



Notes of a Son and Brother and The Middle Years: A Critical Edition

Henry James

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After a childhood divided between America and Europe, Henry James settled with his family in New England, first in what he regarded as an outpost of Europe, Newport, and later in Cambridge. The family letters (the initial inspiration for this autobiographical enterprise), many of which recount the early career of William James at Harvard and in Germany, also reveal Henry James Sr.'s views on the intellectual, philosophical, and social issues of the time. Henry Jr., aspiring to be "just *literary*," acknowledges his indebtedness to the widely cultured artist John La Farge, whose friendship he enjoyed during adolescence. The Civil War is recorded through the letters of his younger brother, Wilky, while Henry recalls a Whitmanesque longing for the Union soldiers he met and talked to. The death of a beloved cousin, Mary Temple, who would become the inspiration for some of his greatest fictional heroines, is documented through the passionate, questioning letters she wrote in her final year of life. In *The Middle Years* James, newly resident in London, gives his impressions of some of the literary "lions" of the time, most notably George Eliot and Tennyson. This first fully annotated critical edition of *Notes of a Son and Brother* and *The Middle Years* both offers the reader extensive support in appreciating the demands of James's late prose and illuminates the context in which one of literature's most influential figures developed a characteristic voice.

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