NOTE

After his naturalisation as a British subject, James became eligible for the Order of Merit – an honour in the gift of the Crown and the highest that can be bestowed on an author. On 18 December 1915 Edward Marsh, who was attached to the Prime Minister's office, wrote a memorandum to Asquith urging that the OM should be given to James. Asquith acted quickly, the royal assent followed, and the news was made public on 1 January 1916. Max Beerbohm's 'The Guerdon', a superb parody of James's later style, describes an imagined interview between the King and the Lord Chamberlain, both of whom are very vague as to who Henry James might be (reprinted in *Parodies*, ed. Dwight Macdonald (London: Faber, 1961) pp. 147–9).

James's Funeral*

EDMUND GOSSE

The group of friends, a large company, who gathered in Old Chelsea Church this afternoon, must have included several whose thoughts went back, like mine, to the mysterious and poignant story which Henry James contrived to publish twenty-five years ago. . . . As we stood round the shell of that incomparable brain, of that noble and tender heart, it flashed across me that to generations yet unawakened to a knowledge of his value Old Chelsea Church must for ever be the Altar of the Dead.

No man has awakened greater loyalty or penetrated so many shy spirits with affection. But . . . when the war with Germany broke out he ceased to be merely the idol of an esoteric group. He became a soldier; he belonged to England. No one has suffered more in spirit, no one was more tensely agitated by the war, than Henry James. . . . Quite in the beginning of August 1914, he said to two English friends, 'However British you may be, I am more British still.'

* *The Times*, 4 March 1916, p. 7.

NOTE

The extract is taken from a letter dated 3 March 1916 and addressed to the Editor of *The Times*. The issue of the newspaper in which it appeared also carried the headlines 'Lost British Ships' and 'New Call to Married Men Expected'.