

V I V I A N Z E N A R I

Henry James's Civil War Stories The Homefront Experience and War Romance¹

Henry James wrote three short stories with Civil War settings: "The Story of a Year" (1865), "Poor Richard" (1867), and "A Most Extraordinary Case" (1868).² In "The Story of a Year," Lizzie Crowe and John Ford secretly become engaged before John leaves to fight with the Union army, but Lizzie's commitment falters when she meets Robert Bruce. "Poor Richard" is about a rivalry over heiress Gertrude Whittaker between a downtrodden farmer and two Civil War soldiers. In "A Most Extraordinary Case," Ferdinand Mason, a Civil War veteran suffering from a mysterious ailment, falls in love with his aunt's ward, Caroline, while he is recuperating in the countryside. As these plot summaries suggest, James's stories resemble popular domestic and sentimental stories of the period; more specifically, James's stories belong to a subgenre that Alice Fahs calls "war romance": stories of women in love with soldiers in spite of or because of the war's interventions.³

Yet as Peter Collister states, "All of these Civil War tales challenge prevailing conventions" (90): James's stories both belong to and resist the conventions of war romance. This resistance in part stems from the complicated representation of masculinity many critics consider to be characteristic of James's oeuvre generally.⁴ These three stories must also, however, be put in the specific context of the Civil War. The particular manifestation of the war romance genre in James's stories helps reveal the nature of James's critique. Each story expresses pessimism about the relationship between the soldier and his community. "The Story of a Year" contradicts, often in metafictional ways, the characteristics of war romance. "Poor

Richard” questions the idea that war helps men become manly. Most bleakly, “A Most Extraordinary Case” suggests that home, the sanctuary which soldiers are supposed to protect and to which they are supposed to long to return, may be the source of a soldier’s suffering.

James and the War-Time Community

Henry James did not fight in the American Civil War. He was drafted, but he was exempted for unspecified medical reasons, perhaps because of an injury he incurred while he helped put out a fire in Newport, Rhode Island, shortly after the war began (Hoffman and Hoffman 529-30).⁵ Some critics have interpreted James’s three Civil War stories as reflections of James’s “uneasy isolation” from the young men who went to war (Aaron 113).⁶ James himself interpreted his state of mind in *Notes of a Son and Brother* using a theme prevalent in Civil War literature: during war, all citizens suffer for the sake of their community. James’s injury, though an “infinitely small affair in comparison” to the “great public convulsion” of the war, was for him “a huge comprehensive ache, and there were hours at which one could scarce have told whether it came most from one’s own poor organism, still so young and so meant for better things, but which had suffered particular wrong, or from the enclosing social body, a body rent with a thousand wounds and that thus treated one to the honour of a sort of tragic fellowship” (296-97). The ideas of a “huge comprehensive ache,” a wounded “social body,” and a “tragic fellowship” make his injury part of, not separate from, war’s tragedy. On the boat ride back from his visit to a Union soldiers’ rest camp (Hoffmann and Hoffmann 540), James’s injury flares up because, he supposes, of his exertion on the trip. He finds himself associating his pain with the camp and, by extension, with the tired soldiers he met and with the war itself: “wounds against wounds, or the compromised, the particular taxed condition, at the least, against all the rest of the debt then so generally and enormously due, one [that is, James] was no less exaltedly than wastefully engaged in the common fact of endurance” (*Notes* 317-18). His comparisons of his injury and soldiers’ injuries, James realizes, “threatened ridicule if they are overstated” (318). Both the older and the younger James knew that a major cost of his nonparticipation was that his fellow New Englanders could question his manliness. In his discussion of the Newport fire, James notes drily that when “the willing youths” in the community “were mostly starting to their feet” to work the pumps, for James to “have trumped up a lameness at such a juncture could be made to pass in no light for graceful” (297). James had felt social pressure to leap to action because Americans, especially American men, venerated action: “the

hurrying troops, the transfigured scene, formed a cover for every sort of intensity, made tension itself in fact contagious—so that almost any tension would do, would serve for one's share" (298-99). At the time, the young James half-convincing himself that his injury was neither coincidence nor bad luck, then, but rather the product of a general enthusiasm for physical action after war's declaration. Even as a noncombatant, then, James could claim a connection to soldiers, since the "contagion" of war permitted "any tension" to "serve for one's share," James's share being the injury he incurred while putting out a fire in his town.

James thus believed that everyone, even those who did not fight, were part of an ethic that valorized both physical action and the physical suffering that arose from it. This belief was shared by many other Americans at the time. The American Civil War, as did all wars fought by civilians through a sense of nationalism, afforded ordinary American men the opportunity to participate in activities once associated with the aristocracy or with the professional soldier class (Braudy 265-66). At stake were not simply the ideological and political ramifications of the Civil War but also the general social and personal goals that war could advance for its people. For both North and South, the war permitted both young Americans and the young American nation to develop the masculine qualities of strength and stoicism. According to Gerald Linderman, Union and Confederate soldiers considered "manliness" to be a near-synonym for courage (7-8). Both soldiers and civilians assumed the war would allow men to measure their courage by proving they could hold firm under fire or during attack (20-21). War also would provide a rite of passage from childhood to manhood, especially for those many Civil War soldiers in their teens, including James's two younger brothers, Wilkie and Bob.⁷ Indeed, in his wounded son Wilkie, Henry James, Sr., noted "so much manhood so suddenly achieved."⁸ When Bob considered quitting the army, the elder Henry chastized Bob's "passing effeminacy" and advised his son "to be a man, and force yourself to do your whole duty."⁹ After all, one way to prove one's manliness was to acquire a wound. The desire of Stephen Crane's hero Henry Fleming for "the red badge of courage" reflected the belief that a soldier's wounds were a visible sign of manliness put to the test (Linderman 30-32). As Michael Kimmel (ix) has argued, in America manhood requires constant testing; war provided the ultimate test.

Americans further connected this striving for personal development to a striving for national development. As David Shi notes, "Prominent New Englanders predicted that the war would do more than end slavery and nullify secession; they saw in the struggle a catalyst for societal regeneration and masculine revival" (47).¹⁰ John Weiss wrote in 1862 that the war could "restore attributes and prerogatives

of manhood”—just as men privately fought against their “habits and deficiencies” so as to return to “the pure manlike elements of his nature,” a nation could “go to war” against its deficiencies and restore its “unity,” which would give “the largest freedom” for all and would destroy “poverty and misery” (680). Henry James, Sr., also “interpreted the onset of fighting as a natural transition in the life of the nation” (Shi 49); according to him, war would move America “from youth to manhood, from appearance to reality, from passing shadows to deathless substance” (“Social Significance” 117). The war would allow morality and revolutionary ideals to resurge after years of corruption caused by the North’s growing commercialism and industrialization (Paludan 22-25). As Horace Greeley put it, “yesterday we were esteemed a sordid, grasping, money-loving people, too greedy to gain to cherish generous and lofty aspirations. Today vindicates us from that reproach, and demonstrates that beneath the scum and slag of forty years of peace, and in spite of the insidious approaches of corruption the fires of patriotic devotion are still burning” (4).

In this project to revive the ideals associated with the American nation, Civil War soldiers were acting on behalf of the community. The soldiers’ individual experiences constituted an experience for the towns and cities out of which they came. This close relationship between military and civilian life conformed to the trend in the nineteenth century towards “normalizing” the soldier by emphasizing his connections with everyday society, especially the family, rather than his exclusion from it (Braudy 297-301). Some enlisted soldiers believed that the personal qualities that made them valuable members of the community, such as moral purity and innate courageousness, predicted success on the battlefield more than military training did (Linderman 83-87). In terms of the practical organization and execution of Civil War battles, the home front was both a base and a target. Individual states, not the federal government, organized the bulk of enlistments, with governors often appointing officers based on political favouritism and appeasement of local elites (Paludan 18-20). Recruitment and training was locally organized, and civilians often lived and worked among the military (Linderman 39-43). It was common practice to send soldiers back to the home front as recruiters (Linderman 42). Civilians could face attack themselves on the home front. Initially, both sides of the war viewed attacks on civilians and their property as immoral, but within a couple of years the need for supplies, as well as the accumulated hostility against the enemy, made confiscation and destruction of civilian property commonplace. The guerrillas of the South, many of whom had official recognition as Confederate troops, specialized in destructive raids and

sniper attacks against both Union soldiers and pro-Union civilians in the border states (McPherson 210-11; Paludan 291). By 1864 the Union Army was attacking and occupying southern communities as a military tactic, the burning of Atlanta and the expulsion of its citizens being a well-known example (Linderman 180-215). The home front was therefore both a source of the military's offensive strength and an enemy target that required defence. Attachment to home was a quality that soldiers cultivated and of which American society approved. As Alice Fahs notes in her study of war-time popular culture, "the soldier's imagined longings for home were . . . deemed highly appropriate" (106).

War-time ideals about the nurturing relationship between soldiers and the homefront faltered noticeably as the war progressed and human costs were counted. The Civil War killed and injured more Americans per capita than any other war has before or since.¹¹ The presence of medical personnel at battlefields for both North and South meant that battle-scarred men, many with amputated limbs—almost 30,000 amputations took place (Paludan 324-26)—returned home as pervasive reminders of war's destructiveness. By late 1862, the North was having difficulty getting recruits. Rallies, speeches and patriotic poetry were supposed to boost the apparent wane in patriotism (Maher 27), but even so, 1862 militia recruitment resulted in fewer enlistments than expected. The Union government therefore held conscription drafts in 1863 and 1864 and introduced \$300 bounties for volunteer enlistment in 1863 (McPherson 384). A soldier with money, however, could avoid enlistment by finding a replacement or paying \$300; as a result, "of the 776,829 names called in all three national drafts, only 46,347 men were actually held for military service" (Maher 28). Reports of devastating battles and of the hardships of daily life in war camps reached the civilian population through soldiers' correspondence and newspapers (Paludan 328). The notion that courage was sufficient for success in war quickly became suspect (Linderman 156), since the "courageous" soldiers tended to die while the "cowardly" soldiers lived.

Nine in 10 Northerners never served in the Union army¹²; like them, James read about the Civil War in newspapers and in correspondence from soldiers. In *Notes to a Son and Brother*, James publishes letters from his brothers Wilkie and Bob about their war experiences (385-401), and he includes an August 1863 letter by his father describing Wilkie's injury (241-42). During and shortly after the war, James reviewed some early Civil War literature, including J. W. De Forest's *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty* and Walt Whitman's *Drum-Taps*. Contemporary readers could find many references in James's stories to specific names and dates related to the war (Beck 225-27). Although he was not a soldier,

James experienced war, and contrary to what Edmund Wilson states in *Patriotic Gore* (662), James did confront the Civil War in his fiction. His was the home-front experience.

War Romance

James is usually considered to be part of the American realist movement of the late-nineteenth century, which some critics argue arose because of the Civil War's harshness (Shi 11, 45). The mid-1860s, however, were still dominated by the genres of sensation and sentiment (Reynolds 183). Sensation "emphasized bold action, striking effects on the emotions, sharply drawn heroes and villains, and highly conventionalized, florid, even lurid language" (Fahs 226-27). The presumed adventurousness of war spurred the publication of sensational war fiction such as Sarah Palmer's *Six Months Among the Secessionists* and Wesley Bradshaw's *The Picket Slayer: The Most Thrilling Story of the War* (see Fahs 226-55). The plot of "Special Service," an anonymous short story published in *Harper's Weekly*, is representative of this genre. The Confederate suitor of the heroine, Emma, leads a group of guerillas who attack pro-Union homes; in one attack he kills the father and brother of Emma's Unionist suitor Bradford. The Confederate tries to force Emma into marriage but is stopped by the sudden arrival of Bradford, who shoots the Confederate in the head. John Esten Cooke, author of *Surry of Eagle's Nest* and its sequels, was already a career writer when he joined the Confederate Army. His novels are neo-medieval adventures, preoccupied with the machinations of sinister villains and mysterious anti-heroes, coincidental meetings, and damsels in distress. American novels of action and adventure in the years during and shortly after the Civil War more closely resemble gothic and pulp fiction than *The Red Badge of Courage*.

In the meantime, sentimental fiction took its own approach to war. Works of American sentiment generally "celebrated sympathy, not self-communion; they portrayed experiences of emotion as social events rooted in human relationships, legitimized through being witnessed by or communicated to another" (Fahs 94-95). During the Civil War, this type of popular literature was interested in the emotions and thoughts of soldiers, particularly the soldier's longings for home, rather than in descriptions of battles (103). A new sub-genre, intended for a female audience and featuring life at home, arose. Fahs calls this genre "war romance" (130-34). Fahs notes two references to the genre of war romance in periodicals of the time: "Romances of the War" in *The Round Table* and in M.G. Snow's "A Gossip about Novels" in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (called "war stories"

[696]). The term “war romance” was also the name of a column that *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* began running at the war’s outbreak (Fahs 6). In the standard plot of the war romance, the heroine sees her beloved off to war, though under her protestations. News of a battle reaches the heroine, and she learns that her beloved has been killed. At the story’s end, the lover returns home unscathed, the news of his death having been erroneous, and the two lovers marry. *Harper’s Weekly* published fifty-six war romances during 1862 and 1863 (Fahs 131). A simple form of this plot occurs in the anonymous story “Surprised,” which tells of nothing more than a soldier’s train trip home and his unannounced night-time entrance into the family home. The stories tend to be more complex than that, however. Sometimes the war romance establishes a love triangle, including a rival for the man or woman who is affiliated with the enemy; often the female protagonist has to choose between two brothers who are fighting on opposite sides of the war: in the pro-Union atmosphere of northern publications, the Unionist succeeds in his courtship. If the war romance soldier is seriously injured, his beloved remains loyal, not only despite his wound but also because of the wound, which was an emblem of patriotism and manly courage (in “Aunt Hepzie’s Warning,” she assists the doctor with her beloved’s amputation). “A Leaf from a Summer” gives a counterexample of a worthy woman: the soldier dies in hospital after his lover rejects him because he has had a limb amputated. This story nevertheless models proper womanly behaviour through the story’s narrator, a woman who conceals her love for the male protagonist and watches silently while the male protagonist falls in love with an undeserving woman. Fahs suggests that war romance had an “educational” value for its intended audience. Through war romance, “women learned the patriotic lesson that they must sacrifice their personal interests for the sake of the nation.” War romance also taught women that “the granting or withholding of women’s love was a life-and-death matter, and [thus] represented women as having enormous power over men’s well-being” (Fahs 130-31). Although Fahs notes that war romances were written by women for women, the author of a critique of war romance in *The Round Table*, for one, does not assume the authors of war romances are women: “we sincerely implore all young ladies and gentlemen of budding talent and limited experience to refrain, henceforth from doing feeble violence to our noble language in their frantic endeavors to gild the fine gold of heroism...” (“Romances of the War” 59). Indeed, since many war romances were published anonymously, the sexes of their authors are unknown.

War romance was published in many venues besides *Harper’s Weekly*. *The Atlantic Monthly*, publisher of all three of James’s war stories, published writing

for an audience well acquainted with high culture, both European and American. Like *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, *Scribner's* and *Century*, these magazines did not cater to readers of domestic and adventure fiction (Brodhead 34-35). Post-war, *The Atlantic Monthly* promoted realism as a national literary genre (Glazener 36-38). Nonetheless, *The Atlantic Monthly* published war romances. The January 1864 issue, for example, includes "Ray" by Harriet B. Prescott: the title character is a Union soldier who courts a farm girl, Vivia, and who reveals, while convalescing from a wound, that he has killed his Confederate brother Beltran (the man Vivia prefers) in battle (19-40). March 1864's "Ambassadors in Bonds" by noted sentimental writer Caroline Chesebro features a church organist in Union territory who has left her Confederate husband and lives in semi-secrecy. She falls in love with a local artist, who goes off to war for the Union. The artist-soldier ends up in battle against the husband and the husband is mortally wounded. The June 1866 issue contains Mrs. C. A. Hopkinson's "Quicksands," the story of Amy Percival, illegitimate daughter of an English earl, who while living in Europe marries Charles, an American who subsequently disappears on business in the West Indies and is presumed dead. In the meantime, a local man, Robert, is in love with Amy, but since Amy is married (a secret she keeps from her American foster family), she rejects Robert's proposal. Charles, now a Union soldier, arrives at Amy's village to bring the news that Amy's suitor Robert has died in battle. As the plots of these stories demonstrate, the war romance formula allowed for variants, but the formula always supports normative social values through the love plot's outcome.

Evidence of James's own attitude towards war romance is limited—few examples of his writing in this period exist compared to later in his life—but in 1867 he reviewed Rebecca Harding Davis's Civil War novel *Waiting for the Verdict*. In his review, James complains of the novel's "lachrymose sentimentalism" (221). Sentimentalism, James argues, prevents an accurate representation of the real world: "it is impossible to conceive of a method of looking at people and things less calculated to elicit the truth" since it "goes dripping and trickling over the face of humanity, and washing its honest lineaments out of all recognition" (222), thereby stymieing "a study or an intellectual inspection" (221). Here James is focussing on the book's writing style rather than on its plot, which he more or less approves of; nonetheless, he suggests that sentimentalism exaggerates characterization and creates a cast of "ghastly, frowning, grinning automatons" that puts "a strain upon [the reader's] moral sensibilities" (222). For James, then, Harding's sentimentalism works against sentimentalism's purported aim, which is to champion moral sensibility.

In general, it seems that young James did not value sentimental fiction.¹³ Nevertheless, though James may not have wanted to be affiliated with sentimental or domestic fiction, he wrote enough stories like them for David Southward to say that James “may be called a domestic-fiction writer” (495). Alfred Habegger argues that James’s first novel, *Watch and Ward*, serialized in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1871, has characteristics of sentimental fiction even as it disavows that genre (*Henry James* 63-84). Several years before *Watch and Ward*, three of James’s stories use a sub-genre of sentimental fiction, war romance, even as they disavow that genre by critiquing it.

These stories’ critique extends beyond literary genre, I argue. Genre is a facet of representation (mimesis in the traditional sense), but it is also a cultural construct. John Frow argues that genre is a social framework whose purpose is to make texts (cultural constructs themselves) understandable (80). Like other social frameworks, a genre constitutes “principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them” (Goffman 10-11). Genre is a mechanism for facilitating comprehension: it is not a text per se, and texts are not examples of genre. Rather, texts are “uses of genre, performances of or allusions to the norms and conventions which form them and which they may, in turn, transform” (Frow 25). This conception of the relationship between text and genre conforms with Jacques Derrida’s idea that “a text would not *belong* to any genre. Every text *participates* in one or several genres, there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging” (230). Genre contextualizes the interaction between author, text, and reader so that readers who are privy to a genre’s discourse recognize the form of communication being extended to them. Genre puts a productive limit on texts: it is “a set of conventional and highly organised constraints on the production and interpretation of meaning” (Frow 10).

Certain genres, such as realist fiction or journalism, make a point of affiliating themselves closely with the real world, while others, such as fairy tales and romances, distance themselves from ordinary human life. War romance makes sense to readers who know something about the actual American Civil War. Furthermore, war romance takes seriously the emotional effects of war on those who are not combatants. War romance acknowledges the uncertainty surrounding the departure of the soldier from home. In war romance, that uncertainty normally is resolved: grief over the soldier’s death is replaced by joy when the hero, not actually dead, returns.

Henry James and his family lived in a war romance, after a fashion, when Wilkie James returned home, injured but alive. War romance suggests that such a positive resolution depends on proper behaviour, particularly womanly behaviour. Yet in truth, other people, including those that the James family knew, did not have their grief replaced. In reality, proper womanly or manly behaviour did not guarantee a joyful homecoming. James's three war stories assert that war romance is an inadequate representation of the Civil War. The American war-time community was not constructed in a way that made war romance plausible.

“The Story of a Year”: Genre’s Limits

Of the three James stories, “The Story of a Year” most closely follows the basic war romance plot: the female protagonist’s beloved, presumed dead, returns home alive. In fact, Alice Fahs names “The Story of a Year” as an example of war romance (131). In keeping with the genre, the story does not represent events on the battlefield (“I have no intention of following Lieutenant Ford to the seat of war” [30]). In other ways, however, “The Story of a Year” profoundly fails to follow the pattern of the war romance. The beloved returns, but he dies; a marriage engagement breaks off with no clear indication of the fate of the female protagonist.

The first sentence of “The Story of a Year” refers to the interrelationship between literary genre and its cultural context: it explicitly mentions the effect of the war on narrative: “My story begins as a great many stories have begun within the last three years, and indeed as a great many have ended; for, when the hero is despatched, does not the romance come to a stop?” (20). This sentence is complex for a number of reasons. Some words have more than one relevant meaning. The word “story” can mean both a narrative or chronology of the past (that is, three years of the Civil War) and fiction (that is, fiction about those war years). The word “hero” can refer to either John or Robert, the two men, or heroes, in Lizzie Crowe’s life. Likewise, “despatched” (or “dispatched”) has three relevant meanings: to be sent quickly to another place, to be rejected, and to be killed (“Dispatch,” def. I.1, I.2-3, and I.4). John is both sent away to battle and killed, and Robert is sent away by Lizzie at the story’s conclusion. Finally, the word “romance” refers to a genre of literature but, by the nineteenth-century, was also used to signify a love relationship (“Romance,” def. A.I.3, A.I.6, and A.I.7). Using the permutations of these words’ definitions, the sentence acknowledges the reality that some Civil War soldiers were newly married or engaged when they died.¹⁴ At the same time, the sentence is a metafictional statement about the effect of the war on popular literary genre.

The sentence is a question, too. Its presumed answer lies within this story. Nevertheless, the answer is not clear-cut. The sentence suggests that during the war, a story could start or finish in the same way—the formula cannot guarantee a difference in the nature of beginnings and endings. The story’s ending reflects this uncertainty. War may end, but there may be no end to suffering.

On that note, “The Story of a Year” does more than question the relevance of a specific genre as an accurate representation of the real world. It also questions the usefulness of genre in general to understanding—that is, representing—the real world. Genre aids in understanding texts because it limits or controls meaning inside a particular discourse. In a similar way, Lizzie, the main character, tries to make sense of her war-time life through different genres—namely sensation, medieval romance revival, and drama. Like war romance, these other genres cannot completely explicate, or contain, war’s experiences.

Early in the story, John is cynical about the kinds of proper behaviour that war romance establishes for his beloved. He tells Lizzie to avoid “that tawdry sentiment which enjoins you to be ‘constant to my memory’” and expresses impatience towards women who “inflict” their grief on others like “the peddler in that horrible murder-story, who carried a corpse in his pack” (“Story” 23).¹⁵ John finds this sentiment grotesque. His suggestion that Lizzie move on with her life if he dies is humane and pragmatic. Even though Lizzie protests at the time, she does not even need news of John’s injuries before she finds an alternative to John in the businessman Robert Bruce. Once Lizzie learns of John’s wounding, Lizzie is jarred from her complacency about her growing relationship with Robert. Lizzie couches her shock over John’s injury not in terms of sentiment but of sensation: “She had been aroused from a dream into a waking nightmare. It was like hearing a murder-shriek while you turn the page of your novel” (“Story” 39). Both the event and the overwrought language used to describe that event are reminiscent of sensation fiction, not sentimental fiction. This “waking nightmare” is followed by an actual nightmare she has about a “man of the wounds”:

It seemed to her that she was walking in a lonely place, with a tall, dark-eyed man who called her wife. Suddenly, in the shadow of a tree, they came upon an unburied corpse. Lizzie proposed to dig him a grave. They dug a great hole and took hold of the corpse to lift him in; when suddenly he opened his eyes. Then they saw that he was covered with wounds. He looked at them intently for some time, turning his eyes from one to the other. At last he solemnly said, ‘Amen!’ and closed his eyes. Then she and

her companion placed him in the grave, and shovelled the earth over him, and stamped it down with their feet. (42)

As the narrator asserts, “He of the dark eyes and he of the wounds were the two constantly recurring figures of Lizzie’s reveries” (42). The “dark-eyed” man is Robert Bruce, whom Lizzie has recently met. The “man with the wounds” is John, with whom she has already begun to fall out of love. The nightmare vision reinterprets John’s criticism of sentimentality in terms of gothic isolationism (the “lonely place”), death, and the supernatural. The dream-vision suggests that John has acquiesced in her decision to abandon him for someone else, a circumstance John had anticipated before he left for the war. Lizzie imagines John’s wounds as the vehicles through which he releases her from her obligation to him.

Another such fantasy occurs when Lizzie, facing both her failure to continue to love John and her anguish over John’s wounding, imagines killing herself:

She roamed about the empty house with her footsteps tracked by an unlaid ghost. . . . Suppose Mrs. Ford should come back and find her in an unswept room, pallid and insane? or suppose she should die of her troubles? What if she should kill herself?—dismiss the servants, and close the house, and lock herself up with a knife? Then she would cut her arm to escape from dismay at what she had already done; and then her courage would ebb away with her blood, and, having so far pledged herself to despair, her life would ebb away with her courage; and then, alone, in darkness, with none to help her, she would vainly scream, and thrust the knife into her temple, and swoon to death. And Jack [John] would come back and burst into the house, and wander through the empty rooms, calling her name, and for all answer get a death-scent! (43-44).

The language and circumstance belong to sensation fiction once again, specifically gothic literature’s motif of a young woman in a dangerous house (Botting 2-3). Essentially Lizzie’s imagined suicide transfers John’s war wounds, already the subject of her dream, to herself, a manifestation of her remorse and self-punishment at having replaced him with Robert.

These fantasies enable Lizzie to understand her deviation from sentimental fiction’s precepts through the outrageousness of sensation. She cannot undo her loss of devotion and thus has contravened war romance’s sentimentalism; she tries

to understand herself through other models. Another model that the story invokes on her behalf is the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature that paid homage to medieval romance. Robert Bruce, Lizzie's home-bound love interest, is a "Scottish chief" ("Story" 38) whose "firm of Bruce and Robertson does an immense business" (36); when Lizzie's neighbour commends her on her "conquest" of him (36), the text is alluding to the Scottish dissident-king Robert the Bruce. In fact, the only book Lizzie has read to the end is *The Scottish Chiefs* (30), Jane Porter's nineteenth-century medieval-revival romance that features Robert the Bruce.¹⁶ This Robert, however, is not a warrior: he has not enlisted. He is not a revolutionary adventurer-patriot, whereas John is an actual soldier. She acknowledges this contrast when she speaks of them as knights on a chessboard: one (John) represents "fact," the other "fancy" ("Story" 42). John is a real warrior, but Lizzie now prefers the man merely named after a warrior. Robert is an escape from fact's reality.

Medieval-revival romance is reinvoled when, upon John's arrival home, the story cites the song that closes section five of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *The Princess* ("Home they brought her warrior dead,/She nor swooned nor uttered cry") ("Story" 51). John is not brought home dead as the soldier in the song is.¹⁷ By the same token, Lizzie has failed to match the moral integrity of the woman in the song. The woman's lack of emotion is comprehensible by war romance as the kind of stoicism that permits a heroine to assist in the amputation of her beloved's limbs. John's mother, not Lizzie, corresponds better to Tennyson's heroine. Lizzie's ostensible stoicism is, at best, the stiffness of someone appalled at her own lack of loyalty, and at worst, indifference. The two allusions subvert the medieval-Romantic figures of the war hero and of the selflessly loyal lover, two character types that war romance uses and approves of. James's story thus denigrates sensation and the medieval revival as genres suitable for representing the war.

Nevertheless, Lizzie, like other "young girls," is "prone to fancy" (43). These imaginative tendencies, or fancy, become aligned with another genre: drama. Lizzie is sometimes associated with the actor role and sometimes with the spectator role of this performative genre. After John's departure, Lizzie tries to overcome her fear of nature by going for walks alone: "Might she not play the soldier, too, in her own humble way?" (31). At this point, she is acting a role, "playing," rather than becoming a soldier. Later, with John wounded and Robert courting her, Lizzie becomes an actor "who finds himself [sic] on the stage with a half-learned part and without sufficient wit to extemporize" (42). She is unprepared and unsuited for the seriousness of her situation. When she finds the tension of her fiancé's situation too much for her, she distances herself from agency and becomes a witness instead:

“[T]he curtain had not yet fallen, yet our young lady had begun to yawn. To yawn? Aye, and to long for the afterpiece. Since the tragedy dragged, might she not divert herself with that well-bred man beside her?” (43). After the narrative describes her dream of burying John, the narrator mysteriously comments that Lizzie has not read *Romeo and Juliet*, a fact both “creditable and discreditable” (44). This paradox is solvable by interpreting the discredit as Lizzie’s lack of interest in reading and the credit as Lizzie’s imaginative talent in naively recreating its elements. By the time Mrs. Ford ominously shuts the door to John’s sick room in Lizzie’s face, Lizzie’s association with the actor role, not the spectator role, has solidified: “The plot of her little tragedy thickened. Be it so: she would act her part with the rest” (54-55).

Lizzie can no longer ignore her past relationship with John. Neither, then, can she ignore that she is a part of a tragedy, that is, she is part of a war. The text explicitly makes that connection: “John Ford became a veteran down by the Potomac. And to tell the truth, Lizzie became a veteran at home. That is, her love and hope grew to be an old story” (33). She and Jack become veterans at the same time. A veteran is someone with experience enough to cease being surprised or unprepared. The term “old story” seems cynical; but it is also another way of saying “formula,” or indeed, “genre.” The old story of love and hope is the story of war romance. This statement appears early in the text, but its purpose is proleptic: it establishes a trajectory. The termination of that trajectory does not resemble war romance; nor does it resemble that of sensation, historical fiction, or tragedy.

Lizzie attempts to appropriate another formula, this one closer to the turn of Jack’s life. Lizzie’s imaginary suicide is the story’s most explicit description of physical violence; “The Story of a Year” has substituted the expected setting of violence in a war story (the battlefield) with the domestic setting. The idea of transferring wounds from battlefield to home seems outrageous, but that idea was a motif in war-time popular literature (Fahs 136). For example, in a July 1862 *Harper’s Weekly* story, “Wounded,” a woman notes how soldiers are not the only people who are injured in war: “From every battle-field. . . go swift-winged messengers that kill or wound at a thousand miles instead of a thousand paces; bullets invisible to mortal eyes, that pierce loving hearts. Of the dead and wounded from these we have no report. They are casualties not spoken of by our commanding generals” (442). In Louisa May Alcott’s autobiographical *Hospital Sketches*, Trib absorbs not simply psychological trauma but an actual camp illness from a dead soldier (Alcott 58). Long (118), following Elizabeth Young (84-87), sees in *Hospital Sketches* an attempt at making an equivalence, through physical debility, between men’s and women’s war experiences.

“The Story of a Year” establishes a similar equivalence by having a woman transform into a soldier. After Lizzie learns of John’s injuries, she begins to wonder if she is more than simply a witness to war’s mortal blows: “A tragedy had stepped into her life: was she spectator or actor? She found herself face to face with death: was it not her own soul masquerading in a shroud?” (“Story” 39). The language is melodramatic, and the shift to a question relays uncertainty, but she is acknowledging her closeness to death. After Mrs. Ford’s agent compliments Mrs. Ford by saying that her organizational competence could inspire him to apply for a brigadier-generalship under her, Lizzie tells herself that she would “apply to be sent South” as though she were volunteering in the war effort in some way (41). Eventually, Lizzie turns herself into a soldier. The only battlefield scene in the short story is her imaginary one. While standing vigil for John on her porch, she sees an army blanket (51) with a “strange earthy smell” and “a faint perfume of tobacco” and wraps herself in it: “Instantly the young girl’s senses were transported as they had never been before to those far-off Southern battlefields. She saw men lying in swamps, puffing their kindly pipes, drawing their blankets closer, canopied with the same luminous dusk that shone down upon her...” (52). When Robert approaches her during her reverie, she stands up; he is startled, as if he had not recognized her. “Are you one of Mr. Ford’s watchers?” he asks (52). Robert’s misrecognition of Lizzie suggests that, for a moment, she had been transformed, both by her blanket and by her imagination, into a soldier. to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word “watcher” means a person keeping vigil over a dying person (def. 1.d.), but it can also mean a guard (def. 1.e and 1.g). She might be a Union army picket being approached by another picket. In becoming a soldier herself, Lizzie takes the final step in approximating herself to a wounded combatant.

In Chapter Two of *The Body in Pain* (60-157), Elaine Scarry asserts that the war wound is a key tool in the “making and unmaking” of national identities during war; the “transference” of a wound away from the body of a real soldier through reimagining the wound as something else becomes a way for nations to deny war’s destructiveness. Using Scarry’s theory, Lizzie’s imaginings around John’s war wounds signal her denial of war’s physical destructiveness and a repurposing of it for her own ends. The sensational transformation of Lizzie into a soldier could in part be a denial of war’s destructiveness, but it is also a way for her to acknowledge how war has made her suffer. John’s death may also be an example of how, in war romance, a woman’s lack of loyalty can turn the beloved into an enemy combatant: the short story implies that John begins to die after Mrs. Ford tells him about Lizzie’s relationship with Robert (“Story” 54). Lizzie’s education, however,

goes beyond what war romance offers. When Lizzie withdraws her acceptance of marriage to Robert, she renounces, in imitation of John, her bond with her fiancé. That is, she imitates, or adopts the qualities of, a soldier's self-sacrifice. She is taking up the genre of soldiering.

Genre fails to account for life's experiences in "A Story of a Year." It begins by asking if patterns or expectations are adequate means of dealing with war and love, and it ends by answering in the negative. Lizzie is no more a soldier than she is a heroine of a sensation novel. Nor is she, really, a protagonist in a full-fledged war romance; her Civil War narrative cannot be bounded by that genre either.

"Poor Richard" and Heroic Possibilities

Love and war intersect in war romance through the pairing of soldiers with local women and with resulting rivalries and barriers to true love. Like "A Story of a Year," "Poor Richard" adheres to this war romance formula only partially. In "Poor Richard," three suitors, not two, court the female protagonist, Gertrude. The matchmaking is not only between her and the men but also in her own pairing of her civilian suitor, Richard, with the soldiers. Furthermore, the love quadrangle does not coalesce in a marriage: the heroine flees in self-imposed exile in Europe, the preferred suitor Severn dies, the male protagonist lives much as he had before the story began, and the villainous suitor Luttrell marries someone else entirely. In addition, war romance supported the belief that war was a mechanism by which American men and women could develop and demonstrate heroism. The fates of Richard, Gertrude, Severn and Luttrell in "Poor Richard" contravene this expectation too. Neither Gertrude nor Richard use war as a vehicle for heroism. Even Severn and Luttrell, who are both soldiers, do not have heroism conferred on them through war.

Interestingly, the story claims that its main focus is the problem of "the actual existence" of Gertrude's "heroic possibilities" ("Poor Richard" 113). To apply the possibility of heroism to a female character may seem idiosyncratic in a war romance of the Civil War, and it is, but not for the obvious reason that she is female. During the Civil War, women's struggles, both physical and emotional, were considered legitimate war-time experiences (Fahs 128-31). Women were excluded from combat, but they contributed to the war through the production of garments, maintenance of homes and businesses (Young 2), and the encouragement of men to enlist (Linderman 85-97).¹⁸ Nursing, for example, was seen, at least in the North, as a significant material contribution that women made to war (Fahs 139-42). Mothers in particular were important figures in Civil War literature (Fahs 103-109). John

Weiss was not atypical when he suggested women's emotions during wartime were more stirring than the battles themselves: "Drums do not throb like these hearts, bullets do not patter like these tears" (684). Women were "the face of our country, waiting to suffer and be strong for liberty, and to put resolutely the dearest thing where it can serve mankind" (684).¹⁹

In this context, Gertrude behaves as a war-time woman should when she adopts a caretaking role in her community. She is in the habit of visiting all the convalescing veterans in her neighbourhood; she meets the injured Captain Edmund Severn this way, when she visits him at his sister's home ("Poor Richard" 138). Gertrude grieves appropriately after news of a blood battle: "her heart was too heavy with her country's woes, and with the thought of so great a butchery" (156). This kind of caretaking is an extension of women's normal social role as healer and nurturer. Just as Gertrude helps the veterans, she attempts to "improve" her childhood friend, Richard, by introducing him to Severn as a role model (138).

Gertrude's "heroic possibilities" could have arisen from these war-time caretaking activities, but the story does not use the war to test her heroism. For one thing, Gertrude does not approve of war: she tells Luttrell, "War is an infamy, Major, though it *is* your trade. It's very well for you, who look at it professionally, and for those who go and fight; but it's a miserable business for those who stay at home, and do the thinking and the sentimentalizing. It's a miserable business for women; it makes us more spiteful than ever" (166). Instead, her heroic possibilities lie in the hope of finding a "sweet and remote perfume" (113) in the otherwise pragmatic Gertrude. This type of heroism is not battle courage or even the bravery of those waiting at the homefront. This "heroism" is more like a synonym for "romance" in the sense of the ancient genre to which "A Story of a Year" draws attention by its references, for example, of the Robert the Bruce. Gertrude's heroic possibilities derive from the chance that she might transcend her commonsense nature and allow herself the adventure of falling in love.

Heroism, however, even in this sense, does not fare well in James's story. The first paragraph of "Poor Richard" sets the terms for Gertrude's development in this story. The narrator notes that the path that Gertrude and Richard walk along in the moonlit meadow is merely an unused stream-side tow-path (a path that men or animals use to pull a barge through the water from the shore). The story comments that this path is "not in itself a romantic promenade" ("Poor Richard" 128). The utility of the tow-path contrasts with the kind of idealized natural setting of courtship that war romances, including "A Story of a Year," open with. This contrast denies the story its connection with the fantasy of romance. Yet when

the story presents her with the opportunities to fall in love, Gertrude rejects them. She does not tell Severn that she loves him. When Severn is gone, she has another opportunity for love through Richard, but she decides against marriage with him as well. She minimizes her attractions to both Severn and Richard when she tells herself that she has been merely seeking a “sensation” through Severn and that such a sensation could be got “cheaply” via the eager and psychologically damaged Richard (“Poor Richard” 149-50). Here, the word “sensation” is a synonym for “romance” in the way that sensation fiction was a subgenre of romance. “Heaven preserve me from the heroics,” she adds, “especially the economical heroics! The one heroic course possible, I decline” (150). “Economical heroics” refers to her possibility of marrying Richard: it is “economical” not because she can improve Richard’s financial situation but because Richard is an easy path to “sensation.” For Gertrude, “heroism” becomes conflated with war-time’s demands for self-abnegation. The tale ends with a sardonic reference to what little heroism Gertrude can achieve. Among her social circle in the Europe of her exile, ‘a little romance is occasionally invoked to account for her continued celibacy’ (179). Gertrude has achieved her “heroic possibilities” through the bathos of the “little romance” that gossip has generated about her unmarried status.

Gertrude walks the unromantic tow-path at the story’s opening with Richard; her relationship to heroism is similar to Richard’s in that he does not acquire heroism through war, though he attempts to acquire it by other means. When the story asserts that he is “soaring most heroically,” he is nowhere near a battlefield (145). Instead, he is on a walk with Gertrude, Luttrell and Severn, and he feels buoyed up enough to assert himself as a worthy suitor. His failure in that scene is emblematic of his failure to achieve the kind of heroism that war romance is supposed to offer its male characters. Richard joins the war cause eventually, but only at the story’s denouement and without much glory. Richard “saw a great deal of fighting, but he has no scars to show” (178). A scar, the “red badge of courage,” is not Richard’s reward, because in “Poor Richard” war cannot give such courage or other positive moral benefit. Richard ends the story much like he starts: with little money, working for his formal rivals in farming and having returned to moderate drink, with a desire but no means to emigrate west. War is more a consolation than a vehicle for self-development and success.

Before he goes to war, he tries to develop heroism in a way similar to Gertrude: through an affiliation with the broad genre of classical and medieval romance. Richard seeks a physical trial such as what folkheroes or literary knights attempt to win the hand of a princess, “some continuous muscular effort, at the end of which

he should find himself face to face with his mistress.” Yet Richard, “instead of being a Pagan hero, with an enticing task-list of impossibilities” is simply “a plain New England farmer.” In his non-romantic context, “his work was a simple operation in common sense,” such that “slaying his dragon” simply meant “breaking with liquor” (137); nonetheless, the story often associates Richard with at least the spirit of a romance hero. When Richard breaks into the conversation between Severn, Luttrell and Gertrude, his intrusion is “a desperate sally into the very field of their conversation” (142). Richard is a “woefully wounded knight” whose social awkwardness and heartbreak make it difficult for him to compete with Severn and Luttrell, such that his stubborn determination keeps him from “restor[ing] the equilibrium of his self-respect by an immediate cession from the field” (144). Nonetheless, Severn admires Richard’s ideals: “Whether he wins her or not, he’ll fight for her” (144).

Richard’s first attempt at engaging Gertrude and her suitors in conversation gives him the “feeling that he had given proof of his manhood” (145). Ultimately, his attempt at successful manhood fails and his “soaring heroism” comes to earth. Richard thereupon has a “a sordid and yet heroic struggle with himself” (146). He chooses not to compete with the two soldier-suitors directly: instead, Richard decides that “if he was not worthy to possess Gertrude, he was yet worthy to strive to obtain her” (137). In other words, his self-improvement will be for his own sake—he will not fight for his country or his princess, but for himself. Richard tries his valour by riding past the taverns in the countryside to tempt his sobriety, which the narrator remarks is “a course of such cruel temptations as were likely either to shiver it [his valour] to a myriad of pieces, or to season it perfectly to all the possible requirements of life” (147). The phrase that he could “shiver” his resolve “to a myriad of pieces” replays Severn’s metaphor of Richard as a medieval knight, with temperance replacing the jousting weapons of Arthurian romance. Richard’s “temptations” recall the temptations that knights in medieval Arthurian legend, such as Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, endure to prove their adherence to the chivalric code.

This notion of “self-improvement” explains the story’s title; Benjamin Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanack* (Marks 61) associates Richard’s goal with the self-help ideology of Benjamin Franklin (Levy 552-54). For Richard, “the plain New England farmer,” the most practical, and perhaps more laudatory, means for self-help is through his farm. Richard begins to improve his property through his own physical labour. The positive effects of this work on Richard become clear to Gertrude, who earlier in the story complains about Richard’s immaturity. After

he begins to devote himself to his farm and to his chivalric trials of temperance, Gertrude finds Richard to be more masculine. Although she initially considers him “an unhappy boy” (“Poor Richard” 150), she later comments, on seeing him work on his farm, on his increased “manliness”: “The truth is that, in this rough adjustment, the native barbarian was duly represented. His face and neck were browned by a week in the fields, his eye was clear, his step seemed to have learned a certain manly dignity from its attendance on the heavy bestial tramp” of his animals (151).

Richard’s most important test of his manliness is to tell Gertrude about the lie he and Luttrell shared about Severn’s affection for her. This act of heroism requires him to realize that he has been the source of Gertrude’s unhappiness. Once he confesses, Richard gains an appreciation of his own worth. By the time Gertrude becomes aware of his transformation, however, Richard has disassociated his self-improvement plan from Gertrude. “She felt that he was abundantly a man, and she loved him. Richard on his side felt humbly the same truth, and he began to respect himself” (178). Richard’s self-improvement is his version of Gertrude’s idea of developing “heroic possibilities,” but he does not need to become an embodiment of a medieval knight to succeed. In that sense, the story’s early reference to a deromantized setting comes true. When Gertrude sees Richard on his horse on his farm, he is merely a farmer, not a knight, and Gertrude notes to herself that “[t]his is not romance, it’s reality”; she takes care their relationship is “divest[ed]... of romance” (153).

In romance, the hero is a moral adventurer of superhuman ability, such as the mythologized Robert the Bruce. The hero of legend and myth was the model for the actual American soldier. As Americans came to discover, if they did not know it already, living up to this model was unachievable. James’s story offers a critique of the expectations for soldiers to exhibit this kind of heroism: the war romance about “heroic possibilities” is really the story of how hero-culture’s idealism falls short. Richard improves his masculinity before he goes to war; when he comes back, his sacrifice seems to be a true sacrifice in that he does not gain anything from it. All of Gertrude’s suitors fight for the Union Army in some way, and their fates do not resemble that of the heroic knight-errant. Severn, the man Gertrude loves, a “mathematical tutor in a second-rate country college” who “transferred his valour to a more heroic field” by volunteering for his Civil War regiment (138). Severn’s skills are humble, “solid rather than brilliant. He was not destined to be heard of at home, nor to leave his regiment; but on many an important occasion in Virginia he had proved himself in a modest way an excellently useful man” (139). Arguably he acts heroically when he decides to go back to the battlefield after news of a northern

loss, but Luttrell questions whether Severn is really well enough to return (157). The story does not reward Severn for this perhaps overenthusiastic loyalty. He dies soon afterwards, and not even in a proper battle—he is killed by a guerrilla (166).

More successful at war is Luttrell, yet he is the story's most villainous character. The name "Luttrell" emphasizes his involvement in combat ("lutte" means "fight" in French). Luttrell is a career soldier, returning to the homefront as a recruitment officer for the Army of the Potomac (141). Severn judges Luttrell as "not handsome, but he looks like a soldier," Richard, more cynical and more perceptive, asserts that Luttrell "looks like a rascal" (142). Luttrell parodies the masculine ideal perpetuated by the valorization of war. Luttrell is a soldier-diplomat, always ready to negotiate but always willing to use violence. Luttrell's courtship of Gertrude is at times described as military manoeuvres. Luttrell calls his decision to relay Severn's farewell message to Gertrude as a "shot" (162). When he finds out that Richard is ill at home, Luttrell is "very glad to find Richard a prisoner in bed" (162). Despite their rivalry, Luttrell keeps Richard close in order "to renew that anomalous alliance" that allows Luttrell to remind Richard of his complicity in the lie about Severn's disinterest in Gertrude and thus use Richard's guilt to keep Richard away from Gertrude (170). Luttrell threatens to respond with violence to Richard's anger over Luttrell's scorn: "Do you want to pick a quarrel with me? Do you want to make me lose my temper?...Strike me, and I'll strike you in self-defence, but I'm not going to mind your talk" (159). For Luttrell, war is a means to gain a rich wife, not to fight for political or moral ideals. Luttrell's speech in "Poor Richard" is the closest any of the three James Civil War stories comes to an ideological analysis of war: "War is certainly an abomination, both at home and in the field. But as wars go, Miss Whittaker, our own is a very satisfactory one. It involves something. It won't leave us as it found us. We are in the midst of a revolution, and what is a revolution but a turning upside down? It makes sad work with our habits and theories and our traditions and convictions" (167). This speech might be referring to southern secession and the North's drive for abolition ("revolution"); in other words, Luttrell uses language familiar during the Civil War of war as a means of social regeneration. But Luttrell gives this speech as the lead-up to his proposal to Gertrude, which he does just after he lies to Gertrude about Severn's death. Luttrell's use of the term "revolution" panders to her political ideology, since Gertrude seems to align herself with Radical Republicans.²⁰ His discussion of the war, therefore, is an attempt to convince Gertrude to marry him. Luttrell does not succeed in his designs on Gertrude, and he even loses an arm in battle, but he marries another wealthy woman of high social standing ("Poor Richard" 178). Luttrell, though a good soldier,

is not a good man. Luttrell, having convinced the grieving Gertrude to marry him, stands over her “an image of manly humility, while from his silent breast went out a brief thanksgiving to favouring fortune” (169). He is a mere “image” of “manly humility”—really, he is an opportunist who sees personal advancement in Severn’s death, Richard’s illness, and Gertrude’s grief, despair and self-loathing. Arguably the loss of his arm may serve as a kind of narrative punishment, but a wound is a badge of honour for a soldier. To give Luttrell victory with both a wound and a wedding is a cynical response to the war romance tradition and to the concomitant tradition of the wound’s moral and masculine-inducing qualities. Both Severn and Richard have more moral credibility, but war does not crown them heroes.

Richard, and to some extent Severn, seems to be the type of marginal figure that Kelly Cannon argues is a “frequent occurrenc[e]” in James’s work—that is, one the those “characters...who defy masculine stereotypes”; the recurrence of this marginal type “suggests James’s consciousness of alternative masculinity, an awareness that he was creating a world substantially different from the typically masculine world one reads about in conventional fiction of experiences in the workaday world” (Cannon 1-2). Cannon further argues that “[c]onventions do not have any immediate utility for the marginal male who seems to inhabit the patriarchy, all the while watching the culture suspiciously as something not his own. He is on the outside and he knows it. His knowledge is dangerous to himself for it could mean self-loathing and eventual destruction while, on the other hand, it could mean a reassessment of his situation and the creation of some position comparable to the safe world of normative masculinity yet of his own making” (Cannon 8). Cannon’s portrait of the marginal male describes Richard’s social position well. Cannon claims, however, that James avoided such interrogations of masculinity in his earlier work (2). Yet “Poor Richard” is an early work. I argue, therefore, that masculinity did get the kind of interrogation that Cannon detects in later James texts. Luttrell’s character and circumstance very much seems to be such an interrogation. Indeed, American society in general was not completely closed to questioning the efficacy of the ideal soldier model, as my earlier discussions of the social role of the soldier indicate. Further evidence of interrogations of masculinity, both in American society generally and in James’s early writings in particular, comes to light in the third Civil War story, “A Most Extraordinary Case.”

“A Most Extraordinary Case”: Death on the Home Front

Like James’s other two Civil War stories, “A Most Extraordinary Case” both invokes and thwarts the war romance genre. Its most obvious contravention is that the male protagonist, Ferdinand Mason, dies shortly after the two other figures in

the love triangle become engaged. The story has another significant contravention: while he was a soldier, Ferdinand had no home front. He is an orphan who lost track of his remaining family until his aunt finds him recuperating in a hotel. As a result, his war-time work ethic is detached from a home front and instead is grounded in his personal habits, on what his doctor calls “tak[ing] things too hard” (241), rather than in his desire to fight for family and country. War romance depends on the existence of a home front because the love relationship arises from union of the community’s extra-ordinary mode of war with its ordinary mode of domesticity. The love relationship signifies the moral justice of war as protector of the community from physical and political destruction. The marriage between the soldier and the civilian seals this relationship between war and community: it creates something productive from the suffering on the battlefield and in the village. Ferdinand does not experience a reconciliation with the community at war’s end, however. Instead, he is an interloper and fraud, and his community does not heal him.

“A Most Extraordinary Case” features a theme common in sentimental war literature: the wounded soldier. According to Alice Fahs, Civil War soldiers in sentimental literature “were highly conventionalized and typologized,” rather than delineated with the individualized consciousness that realism, for example, valued, or with the “solitary rapture” and “intimate communion with nature” that Romanticism valued. Such sentimentalism made important not simply a parent’s or spouse’s fear and grief over a child or husband fighting in the war but also a soldier’s emotional attachments and awareness of his social obligations. The motif of the dying soldier was popular in the songs, poems, and stories of war-time. Americans knew that if a soldier did not die in battle, he might still experience an excruciatingly prolonged death in hospital for the sake of their communal and national ideals (Fahs 115). As Civil War nurse Anna Holstein wrote in her *Three Years in Field Hospitals of the Army of the Potomac*, hospitalized Union soldiers endured “suffering with a heroism which exceeds even the bravery of the battlefield” (47).

In this context, men could exhibit feminine qualities, provided that they made clear through acts of courage their pervasive masculinity (Linderman 27). For example, men could demonstrate their manliness by showing emotion, even weeping, over the death of a soldier (Fahs 106). William Howell Reed recorded how he witnessed soldiers in a hospital ward sit up in their beds, some in tears, when they heard a nurse sing the popular war-time song, “Just Before the Battle, Mother.”²¹ In Civil War nursing literature such as Walt Whitman’s poetry about

his nursing experiences and Alcott's *Hospital Sketches*, the motif of the injured soldier validated the heroism of those soldiers who could no longer exercise bravery in combat: such a soldier could be brave during his recovery or his drawn-out, painful death. If soldiers themselves did not write sentimental literature, others allowed themselves to imagine soldiers participating in the recognition of war's hardships. For instance, the opening lines of Mary Nealy's poem "Dying in the Hospital" demonstrate how dying soldiers were expected to show emotion:

I am dying, mother, dying in the hospital alone;
With a hundred faced round me, not a single one is known;
And the human heart within me, like a fluttering, wounded dove,
Hungers with a ceaseless yearning for one answering word of love.

His tenderness indicates his loyalty to family and community and thus signifies the soldier's virtue.

The literary motif of the wounded and dying soldier was the representation of a war-time reality. Like all Americans, Henry James knew people who had died or been injured during the war. ²²In his immediate family, his younger brothers Wilkie and Bob belonged to Robert G. Shaw's African-American regiment, the 54th (Hoffmann and Hoffmann 542). During the regiment's disastrous assault on Fort Wagner 18 July 1863, Wilkie was seriously injured on his torso and foot (Hoffmann and Hoffmann 549-50). Though Bob's injuries were not as serious as Wilkie's, in 1864 Bob became incapacitated, as had many soldiers, by the camp disease of dysentery (Maher 66-67).

Like Wilkie James (Buitenhuis 18; Edel, *Life* 2:186-87), Ferdinand begins his convalescence on the main floor of the family home because he is too ill to be moved elsewhere. Unlike Wilkie, Ferdinand is not injured in battle: in fact, "it had been his fortune never to receive a serious wound" ("Most Extraordinary" 234). Ferdinand's illness is never specified, though he does have physical symptoms. In the story's first scene, he is "feverish" with "enfeebled perception" (227). Later, his doctor and fellow veteran, Dr. Knight, notes that the "disorder was deep-seated and virulent, but there was no apparent reason why unflinching care and prudence should not subdue it" (233). Even mild physical exertion worsens his condition, such his assistance to Caroline in putting her on her glove and shawl (244), his river walk with Caroline (247), and his attendance at the Stapleton party. A Civil War story that focuses on a diseased soldier, as opposed to an injured soldier, may seem like an evasion of war's violence. Sentimental war literature, including war

romance, was in fact not much interested in soldiers with typhoid or malaria. The reality, however, was that a Civil War soldier was more likely to die of disease than die in combat.²³ The crowded, unsanitary camp conditions made disease a greater threat to soldiers' lives than disease did to civilians' lives (Steiner 6). The outcomes of battles were influenced dramatically—and some battles did not even occur—because disease had killed or debilitated significant numbers of soldiers in regiments.²⁴

With a sick veteran as its protagonist, James's story contains elements of the sentimental theme of the dying soldier.²⁵ Ferdinand exhibits the tearfulness that models of masculinity in war-time permitted: when he realizes that “[f]inally, after the lapse of years, he too was being cared for,” he begins to cry “like a homesick school-boy” (“Most Extraordinary” 230). These emotions were what home's nurturing environment was supposed to inspire in a man risking his life for his people. While on a therapeutic ride through the countryside, his relief that “[d]etestable war was over, and all nature had ratified the peace” causes Ferdinand to look up at the sky “until his eyes began to water, and you would have actually supposed he was shedding sentimental tears” (237). Female characters tend to Ferdinand just as they ought to tend to a dying soldier. Caroline obeys the precepts of sentimental war literature in her insistence on sitting with Ferdinand while he recuperates. Ferdinand chides her, saying she is sitting with him only “on theory” (239); that “theory” could be the notion of the wounded or dying soldier promulgated through war literature. She argues, “Who do you take me for? The hero of a hundred fights, a young man who has been reduced to a shadow in the service of his country,—I should be very fastidious if I asked for anything better” (239). The attention Ferdinand attracts from women at the Stapleton party strikes Mrs. Mason as being similarly self-conscious or mannered: “[t]hey like a man to look as if he were going to die—it's interesting” (259). He is a character in a sentimental war story and they are the doting women.²⁶

Ferdinand's admirers do not fret over the lack of a specific diagnosis. Dr. Knight, however, has suspicions about Ferdinand's health. Knight believes that Ferdinand has “opposed no resistance; you haven't cared to get well” (“Most Extraordinary” 233); later Knight threatens his patient that if he doesn't get well, “I shall tell people that you were a poor spiritless creature—that you are no loss” (242). Knight does not say that Ferdinand is not ill. Yet Knight's comments combine two beliefs current in the Civil War period: first, that war had significant psychological effects on soldiers, but secondly, soldiers could become malingerers—they could feign illness to escape military duty. Shellshock was not medically recognized until the

First World War²⁷, but during the Civil War medical and military staff recognized that war could affect soldiers mentally (Dean, “We Will All Be Lost” 143). The condition of *nostalgie*, or “homesickness,” was an accepted medical condition in the Napoleonic wars. In the United States, “nostalgia” was included in Barthlow’s *Manual of Instructions for Enlisting and Discharging Soldiers* issued to medical officers in the Union army.²⁸ Nostalgia was considered a mental disease, a type of stress or depression that could arise from combat and camp life (Dean, *Shook over Hell* 129-30). Nostalgia was grounds for military exemption (Barthlow 22-23). A related ailment, “irritable heart,” was another diagnosis for war-time stress (Dean, *Shook over Hell* 130).²⁹ The vagueness surrounding the symptoms of these ailments may have been a result of the conditions under which soldiers lived. Camp life was so difficult that at times doctors could not distinguish causes of physical ailments from causes of mental ailments (Dean, *Shook over Hell* 132-33).

At the same time, both combat and medical officers despised malingerers. According to one major treatise of the war period, “The great majority of malingerers consist...of men who exaggerate real maladies of trifling character, or who feign disease outright. Of the two classes, the first is larger” (Keen, Mitchell and Morehouse 367).³⁰ A malingerer was an affront to the codes of morality by which soldiers were expected to live. According to Barthlow, even though nostalgia could be fatal, a diagnosis of nostalgia required “decided and pronounced” manifestations before exemption would be granted (22). Symptoms of stress short of a total breakdown were often viewed as cowardice or as an attempt to shirk duty (Dean, “We Will All Be Lost” 143). Nevertheless, medical acknowledgement of nostalgia and similar illnesses signalled the recognition of a soldier’s emotional (if not broadly psychological) reactions to war. William Howell Reed, for example, describes with sympathy a young soldier from Vermont, hospitalized six months, against whom “[h]omesickness had done its work”: “He said to me, ‘Do you know how many men die of homesickness in the army? O,’ said he, ‘I feel it so much *here*,’ pressing his fingers over his heart, ‘and I think it will wear me out’” (141). This sympathy for the homesick soldier suggests that “homesickness” was a real effect of war as far as many Americans were concerned.

Ferdinand does not behave like a malingerer. A soldier who has been discharged at the end of the war does not need to fake illness. Moreover, he was far from being a shirker when he was a soldier. He was someone who “always worked” (“Most Extraordinary” 234). Instead, Ferdinand has symptoms of depression, a common result of psychological trauma (Campbell, Pickett and Yoash-Gantz 167). While living in the hotel, Ferdinand has no interest in his favorite pastime of reading,

and he has decided that his ailing “carcass had become quite too miserable to be an object worth living for” (“Most Extraordinary” 233). As Ferdinand explains to his aunt, “I had become demoralized by solitude. I had almost forgotten the difference between sickness and health. I had nothing before my eyes to remind me in tangible form of that great mass of common human interests for the sake of which—under whatever name he may disguise the impulse—a man continues in health and recovers from disease” (233).

This disconnection with “common human interests” was characteristic of Ferdinand before the war, however. He was “a singularly nervous, over-scrupulous being,” “a very accomplished scholar, as scholars go, but a great dunce in certain social matters,” namely those matters related to “being somebody’s son, brother or cousin.” His rediscovered aunt “was to teach him the meaning of the adjective *domestic*” (235). In these new surroundings, Ferdinand should have experienced the security and luxury of upper middle-class life (239).

Yet Ferdinand has “a sickening apprehension that he should discover that in one or two important particulars he was worse” (240). The story does not elaborate on the nature of these “particulars,” but the implication is that Ferdinand has not prospered in his new environment. Ferdinand admits to Knight that he “is afraid of dying of kindness” in the Mason household: “There’s nothing here but women....I am saturated with whispers and perfumes and smiles, and the rustling of dresses” (241). On his outing at the river with Caroline, Mason confesses, “I wish to get well, on the whole. But there are moments when this perpetual self-coddling seems beneath the dignity of man, and I am tempted to purchase one short hour of enjoyment, of happiness, at the cost—well, at the cost of my life if necessary!” (249). The desire for masculine dignity is worth the risk of death. After the river outing, Ferdinand falls into a three-week fever punctuated by unconsciousness. When he recovers he is not as well as he once was (251).

In other words, when he engages more fully with the social life of his adopted home, Ferdinand’s health deteriorates, and so does his sense of manhood. Ferdinand’s fear of being demasculinized resembles what social historian Kimmel has described in the real-world mid-nineteenth century America as an effect of “producerism.” This was “an ideology that claimed that virtue came from the hard work of those who produce the world’s wealth”; “work was a source of moral instruction, economic success, and political virtue” (29). The model for American manhood in the age of producerism is what Kimmel calls “The Self-Made Man,” Kimmel takes the term from Henry Clay, who used it for the first time in 1832 in a Senate speech to describe the hardworking people of Kentucky (Kimmel 26).

The Self-Made Man is “a model of manhood that derives identity entirely from a man’s activities in the public sphere, measured by accumulated wealth and status, by geographic and social mobility” (Kimmel 16-17). The ideal man’s “constant drive for self-control helped to create what we think of as the modern nuclear family: the Breadwinner Father and Homemaker Mother and children who remained under their mother’s immediate charge. If life in the public sphere left him battered and bruised and his efforts to assert his manly will over both his body and his fortune left him exhausted, these domestic arrangements could provide a needed balm, a haven in a heartless world” (59).

The ideal American soldier resembles the self-made man of business in the sense that after war tempered the soldier through physical and moral exertions, the soldier could find solace at home. Even though the civilian Ferdinand is a scholar, not a businessman, Ferdinand the soldier has adopted the business work ethic with all its intensity. Knight draws attention to the dangers of Ferdinand’s mode of living. During his military service Ferdinand “took things too hard. You had scruples and doubts about everything. And on top of it all you were devoured with the mania of appearing to take things easily and to be perfectly indifferent” (“Most Extraordinary” 241). Although Knight admits that Ferdinand “played [the] part very well” (241), the insistent individualism of the self-made man makes life difficult to bear at times. At first, anyway, Ferdinand is relieved that he has found a domestic setting in which to recuperate.

A self-made man’s efforts at creating a nurturing rest-stop, however, led to a vicious circle. The avowedly masculine self-made man often found the home to be a feminizing force (Kimmel 58). The self-made man therefore often retreated from the domesticity he had created. Self-made men sometimes escaped civilization by heading west, or, if unable or unwilling to do that, by reading the escapist fantasy of frontier tales and other stories of adventure (59-61). Ferdinand does not literary escapism; instead, he tries to assert his manhood. His courtship of Caroline constitutes this kind of assertion, or as Ferdinand puts it, “bold resolution” (“Most Extraordinary” 247) for the sake of his masculinity. During the river outing, Ferdinand notices a rip in Caroline’s skirts, whereupon he “extended his walking-stick, and inserted it into the injured fold of muslin. There was a certain graceless *brusquerie* in the movement which attracted Miss Hofmann’s attention” (248). It is difficult to ignore a psychoanalytic interpretation of that odd moment. The aggression of his “graceless *brusquerie*” suggests that Ferdinand is exerting his sexuality in an effort to express his masculinity. That the “injured fold of muslin” is the only “wound” in the story is another irony. It is hers, not his; he does not

cause it, either—he merely draws attention to it. Whatever aim he has in drawing attention to it bears no fruit, for the two people leave the river as friends, not lovers.

Instead, Ferdinand feels weakened. He concludes that any suitor of Caroline needs a constitution to match hers. When Knight notes admiringly of Caroline, if rather clinically, “She has a magnificent organization,” Ferdinand concurs: “He must be a strong man who would approach her” (245). A proper suitor, even a former soldier, “must be able to forget his lungs and his liver and his digestion. To have broken down in his country’s defence, even, will avail him nothing. What is that to her? She needs a man who has defended his country without breaking down—a being complete, intact, well-seasoned, invulnerable” (245). He is not a suitable mate because he is not “intact”, manly. As Ferdinand tells Caroline, “It takes more than half a man to fall in love” (237). Ferdinand thinks he has lost all his manhood, of course, not just half of it. War, therefore, has affected his manhood negatively, not positively.

The knowledge of Caroline’s engagement with Knight hurts Ferdinand even further. He tries to adapt to it as a soldier should: “Ferdinand had not been a soldier for nothing. He had received a heavy blow, and he resolved to bear it like a man” (255). Yet Ferdinand compares himself unfavourably to Knight: “He had been a besotted daydreamer, while his friend had simply been a genuine lover.” That his doctor, the supposed healer, emphasizes his weakened manhood is another irony, especially as the doctor is himself a veteran (232). The doctor’s surname, “Knight,” confirms his status as a hero, so he is a suitable love interest for a war romance. By contrast, Ferdinand is an ineffective soldier-lover, so Knight’s success leads to an “injury” on Ferdinand. Knight’s success arises from being “genuine,” real, not a “daydreamer”; Knight engage in the habits of the community that returned soldiers are expected to take up again—to be a domestic man, not a soldier or a scholar. Subsequently, Ferdinand concludes that he “deserved his injury, and he would bear it in silence. He had been unable to get well on an illusion; he would now try getting well on a truth. This was stern treatment, the reader will admit, likely to kill if it didn’t cure” (255).

Since his “treatment” requires him to remain in the domestic setting, the likelihood for failure is high. In some ways Mrs. Mason is more forthright in acknowledging the long-term implications of the war on American men. She “lament[s] the numbers of young men who are to enter upon it with lost limbs and shattered health” (228). She says to Mason that “you’ve had the war and a hundred dreadful things” (228). The war “had already made light, in its own grim fashion” of “his future” (257). In this fatalistic view, the domestic sphere provides only limited

solutions. Her solution is to offer Ferdinand a leisured life in Europe and a program of self-education and acculturation. This program, however, is the opposite of what Ferdinand believes can revive his masculinity. Ferdinand watches the women of the adopted household as though they are a “spectacle” and “with the indolence of an invalid, the sympathy of a man of taste.” Among them, he is like a theatre-goer, a spectator of life, not a participant (238).

In the end, he does not see himself thriving in post-war America. Looking in a mirror, Mason sees a man “very thin and pale, and utterly unfit for the business of life” (242). For Ferdinand, the business of life is a role among roles, yet, after he learns of Caroline and Knight’s engagement, he strains himself to attempt it for as long as he can. At the Stapleton party, he is “to himself...an object almost of awe” at his skill in seeming healthy (259). Ferdinand takes two or three days “to play at feeling well” and then he starts to die (259). Ferdinand is the opposite of a malingerer: he pretends to be well, rather than ill. His “act” as a well man—“well” in the physical and social sense—finally unravels: the “shattered fragments of his long-resisting will floated down its shallow current into dissolution” (260).

In part, Ferdinand’s death is a literary death—death by broken heart. Nonetheless, Ferdinand attends the Stapleton party after being advised against it, knowing that such social situations have weakened him in the past—in that sense, Ferdinand’s death is a suicide too. In the postwar years, suicide was more than a literary trope. Charles Estabrook lists 391 suicides among 339,681 Federal soldier deaths during the war (185). The U.S. War Department’s *Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion* lists 301 suicides among white soldiers (641). After the war, a soldier’s suicide would have been counted with non-veteran suicides. The overall suicide rate in the U.S. may have increased, however, after the Civil War. The pre-war 1850 U.S. census lists 491 suicides (De Bow, *Mortality* 20) among the reported general population of 23,191,876 (De Bow, *Seventh* xxxi); the post-war 1870 U.S. census lists 1345 suicides (Walker 2: xix) among a reported general population of 38,115,614 (Walker 1: ix). Suicide was a taboo and thus often underreported by family and statisticians; nevertheless Eric Dean’s *Shook over Hell* and Dennis Brandt’s *Pathway to Hell* contain case studies of suspected veteran suicides. For these men, as for Ferdinand, the home front did not provide solace.

Ferdinand, like Richard in his own story, is a failure according to conventional sentimental fiction and war-time ideals of masculinity. Both characters struggle to become the kind of men that their people claim to admire, but they fail to marry the women they love. In Richard’s case, he does not die, but his entry into the war derives from his failure, and once in war, he is not transformed into something

better—he is left much where he left off. The first James story, “The Story of a Year,” demonstrates again that someone striving to live up to a masculine ideal may achieve, at best, only a Pyrrhic victory, whether the striver is a man or a woman. All three stories dissect the complexities of American masculinity such that their demands sometimes contradict each other. The stories also problematize the notion that the home front is a place of healing. Because of this attitude to the home front, James’s war romances problematize their own genre. The home front is not always a haven. The community can break a soldier’s heart, just as it can send him off to war and death.

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Notes

1. A different version of this paper formed part of my doctoral dissertation, "Genre and the Representation of Violence in American Civil War Texts by Edmund Wright, John William De Forest, and Henry James," granted in 2010 by the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta.

2. These publication dates are for the stories' first publication, which for all was in serial form. My source for the texts, unless stated otherwise, is *The Tales of Henry James: Volume One, 1864-1869*, edited by Maqbool Aziz, which reproduces the serial versions of the stories. Edel's edition, *The Complete Tales of Henry James*, uses the versions of "Poor Richard" and "A Most Extraordinary Case" published in their first book edition, *Stories Revived* (1885), for which James revised the serial versions (Edel, "A Note on the Text" 429-30). "The Story of a Year" was not published in book form in James's lifetime.
3. Fahs uses the term "romance" to designate a love plot, as the term tends to be used popularly today, rather than to designate the older, broader category of a narrative of heroic adventure with historical and supernatural elements. I use the term war romance to signify a subgenre of sentimental literature as it developed during the war years, and not as, say, a form of sensation literature (what David Reynolds in *Beneath the American Renaissance* calls "romantic adventure" [181-82]). My discussion of "Poor Richard" later on, however, invokes the term romance in this sense of heroic adventure of the classical and medieval traditions. See Fuchs for a discussion of the complexity of the term "romance" in literary studies.
4. See for example Cannon's *James and Masculinity*, Person's *Henry James and the Suspense of Masculinity*, and Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet*.
5. James's circumspection about the exact nature of his "obscure hurt" (*Notes* 298) has led some critics to interpret the injury psychologically, if not psychosomatically: see for example Eakin 108, Edel *Life* 1:175-183, Hunter 283, Kaplan 55-56, and McWhirter 478.
6. For "A Story of a Year," for example, Rosenzweig associates the injured Ford with the injured James (95-99), while Buitenhuis suggests Lizzie's dream about the wounded Ford manifests the guilt over her renunciation of responsibility, the kind of guilt that James may have felt (19). Edel argues that Richard in "Poor Richard" expresses the same insecurity as James felt in 1865 about his ability to compete for Minny Temple against veterans Holmes, Jr., and Gray (*Life* 1:236-38). Albers summarizes various critiques that have connected James' "obscure hurt" with Ferdinand's "obscure" illness in "A Most Extraordinary Case" (592-93).
7. During the first year of the war, eighteen-year-olds constituted the largest age group for both the Northern and Southern armies (Linderman 26).
8. Henry James, Sr., to Samuel G. Ward, 1 Aug. 1863 (qtd. in Habegger, *Father* 442).
9. Henry James, Sr., to Robert James, 31 Aug 1864 (qtd. in Shi 50).
10. See also Frederickson.
11. Estimates for deaths in the Civil War are difficult to calculate because casualty numbers for the Confederacy are incomplete. Nonetheless, official U.S. government statistics cite a death toll of 618,222, or about 182 deaths per 100,000 of the general population and 13.96% of enlisted soldiers. The next highest war-time mortality rate in U.S. history is for the Second World War, with 405,399 dead, 29.6 deaths per 100,000 of the general population and 2.5% of enlisted soldiers (Neff 20-21). Those that did return alive often had injuries: of the 2.2 million soldiers who served for the Union, over 281,000 had non-fatal wounds (United States, Dept. of Defense, "Principal Wars").
12. The 1860 census lists a population of 22 million in the Union; 2.6 million people served in the Union military during the Civil War ("Army United States [1861-1865]").
13. See for example Habegger's *Henry James and the 'Woman Business'* and Richards on James's views of writers he and others labelled as sentimental.

14. In James's circle, both Robert Shaw and Charles Russell Lowell were newly married when they died. For Shaw, see Russell Duncan 83; for Lowell, see Bundy 345 and Habegger, *Father* 440.

15. This story is an inexact reference to the "long pack" legend popularized (if not invented) by James Hogg. In the story, a peddler leaves a large, heavy pack at a residence and a suspicious servant stabs the pack, out of which pours the blood of the peddler's accomplice, who was going to unlock the door and let in the peddler so they could rob the residence. See Hogg's *Winter Evening Tales* 509-11.

16. Leon Edel interprets this reference to *The Scottish Chiefs* as James's way of invoking the idea of civil war, since the adventures of Robert the Bruce were part of the medieval wars for Scottish independence. The allusion also calls attention, Edel surmises, to "the reading about these wars rather than the participation in them"; Edel thus connects the allusion to James's own non-participation in the war ("Two Libraries" 10).

17. More might be said about this allusion to *The Princess*, whose multilayered narrative addresses ideas about woman's rights and gender roles. For more on *The Princess*, see for example Chapter 7 of Sedgwick's *Between Men* and Denecke.

18. Several hundred women, however, disguised themselves as men and enlisted as soldiers. See Leonard's *All the Daring of the Soldier*.

19. For a discussion of gender and the Civil War, see Clinton and Silber's *Battle Scars and Divided Houses*. For the role of women in the Civil War North, see Attie and Leonard's *Yankee Women*.

20. The story notes that Gertrude is a "great radical" and Luttrell a "decided conservative" (156); these terms had specific meanings at the time, suggesting that Gertrude aligns herself with those Republicans in favour of immediate abolition, while Luttrell aligns himself with those who favoured a slow, voluntary phase-out of slavery (McPherson 290-91). On beliefs in favour of revolution among Radical Republicans, see Shortreed 77-85.

21. Reed 140. The chorus to George Root's song explicitly connects family, death and memory:

Farewell, mother, you may never
Press me to your heart again,
But, oh, you'll not forget me, mother,
If I'm numbered with the slain.

22. Among the dead were his cousins William Temple and Gus Barker and family friends Theodore Wheaton King and Cabot Russel (Hoffmann and Hoffmann 539, 551). Among the wounded was family friend Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who received serious injuries in three separate incidents (Shi 50-51).

23. Commonly used statistics on death in the Civil War tend not to distinguish between these two causes of death. Steiner says that a commonly used figure for Union deaths, 359,528, combines death by disease (199,720) and death by combat (110,070) (8).

24. Steiner's book contains case studies of battles that were affected by the presence of disease in soldiers of one or both sides.

25. Collister detects a similar theme in "Poor Richard": he says Richard is "feminized" when, realizing he has aided Luttrell in his plot, he "begins to weep and begs his companion to take him home" (91).

26. The reference to the “interesting” man is reminiscent of a statement that a critic in the January 1864 issue of *The Round Table* makes about the typical hero of war romance: he “is pale and interesting, needs attention and gets it; and the story ends with a wedding on the part of the couple, and a yawn on the part of the reader” (“Romances of the War” 59).

27. Post-traumatic stress disorder was officially recognized by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 (Leys 2). Dean’s *Shook Over Hell* examines the incidence of postwar trauma in the Civil War.

28. Dean, *Shook over Hell*, 128-29. See also Rosen and Anderson and Anderson.

29. See for example Long for an extended discussion of other ailments possibly related to war trauma.

30. Another work on the subject is *Gunshot Wounds and Other Injuries of Nerves* by the same authors (Mitchell, Keen and Morehouse). In their article “On Malingering,” Keen, Mitchell and Morehouse identify “back cases” as a symptomatic category that needs attention for malingering (377-79), a possible reason for the skepticism about James’s back injury.

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