 'Maud-Evelyn'  
 'Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie'  
 'Broken Wings'  
 'The Two Faces'  
 'The Tone of Time'  
 'The Special Type'
- 1901 *The Sacred Fount*  
 'Mrs. Medwin'  
 'The Beldonald Holbein'
- 1902 *The Wings of the Dove*  
 'Flickerbridge'  
 'The Story in It'
- 1903 *The Ambassadors*  
 (*The Better Sort*: eleven recent stories)  
 'The Beast in the Jungle'  
 'The Birthplace'  
 'The Papers'  
 (*William Wetmore Story and His Friends*)
- 1904 *The Golden Bowl*  
 'Fordham Castle'
- 1905 (*English Hours*)

## JAMES'S LIFE

- 1900 Rye. HJ abandons unfinished novel *The Sense of the Past*. HJ shaves off his beard—a new face for the new century. Acquires London base at Reform Club.
- 1901 Rye. HJ dictates his work to typist-secretary. Visit from William and family.
- 1902 Rye, London.
- 1903 Rye, London. HJ meets Jocelyn Persse and Edith Wharton.
- 1904 Rye. Return visit to U.S.A. New York, New England.
- 1905 Philadelphia, Washington, Southern States. St Louis, Chicago, California and the West, New York. HJ elected to American Academy of Arts and Letters. Return to Rye.