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Author(s): Howell Daniels

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HENRY JAMES AND "AN INTERNATIONAL EPISODE"

By Howell Daniels

In their introduction to A bibliography of Henry James¹ Leon Edel and Dan H. Laurence rightly single out the year 1878 as an example of James's astonishing literary productivity. In that year were published French Poets and Novelists, the revised Watch and Ward, Theodolinde (later to be called Rose-Agathe), Daisy Miller, The Europeans, "Longstaff's Marriage" and an International Episode, together with thirty-one articles, reviews and notes, the majority of which were published in the Nation, although James did not become their regular London correspondent until September, 1878. Throughout the seventies James, consciously or unconsciously, had been increasingly preoccupied in his fiction with the "international subject", and his letter to America also testified to his growing enchantment with Europe. The decision that he made for Europe in 1881 had in one sense been made several years earlier; in his novels, short stories and articles James may be seen constantly weighing two civilizations in the scales of his own artistic purposes, setting off the achievement of Europe against the promise of America. In writing his bio-

graphy of Hawthorne in 1879 James must have realised that his own problems were in many ways similar to those which had confronted Hawthorne in America.

As far as the international tale is concerned Oscar Cargill has shown² that the "first really conscious production of the type" was James's The American (1877). In the following year James wrote three stories which may be said to be "international" or at least to possess some of the characteristics of the international tale: Daisy Miller, The Europeans and An International Episode. The best known of these productions is, of course, Daisy Miller; but the fame of its eponymous heroine has tended to overshadow the delightful comedy of An International Episode³, in which James continues to manipulate with increasing dexterity the contrasts between Old and New World character and conduct. It was to this central theme of contrast that James returned in his preface to Lady Barbarina, the collection of tales in the New York Edition in which the revised story appears:

On the interest of contrasted things any painter of life and manners inevitably much depends, and contrast, fortunately for him, is easy to seek and to recognise: the only difficulty is in presenting it again with effect, in extracting from it its sense and its lesson. The reader of these volumes will certainly see it offered in no form so frequent or so salient as that of the opposition of aspects from country to country.

For James there is "no possibility of contrast in the human lot

so great as that encountered . . . between the distinctively American and the distinctively European outlook."⁴ He adds:

It does thus in truth come home to me that . . . my "America" and its products would doubtless, as a theme, have betrayed gaps and infirmities enough without such a kicking-up of the dramatic dust (mainly in the foreground) as I could set my "Europe" in motion for: just as my Europe would probably have limped across our stage to no great effect of procession-
al state without an ingenuous young America (constantly seen as ingenuous and young) to hold up its legendary train.⁵

In this preface of twenty-one pages James considers at varying lengths each of the stories in this volume with the single exception of An International Episode: he mentions the title but once. For James, usually an expansive writer on the subject of his own work, this was indeed critical parsimony.

Before going on to consider An International Episode it is necessary to take note of an article by James which first appeared in 1878 and which seems never to have been reprinted. Throughout that year James was obviously intensely concerned with the problems aroused and repercussions caused by Americans in Europe, and this interest may be seen in "Americans Abroad", an unsigned article which he contributed to the Nation⁶ in October, 1878. In his defence of his countrymen - for that, basically, is what the article is - James does not hesitate to criticize Americans when he is of the opinion that their behaviour justifies such strictures. At the same time he possesses the considerable advantage of

being able to see his compatriots through European eyes, a gift of incalculable value as far as the "international situation" in his fiction was concerned.

The first two points made by James concern the different attitudes of American and European toward the concept of nationality: "nothing" wrote James, "is more characteristic of our nationality than the sight of a group of persons more or less earnestly discussing it."⁷ The Englishman or Frenchman is hardly aware that "one member of European society distinguishes himself noticeably from another." Indeed, writes James, - and here there arise echoes of the philistine character of Lord Lambeth in An International Episode - even if he knew foreigners criticized him "he would be extremely indifferent to their verdict. He would comfortably assume that the standard of manners - the shaping influences - in his own country are the highest, and that if he were a gentleman according to these canons he may go his way in peace..."⁸ James goes on to make an important observation:

Americans in Europe are outsiders;⁹ that is the great point, and the point thrown into relief by all zealous efforts to controvert it. As a people we are out of European society; the fact seems to us incontestable, be it regrettable or not. We are not only out of the European circle politically and geographically; we are out of it socially, and for excellent reasons. We are the only great people of the civilized world that is a pure democracy, and we are the only great people that is exclusively commercial. Add the remoteness represented by these facts to our great and painful geographical

remoteness, and it will be easy to see why to be known in Europe as an American is to enjoy an imperfect reciprocity.

Toward the end of his article James expands this notion of an "imperfect reciprocity". He notices that combined with a national self-consciousness there is

a profound, imperturbable, unsuspectingness on the part of many Americans of the impression they produce in foreign lands . . . The great innocence of the usual American tourist is perhaps his most general quality. He takes all sorts of forms, some of them agreeable and some the reverse, and it is probably not unfair to say that by sophisticated Europeans it is harshly interpreted. They waste no time in hair-splitting; they set it down once for all as very vulgar. It may be added that there are a great many cases in which their conclusions hardly seem forced.

He then comments on the deficiencies of the European imagination in its attitude toward the United States:

It may be that we shall some day become sufficient to ourselves and lose the sense of being the most youthful, most experimental, and somehow, most irregular of the nations . . . It is only just to say, however, that the American in Europe often enters into what we have called the conscious phase by a great deal of irritation. He finds Europeans very ignorant of a country, very indifferent to a country which, in spite of irregularities, he may be pardoned for thinking a magnificent one. A few Englishmen and Germans know a good deal about the United States - a good deal more than most Americans do; but it is hardly too much to say that as a general thing as regards this subject, the European mind is a perfect blank.

This attitude of mind, this "perfect blank" suggests a reason for the popularity of the "American joke" in the nineteenth century.

Benjamin Franklin certainly played upon this ignorance of

American when he said that whales were frequently to be seen

leaping over Niagara, and James himself was undoubtedly aware of the "secret joke". In his Hawthorne he listed the "items of high civilization . . . which are absent from the texture of American life" but then added:

The natural remark, in the almost lurid light of such an indictment, would be that if these things are left out, everything is left out. The American knows that a good deal remains; what it is that remains - that is his secret, his joke, as one might say. It would be cruel, this terrible denudation, to deny him the consolation of his national gift, that "American humor" of which of late years we have heard so much.¹⁰

Several examples of this American exploitation of European credulity are to be found in An International Episode. Lord Lambeth mistakes mosquitoes for gnats, but Mr. Westgate does not disillusion him: "We shall expect you to like a good many things over here, but we shan't insist upon your liking the gnats; though certainly you'll admit that as gnats, they are fine, eh?" The intellectual idiosyncracies of Boston are also used to good effect by Mr. Westgate to the general bewilderment of his guests.

The final sentences of "Americans Abroad" leave no doubt as to where James's sympathies lie; and several of the assertions in this article find their way in fictional form into An International Episode:

A great many Americans are very ignorant of Europe, but in default of knowledge it may be said that they have a certain amount of imagination. In respect to the United States the

European imagination is motionless: and it may well seem to an American that there is something ridiculous in a scheme of the universe which leaves out a country as large as an aggregation of European kingdoms . . . It is comparatively easy to confess yourself a provincial if you really come from a province; but if you have been brought up among "big things" of every kind the admission requires an effort. On the whole the American in Europe may be spoken of as a provincial who is terribly bent upon taking, in the fullness of ages, his revenge.

Bessie Alden may be described as the first of the Jamesian heroines who takes, on behalf of her nation, the revenge to which many years of European social and cultural domination have entitled her. The revenge of poor, fated Daisy was, if anything a posthumous one, and confined to Winterbourne; Bessie's rejection of the wealth and position that Lord Lambeth has to offer is in itself a symbolic act. As some critics have pointed out, the situation in An International Episode is, in effect, a reversal of that of The American. But Bessie is also in some ways a preliminary sketch toward Isabel Archer who also rejects the suit of an English aristocrat. Although ignorant of England - Lord Lambeth is the first Englishman she has met - Bessie is one of those Americans in whose attitude toward Europe there exists, as James pointed out in his article, a certain amount of imagination.¹¹ Lord Lambeth, on the other hand, presents the "perfect blank" in relation to the history of his own country as well as to European ignorance of America. According to James, the story was a

"study - a very sincere, careful, intendedly minute one - of the state of mind of a couple of American women pressed upon by English circumstances, and I had a faith that the picture would seem life-like and comprehensible".¹² As a result of her Boston upbringing Bessie is said to be "thoughtful"; and though subjected to a tender irony is one of the most charming of James's American girls in Europe. Her illusions are rudely shaken, but she remains throughout a cool, detached observer of the life and customs about her. Mrs. Westgate is loath to leave England quickly since she knows that the Duchess of Bayswater and the Countess of Pimlico will consider that act as a moral victory; they will think "that they paralysed us!" she tells Bessie. To her sister the two ladies offer merely a clinical interest; they seem to be included within her definition of the picturesque: "They were interesting; I should have liked to have seen them again." But Bessie is, however, willing to make adjustments. On several occasions in this subtle comedy of the "international situation" James emphasises the need for the individual to adjust himself to a new environment. After arriving in Newport, Lambeth dogmatically asserts to his companion: "You know the Americans come to these big hotels to make acquaintances."

"I know nothing about it, and neither do you," said his kinsman,

who, like a clever man, had begun to perceive that the observation of American society demanded a readjustment of one's standards.¹³

In her first conversation with Lord Lambeth Bessie "didn't say the first thing that came into her head; he had come from a different society, and she was trying to adapt her conversation."¹⁴ Her final and most important adjustment to the "cynicism of public opinion" she achieves in a relatively painless manner, even though her attitude towards Lord Lambeth may sometimes be described as equivocal.

Bessie Alden's role as a passionate pilgrim is complicated by the figure of Lord Lambeth. London and its historical and literary association delight her, as does the English countryside; but there is an uncomfortable disparity between her conception of what Lambeth ought to be and what he is. In James's words, her "silhouette refused to coincide with his lordship's image; and this want of harmony vexed her more than she thought reasonable."¹⁵ Her response to the English scene is therefore somewhat qualified.

In "Americans Abroad" James distinguished between the "conscious" and the "unconscious" American in Europe, and this division is echoed by a statement of Mrs. Westgate's. She tells Bessie that there are in Europe two classes of American girls: those that walked about alone and those that did not. "You

happen to belong, my dear . . . to the class that does not."¹⁶ James in his article had described the "conscious" American as "apologetic, explanatory - a pessimist might sometimes say snobbish." Mrs. Westgate, an avowedly ironic portrait,¹⁷ belongs to this category. In her long speech of welcome to the two Englishmen she stresses that unlike some of her compatriots she apologises for nothing in America; at the same time she vacillates uneasily between oblique attacks on England and acknowledgement of - almost apology for - America's deficiencies. If Mrs. Westgate is a representative of the class of "conscious" Americans, Bessie Alden must certainly be placed within the group of James's "unconscious" heroines. Throughout the story, in addition to the contrasting of customs, the reader is made aware of a constant opposition between the relative points of view adopted by the two couples: Mrs. Westgate and Percy Beaumont represent experience, social knowledge, worldly wisdom; while Bessie and Lord Lambeth may be described as innocents who first protest against and then submit to the unwritten rules of society. A similar distinction, it might be pointed out, operates in Daisy Miller, James's most famous story of 1878, where Daisy and Winterbourne respectively are set up as examples of "unconscious" and "conscious" Americans.

Although several ideas present in "Americans Abroad" are to be

found in An International Episode, there was a more immediate impetus for the story. Oscar Cargill, who has convincingly demonstrated how James in the writing of The American was influenced by L'étrangere, a play by Alexandre Dumas fils, writes that "James could be very critical of his countrymen, but let an outsider assail them and he was up in arms. A surge of patriotic indignation prompted his assault on the play in his letter to the Tribune, but it carried beyond this report to make his work in hand an almost retaliatory response upon the French."¹⁸ Natural indignation seems to have produced a sharp reaction which took the form of The American in which James presented his own views on how his countrymen would act in a comparable situation. Two years later a similar reaction appears to have provided the stimulus for the writing of An International Episode. Once more James hurried to defend Americans from misinterpretation and prejudice; once more he showed his concern for a true and accurate representation of America and a fair and proper analysis of American behaviour. On this occasion the formal critical protest was contained in a short note in the Nation for May 30, 1878;¹⁹ An International Episode, the indirect fictional refutation, appeared seven months later in the December, 1878, and January, 1879, numbers of the Cornhill Magazine. The subject of James's note was a long

story by Laurence Oliphant²⁰ entitled The Tender Recollections of Irene Macgillicuddy. To James, Tender Recollections was "worth noting as an attempt, which has evidently made a hit, to portray from a foreign point of view the manners of New York", and he goes on to make several observations on the nature of this society as seen in Oliphant's story:

The freedom and the "smartness" of the young ladies, and the part played by married men of a certain age in bringing them out, guiding their steps in society, presiding at their debut in the "German," entertaining them at evening repasts at Delmonico's - these points had already been more or less successfully treated upon. But the great feature of New York fashion, as represented in this little satire in Blackwood, is the eagerness and energy displayed by marriageable maidens in what is vulgarly called "hooking"²¹ a member of the English aristocracy. The desire to connect itself by matrimony with the British nobility would seem to be, in the author's eyes, the leading characteristic of the New York "great world" A corresponding desire on the part of the British aristocracy not to become so connected. appears to complete the picture.

Nevertheless, Tender Recollections struck James as having a certain value in so far as it indicated the direction in which other, more gifted, authors might proceed in writing of American "society" James's own recent attempt in The Europeans to portray a particular type of American society had not been too well received; and his critical curiosity might well then be excited by a popular tale which dealt in detail with the customs and habits of New York society. Accordingly James concludes his brief review with the following remarks:

His story suggests this reflection, however, that it is possible, after all, to write tales of "American society". We are reminded that there are types there is a good deal of local color - that there is a considerable field for satire. Only, why should it be left to the cold and unsympathetic stranger²² to deal with these things? Why does not native talent take them up - anticipate the success of foreign iron, take the wind from its sails and show us, with the force of real familiarity, both the good and the evil that are to be found in Fifth Avenue and on Murray Hill? Are we then so dependent upon foreign labor that it must be left to the English to write even our "society stories?"

Some of these questions were to be taken up and answered by James in An International Episode.

The events of Tender Recollections take the form of the personal confessions of the heroine Irene Tompkins, nee Macgillicuddy. Her avowed aim in writing her recollections is "to 'show up', so to speak, the life led by the world of fashion in the American metropolis, from a purely philanthropic point of view." One can well understand James's chagrin at reading such sentences as the following, written, of course, by an Englishman:

I have tried both Worlds, Old and New; and so far as faults and follies go, I don't think there is much to choose between them. My present business is with the faults and follies of my own country, with which I feel more especially competent to deal, and which I am most desirous to see corrected and reformed. ²³

Irene then goes on to describe her family. Her mother "had an unrivalled knack of capturing distinguished foreigners, and especially British aristocrats, immediately on their arrival in New

York." The landing of two British peers, the Earl of Chowder, eldest son of the Duke of Gumbo, and Viscount Huckleberry, brings to an end the quarrel between Irene and her cousin Flora Temple over a young man named Charlie van Didntoffer. The intense interest of the two girls is prompted by the metropolitan veneration for English noblemen and by the position they hold in the scale of eligibility as far as the unmarried girls of New York are concerned: "First, the British aristocracy down to baron - we don't think much of baronets and knights; next, we like French and Russians, because that involves living a good deal in Paris."²⁴ Italians, Spaniards and, finally, Germans complete the list. The two Englishmen are all too obviously interested in Irene and Flora, and during a visit to Niagara Chowder proposes and Irene accepts him. He wishes the engagement to be kept secret because of the opposition of his family; but Irene's socially ambitious mother loses no time in announcing the event. The result is that Huckleberry hastily departs for the West while the Duke and Duchess of Gumbo, despite the million that Irene's father settles on her, peremptorily order their son to return to his "ducal parents". Irene is understandably annoyed at this implied slur upon her, and she therefore tries to impress Chowder with a fabricated ancestry. But he is unable to conceive of the existence of social distinctions

in a democracy: "As in England, it was not supposed that distinction based upon the idea of birth or caste could possibly exist in a democracy which expressly repudiated them. Hence all Americans who came to England were considered equal; no one ever thought of enquiring about their families."²⁵ In six weeks the engagement is no more. Irene consoles herself with her books and studies. She becomes more charitable toward Flora, and when Huckleberry returns from the West she suggests that he should either propose to Flora or go home. He chooses the former, and the first part of the story ends with the newly-weds setting out for the ancestral home in England.

"Irene M. is rather disappointing," wrote James; "it falls off sadly during the last half, and there is something rather arbitrary rather manqué . . . in the manner in which the author has finally disposed of his heroine." The manner is certainly arbitrary, the satire of the first part degenerating into vapid farce. Briefly, Irene enters a literary coterie and after noting the dearth of intelligence among the young men of her acquaintance, falls in love with a penniless visiting English scientist named Obadiah Tompkins. After their marriage Tompkins rapidly makes a name for himself with a "remarkable series of articles" on "The Moral Attributes of Physical Forces." By virtue of her marriage Flora is already in

the forefront of English society, while Irene finds herself in "intellectual" society which "led to our being forced upwards, whether we liked it or not." Flora finally accepts her as a social equal. It is after pondering on the implications of this acceptance that Irene decides to write her memoirs for the benefit of her former society which is "still young and fresh enough to improve."

There seems little doubt that James was strongly influenced in the writing of An International Episode by Oliphant's story. At one point in Tender Recollections Irene comments: "No wonder we have to fall back upon English dukes, or any distinguished stranger we can find, when our countrymen will not qualify themselves properly to be the husbands of intelligent and well-educated girls". What James does, in effect, is to re-write her story in the light of this statement and in the process succeeds in investing it with considerable irony. Basically the tale of an American girl who refuses to marry a peer because he is a peer, An International Episode is also a refutation of what Oliphant conceives to be the attitude of Americans toward the English aristocracy. For his own purposes of contrast and irony James preserves the same central device of introducing two Englishmen into a strange and alien environment; but in the writing of his story he may be said to have inverted the values which are present in Tender Recollections.

Whereas Irene's recollections are set largely in New York, James's tale divides with mathematical precision into neat halves: the first recording the American scene through English eyes, the second describing England from an American point of view. Henry James, as far as his satiric intent was concerned, could thus eat his cake and have it.

In his portrait of the amiable Barbarian, Lord Lambeth - which was to give him no little trouble with English reviewers - James appears to have been influenced by several passages in Oliphant's story which relate to the parallel figure:

Lord Chowder was a somewhat heavy blue-eyed blond, with a large light beard, and rather vacuous smile; but he had a sort of smart way of sharply dropping his eyeglass with a little twitch out of his eye, which, every time he did it, seemed to impart a flash of intelligence to his countenance. As I came to know him better, I accounted for it by the fact of his having suddenly to change the focus of his eye. He seemed intensely amiable and good natured. He evidently had a sluggish protoplasm, and was very easily amused, but took his jokes in a heavy sort of way . . . ²⁶

James does not use the word "sluggish" in connection with Lord Lambeth; instead, he distinguishes between an "irritable" and a "non-irritable" imagination:

And to speak of Lord Lambeth's expression of intellectual repose is not simply a civil way of saying that he looked stupid. He was evidently not a young man of an irritable imagination; he was not, as he would himself have said, tremendously clever; but, though there was a kind of appealing dullness in his eye, he looked thoroughly reasonable and

competent, and his appearance proclaimed that to be a nobleman, an athlete, and an excellent fellow, was a sufficiently brilliant combination of qualities.²⁷

Huckleberry in Tender Recollections stands in something of the same relation to Chowder as Percy Beaumont, "the clever man of the two," does to Lord Lambeth. And in the initial attraction of Huckleberry to Flora, who has "a certain brilliant nonchalance," there is a suggestion of the relationship between Beaumont and Mrs. Westgate.

Bessie Alden, another of James's passionate pilgrims, is unlike Lambeth in that she possesses an "irritable" imagination. Her conception of England is primarily literary and historical; her ideas of English society are largely derived from Thackeray and George Eliot. When she sees Lord Lambeth for the first time in England, at ease in a familiar environment, she naturally enough thinks him "handsomer and more splendid" than anything she has ever seen. She is, according to Mrs. Westgate, "very cultivated... she has studied Greek; she has read everything; she's what they call in Boston "thoughtful". Irene, too, is "thoughtful", and her intellectual leanings are ironically stressed by Oliphant. It is interesting to note that her mother objects to the marriage with Tompkins because of the issue of precedence in English society: "With our democratic views it is very disagreeable for a girl to

encounter the possibility of having to walk in after anybody because of the accident of her husband's birth. That is why really no American girl should by rights ever marry any one less than a duke. "28 To Bessie precedence is equally odious: "imagine what Kitty must feel on being informed that she's not at liberty to budge till certain other ladies have passed out ! "29 When Irene arrives in London she finds herself in that "certain class of London society which prides itself upon its intellectual attainments"; but her former friend Flora belongs to an entirely different circle. The same distinction between philosophical and frivolous society is made in An International Episode. Bessie "especially prized the privilege of meeting certain celebrated persons, authors and artists, philosophers and statesmen", but she soon comes to recognize that "If Lord Lambeth should appear anywhere, it was a symbol that there would be no poets and philosophers. "30

In addition there are several incidental similarities between the two stories. James sets his scene in New York, Newport and London; and while most of the action in Tender Recollections takes place in New York it is worth noting that the Macgillicuddy family also possesses a house at Newport "where we spent three summer months in a perpetual whirl of gaiety. " For Irene it was "the place to contract intimacies with the girls and the young men. "

James undoubtedly drew on his own memories for the description of the Newport episode,³¹ but it is more than possible that he was directed to it as a locale by the references in Oliphant's story. Irene's mother was the best in New York at "capturing distinguished foreigners"; Mr. Westgate has a similar conception of his visitors as valuable merchandise: "It's a matter of national pride with me that all Englishmen should have a good time . . . please to consider yourselves my property; and if any one should try to appropriate you, please to say, Hands off - too late for the market!"³² Both authors direct a certain amount of satire at Boston and its intellectual atmosphere. Thus, according to Irene, Charlie van Didntoffer "lacked what in Boston (pronounced not inappropriately Boreston) is called culture (pronounced culchaw)" and she therefore puts him through a course of Dickens's novels to be followed by one on "New England thought." Mr. Westgate bewilders his guests with the remark: "At Boston, you know, you have to pass an examination at the city limits, and when you come away they give you a kind of degree." Finally James seems to have duplicated the theme of matriarchal domination in the English upper classes. In Tender Recollections Chowder is ordered home after the news of his engagement has been made public; Lord Lambeth is also subjected to parental authority, although in his case it is

concealed in a false telegram. Oliphant does not directly present the Duchess of Gumbo, but Irene remarks to a friend who is interested in Chowder: "There is only one thing I will tell you ... it is not Chowder that you will find any difficulty with, but the Duchess." Mrs. Westgate is of much the same opinion. Discussing Lambeth's parents, she tells her sister: "I don't know what power they have to interfere, but I know that a British mamma may worry her son's life out." It is her interview with Lambeth's "natural protectors" that finally enlightens Bessie to the cynicism of public opinion and her consequent position in English eyes.

Critical obtuseness and patriotic misinterpretation may generally be said to have characterized the reception of Daisy Miller and An International Episode. And to the history of the latter story there must be added a postscript that, in the light of James's "Americans Abroad" with its plea for a greater understanding of Americans by Europeans, is highly ironic. Instead of James's story being accepted or rejected on its literary merits alone, it degenerated into yet another incident in the long and frequently bitter history of social criticism between England and America in the nineteenth century. After publication in the Cornhill An International Episode was included as the second of three stories in the two volume collection issued in London by Macmillan with

the title Daisy Miller and Other Stories. James had previously received his brother William's strictures on The Europeans, and he accordingly advised him not to read An International Episode since it was "quite in the same manner."³³ But William evidently liked the story, for on January 18, 1879, James wrote to his mother:

Please tell William and Alice that I received a short time since their kind note . . . complimenting me on the first part of the International Episode. You will have read the second part by this time, and I hope you won't, like so many of my friends here (as I partly know and partly suspect,) take it ill of me as against my 'British entertainers'. It seems to me myself that I have been very delicate; but I shall keep off dangerous ground in future. It is an entirely new sensation for them (the people here) to be (at all delicately) ironized or satirised, from the American point of view, and they don't at all relish it. Their conception of the normal in such a relation is that the satire should be all on their side against the Americans, and I suspect that if one were to push this a little further one would find that they are strongly sensitive.³⁴

James now found himself in the uncomfortable position of having written two stories, Daisy Miller and An International Episode, which together pleased neither the Americans nor the English. The popular reaction in America to the former is well known;³⁵ in England, as James mentions in the above-quoted letter to his mother, the story was "a really quite extraordinary hit."

Remembering James's remarks in "Americans Abroad", one suspects that had Daisy been English rather than American the story

would have been a good deal less successful in England;³⁶ she acted perhaps in the way in which the majority of the English reading public expected her to act. And so when, after reading the first story in the Macmillan volume, the English reader turned to An International Episode, it was hardly surprising that the satire directed at the English nobility should be received with so ill a grace. In his letter to his mother James had already given some indication of how his tale had been received; but it was a review by Mrs. F.H. Hill, wife of the editor of the Daily News, that finally brought his discontent and annoyance to the surface.³⁷ In her article Mrs. Hill discusses Daisy's "innocent fashionable simplicity" and also praises the story as "a perfect specimen of a minute word picture." She stresses, however, that Daisy is an American: "we are quite certain that we know what her voice was like, and in what delicate modulation she uttered her little Americanisms." Even the "best and most refined" of James's Americans use "words and phrases which other English-speaking persons are accustomed to think vulgar"; she then concedes that "the odd phrases do not seem vulgar when Mr. James's people use them - they seem only quaint." But she refuses to accept Lambeth and Beaumont as being representative of English gentlemen:

This grace, however, of drawing vulgar people who are not vulgar, our author chooses, as he has a perfect right to do, to restrict to his own country men and women. When he has to deal with English people, his cunning or his will is laid aside. We feel bound to protest against the manners of Lord Lambeth and Mr. Percy Beaumont in "An International Episode", being received as typical of the manners of English gentlemen. As individual characters we take them on their merits and judge them accordingly, but true as types they certainly are not.

Mrs. Hill, after objecting to the way in which James's English characters speak, concludes her review in forthright fashion:

Mr. James does not choose his English titles happily, nor are the manners of his English fine ladies pretty. Perhaps he does not consider that English manners are pretty, and we have no doubt he has had ample means of judging. ³⁸

In his letter to Mrs. Hill James states explicitly that his portraits of the Duchess of Bayswater and the Countess of Pimlico "are a feature of a special case, and they are certainly not an overcharged one." He further maintains that "the Lord Lambeths of the English world are, I think, distinctly liable, in the turn of their phrases, just as they are in the gratification of their tastes - or some of them - to strike quiet conservative people like your humble servant as vulgar." The vocabulary of Lord Lambeth was drawn from observation of the "racketing, pleasure-loving 'golden-youth' section of English society"; and in this way James implies that the portrait is grounded in reality, a fact which Mrs. Hill found difficult to accept. Another reviewer, George Saintsbury,

also refused to accept the possibility that living English models might have existed and categorically stated: "The character of Lord Lambeth is . . . obviously drawn rather after Thackeray's originals than from observation of any living Englishman." The fact that James may have been gently satirizing the English upper classes seems to have totally escaped him. The irony he assumes to be directed exclusively at the American characters, and he postulates for James "the fate of Orpheus" at the hands of his American readers for the "satire with which he depicts the uneasy vanity of two American ladies in London society."³⁹ The probable explanation for this critical myopia is offered in James's letter to Mrs. Hill: "Meanwhile I shall draw plenty of pictures of disagreeable Americans as I have done already, and the friendly Briton will see no harm in that ! - it will seem to him a part of the natural fitness !"

It was left to the Atlantic Monthly, which had generously reviewed Daisy Miller and The Europeans, to provide the last and perhaps most fitting words in the controversy. In June, 1879, its reviewer wrote of the "refined practical joke" which had been played upon English readers. He summed up the critical reaction to An International Episode in these words:

In the pause between the two parts of the drama, when it

seemed even to ourselves as if the balance of the laugh were to be against America, plaudits loud and long resounded the other side of the water . . . But when the tables were turned - and turned with what noiseless rapidity and smiling grace ! there was a moment of vacant bewilderment, and then a burst of something very different from applause . . . The British grandmother is ever slow to perceive herself smiled at, but by the time she had adjusted her reading-glass and slowly perused the account of the Duchess of Bayswater's call on the American adventurers . . . that abominable supposition had taken shape in her august mind. The British lion does not lightly own himself pervious to a thorn, but even so tiny and polished a one as Mr. James has insinuated into his paw is enough to make him shake that member in a terrible manner, and lift up howlings audible throughout two continents, - howlings, however, which when heard at a certain distance are harmless and even entertaining.⁴⁰

James's chagrin at the fate of An International Episode is easily understood. The misunderstandings and misinterpretations on which he had commented in "Americans Abroad" and in his note on Tender Recollections - to correct which An International Episode may be said to have been partly written - were to continue in the reception of the story itself. Most criticisms were directed at Lord Lambeth's vocabulary and at James's portrait of the Duchess of Bayswater; such an uproar had not been known since 1863, when another American, Nathaniel Hawthorne, had in Our Old Home made a similar mistake in ridiculing the sacred institution of aristocracy.⁴¹ As a result of its reception the title of James's story came to have wider dimensions than he intended, and it was perhaps not surprising that when revising his work for inclusion

the New York Edition he should choose to forget the unjustified
censure and reproach which his innocent story had once provoked.

REFERENCES

1. London, 1957, pp. 13 - 14.
2. "The First International Novel", PMLA, LXXIII, September, 1958, pp. 418 - 425.
3. First published in the Cornhill, December, 1878, and January, 1879, it was very slightly revised before being issued by Macmillan as the second story in Daisy Miller and Other Stories, February, 1879. Harpers had brought out a separate American edition in the previous month. The story appeared with The Pension Beaurepas and The Point of View as volume 12 of the Macmillan edition of 1883, and it was included with certain revisions in Lady Barbarina, Vol. XIV of the New York Edition.
4. Lady Barbarina, The Novels and Stories of Henry James, London, 1922, p. v.
5. Ibid., p. viii.
6. Vol. XXVII, October 3, 1878, pp. 208 - 9. This article was James's contribution to a controversy in the columns of this periodical on the subject of the behaviour of Americans abroad. In the Nation for April 18, 1878, an article entitled "The American Colony in France" appeared above the initials "I.M." The author wrote of the prevailing "wonderful ignorance of the habits, behavior, and feelings of Europeans," and in his comments on American women who remain in France he singled out "young girls travelling together without chaperonage or duennage, sans peur and all, of course, sans reproche; but no amount of conscious rectitude will get

them the respect of people who are accustomed to draw certain inferences from certain appearances. " A defence of American women by "J. P. T. " then appeared in the correspondence columns on May 30, 1878. "J. P. T. " thought that "I. M. " "by generalising exceptional behavior . . . has cast an unworthy suspicion upon multitudes of American women in Europe; and by endorsing the prejudicial and unscrupulous gossip of a class as the tone of society, he has given a picture of society in Paris which may well disquiet in America those who have female relations or friends in the French capital". In view of the fact that Daisy Miller was about to appear in the Cornhill for June, 1878, these further observations by "J. P. T. " are of particular interest: "No doubt, years ago, European society was scandalized by the irruption of American manners upon the Continent, and especially by the fast and independent ways of American women . . . But those days of misconception and prejudice are passing away. " The letter concludes, somewhat smugly, by suggesting that while there were American women "who discredit their sex by their effrontery" they would be found chiefly in Paris; Germany - from where the letter was sent - understood and accepted "the personal independence to which the American girl is trained . . ."

In connection with the title of James's article it is perhaps worth mentioning that a pirated version of Daisy Miller had appeared in the New York Home Journal with the sub-title "Americans Abroad".

7. Fenimore Cooper in his portraits of belligerently nationalistic Americans such as Steadfast Dodge was perhaps the first American consciously to present this trait in fiction.
8. James goes on to mention friends who have encountered "a few more specimens of the young unattached American lady . . . and, according to their different point of view, she has seemed to them a touching or a startling phenomenon. " Possibly James also had in mind his own recently published Daisy Miller, critical interpretations of which were divided as to whether the heroine was "touching" or "startling".
9. cf. James's letter to William James, May 1, 1878: "I am still completely an outsider here, and my only chance for becoming a little of an insider (in that limited sense in which an American can ever do so) is to remain here for the present. " -

- Letters of Henry James, ed. Percy Lubbock, London, 1920, I, p. 60.
10. The Shock of Recognition, ed. Edmund Wilson, London, 1956, p. 460.
 11. This quality she shares with an earlier heroine, Caroline Spencer, to whom the narrator of Four Meetings remarks: "You have the native American passion - the passion for the picturesque. With us, I think, it is primordial - antecedent to experience. Experience comes and only shows us something we have dreamt of." - Scribner's Monthly, XV, November, 1877, p. 46. A greatly revised and expanded version of this passage in the New York Edition begins: "You've the great American disease, and you've got it 'bad' - the appetite, morbid and monstrous, for colour and form, for the picturesque and the romantic at any price." - The Author of Beltraffio, Novels and Stories, p. 241.
 12. Selected Letters, ed. Leon Edel, London, 1956, p. 107.
 13. Daisy Miller and Other Stories, London, 1879, I, p. 248.
 14. Ibid., II, pp. 5 - 6.
 15. Ibid., p. 129.
 16. Ibid., pp. 60 - 61. This distinction is in many ways similar to that found in some of W.D. Howells's novels. In a letter to James he described a conflict occurring between "two extreme American types: the conventional and the unconventional." - Life in Letters, ed. Mildred Howells, London and New York, 1929, I, pp. 174 - 5.
 17. Selected Letters, pp. 107 - 8.
 18. "The First International Novel", p. 423.
 19. p. 357.
 20. Journalist, traveller, one-time member of Parliament and mystic, Oliphant (1829 - 1888) was the author of many articles and books including the popular Piccadilly. Tender

Recollections first appeared in two parts in Blackwood's December, 1877, and January, 1878. In May of 1878 it was issued anonymously as one of the stories in the first volume of a new series of Tales from Blackwood. Although this publication was the ostensible cause of the review James had probably read the story on its first appearance, for he refers in his note to "that clever little story which a few months since was the occasion of a good deal of amusement and conjecture." Tender Recollections was again reprinted in Traits and Travesties, 1882, when Oliphant finally acknowledged authorship. A prefatory note denies the caricaturing of individuals and goes on: "If I have laughed at the follies of the fashionable world in New York, they are certainly not greater, are far more harmless than those which characterise the same world in the great cities of Europe . . . I am encouraged to think that my American friends regard this story with a certain complacency, because all the claimants for its authorship have been Americans - indeed, one went so far as to write a continuation of it."

21. James presumably takes over the word from Oliphant's story. It is interesting to note that Percy Beaumont says to Lord Lambeth concerning Bessie Alden: "Depend upon it she will try to hook you." In the revised edition, however, the sentence becomes: "Depend upon it she'll try to land you." Two of the most famous of international marriages had already taken place in the seventies: in 1874 Jennie Jerome married Lord Randolph Churchill, and in 1876 Consuelo Yznaga married the Duke of Manchester.
22. Earlier in his note James had written: "Conjecture . . . after indulging in a good many fanciful guesses, has attributed the thing, without contradiction, we believe, to Mr. Laurence Oliphant."
23. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CXXII, December, 1877, p. 656.
24. Ibid., p. 663.
25. Ibid., p. 669. In the light of this statement compare Mrs. Westgate's account of the Duke of Erin-Green.

26. Ibid., p. 664.
27. Daisy Miller and Other Stories, II, p. 9.
28. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CXXIII, January, 1878, p. 47.
29. Daisy Miller and Other Stories, II, p. 138.
30. Ibid., p. 132.
31. cf. James's essay on Newport written in 1870: "Nowhere else in this country - nowhere, of course, within the range of our better civilization - does business seem so remote, so vague, and unreal. It is the only place in America in which enjoyment is organized. . . Individuals here, of course, have private cares and burdens to preserve the balance and dignity of life; but collective society conspires to forget everything that worries. It is a singular fact that a society that does nothing is decidedly more pictorial, more interesting to the eye of contemplation, than a society which is hard at work." - Portraits of Places, London, 1883, p. 342.
- The following remarks of James are also of interest: "I should hardly come to Newport for the materials of a tragedy. Even in their own kind, the social elements are as yet too light and thin. But I can fancy finding here the motive of a drama which should depend more on smiles than tears." - pp. 343 - 4.
32. Daisy Miller and Other Stories, I, p. 233.
33. Letters of Henry James, I, p. 66.
34. Ibid., pp. 67 - 8. In a letter of June 8 to Grace Norton James wrote of the "great plump flourishing uglinesses and drearinesses which offer themselves irresistibly as pin-cushions to criticism and irony. The British mind is so totally un-ironical in relation to itself that this is a perpetual temptation." - p. 70.
35. Many years later W.D. Howells wrote: "It is pathetic to remember how "Daisy Miller" was received, or rather rejected, as an attack on American girlhood, and yet it is perfect-

ly intelligible that it should have been taken so by Americans who had still a country to be so inclusively proud of that they could not bear the shadow of question to fall upon any part of it." He then suggests that if Daisy Miller were to "come again" Americans would see her "innocent freedom in the face of immemorial convention with the liberal and tolerant pleasure which the English at once felt in it." - Heroines of Fiction, London and New York, 1901, II, p. 169.

36. At least one book was written to refute James's supposed slurs on American womanhood: Virginia Wales Johnson's An English "Daisy Miller", Boston, 1882. Dedicated to "American Women" this short tale traced the scandalous life and pathetic death of Ethel Hooper, a convention-defying English girl on the Continent.
37. James wrote to Mrs. Hill a long letter of self-justification, citing his aims and purposes, which has been printed by Leon Edel in his Selected Letters, pp. 103 - 8. Professor Edel points out that this is the only letter by James to a reviewer of one of his works which is known to exist.
38. Daily News, March 21, 1879, 6 : 4.
39. The Academy, XV, March 22, 1879, p. 256. The character of Lord Lambeth may also owe something to that of Lord Rufford in Trollope's novel The American Senator, London, 1877 one of the most humorous and at the same time most percipient of nineteenth century novels dealing with Anglo-American relations.
40. Vol XLIII, June. 1879 p. 759.
41. In his description of the English dowager: "She has an awful ponderosity of frame, not pulpy. like the looser development of our few fat women, but massive with solid beef and streaky tallow; so that (though struggling manfully against the idea) you inevitably think of her as made up of steaks and sirloins. When she walks her advance is elephantine. When she sits down, it is on a great round space of her Maker's footstool, where she looks as if nothing could ever move her." - Our Old Home London, 1863, I, p. 73. James's description of the Duchess was modestly and perhaps wisely confined to the fact that she

was "a large lady, with a fine fresh colour."

James might well have been commenting on the reception of his own work when he wrote of Our Old Home in his Hawthorne: "The book gave but limited satisfaction, I believe, in England, and I am not sure that the failure to enjoy certain manifestations of its sportive irony has not chilled the appreciation of its singular grace." Throughout the century many American commentators had noticed the tendency in all strata of English society to revere aristocracy. Hawthorne's wife, for example, wrote to her father in the fifties: "It is a deep and great question - this about rank. Birth and wealth often are causes of the superior civilization and refinement that are found with them. In this old civilization there seems to be no jealousy, no effort to alter position..." - Quoted in Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, Memories of Hawthorne, London, 1897, p. 256. James was to explore some of the implications of the above statement in The Princess Casamassima.