Focusing on James's last three completed novels - The Ambassadors, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl - Maya Higashi Wakana shows how a microsociological approach to James's novels radically revises the widespread tradition of putting James's characters into historical and cultural contexts. Wakana begins with the premise that day-to-day living is inherently theatrical and thus duplicitous, and goes on to show that James's art relies significantly on his powerful sense of the agonizing and even dangerous complications of mundane face-to-face rituals that pervade his...Â Persuasively argued, and rich in original close readings, her book makes an important contribution to James's studies and to theories of social interaction. This book is currently unavailable. Typically enough, James found the moral insensibility of the French playwright to be nothing less than â€œprodigious,â€​ and he was sufficiently provoked to think of attempting to pose the same problem through the medium of characters of his own nationality. But it was not till 1882 that he wrote the novelette, which he sent to his friend Leslie Stephen, then editor of The Cornhill Magazine, where it appeared in the early months of 1883. In the process of the composition, however, the original idea somehow lost its hold, and the story turned into a brilliant social comedy on the theme of â€œgetting...