‘The *Angina Pectoris* . . . Unrelenting’*

EDMUND GOSSE

Henry James was here yesterday, and was much pleased to have news of you. He is looking much better, but the *angina pectoris* is there, unrelenting, and he goes nowhere without the strange exploding specific they now give at the moment of paroxysm. Sargent’s portrait¹ of Henry James is nearly finished, and I hear is a masterpiece. There is a plaid waistcoat in it, heaving like a sea in storm, which is said to be prodigious.

* Evan Charteris, *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* (London: Heinemann, 1931) p. 349.

NOTE

On Edmund Gosse, see p. 10. The extract is from a letter to Thomas Hardy written from Gosse’s home (17 Hanover Terrace) on 17 June 1913.

1. Sargent’s fine portrait of James had been commissioned by a group of the latter’s friends and admirers to honour his seventieth birthday and was painted in the spring of 1913 (the artist refused to accept any fee). James said that it depicted him ‘all large and luscious rotundity – by which you may see how true a thing it is’. He bequeathed it to the National Portrait Gallery, where it now hangs. Max Beerbohm’s verdict on the portrait was that it was ‘a dead failure, a good presentment of a butler on holiday; but no more’ (quoted by John Felstiner, *The Lies of Art* (New York: Knopf, 1973) p. 155).

James and England*

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

‘Our dear Howard’, Henry James wrote of his loved Howard Sturgis, ‘is like a richly sugared cake always on the table. We sit round him in a

* ‘Slices of Cake’, *New Statesman*, xxv (5 June 1943) pp. 367–8.