

A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

tall, but firm and strongly made, giving the sense of weight rather than of speed and yet so finely fashioned and healthy that it was impossible not to think of the line about 'a pard-like spirit.' He was dressed just in the ordinary way, except that he wore a low blue collar, and blue shirt and tie, all uncommon in those days. Evidently he did not want to be conspicuous, but the whole effect was almost ludicrously beautiful."

Notions of height are always comparative, and it will be noticed that Mr. Nevinson and Mr. Thomas differ in their idea. Mr. Edward Marsh, however, Brooke's executor and one of his closest friends—indeed the friend of all young poets—tells me that he was about six feet, so that all doubt on this minor point may be set at rest.

He had been in Munich, Berlin, and in Italy, and in May, 1913, he left England again for a wander year, passing through the United States and Canada on his way to the South Seas. Perhaps some of those who met him in Boston and elsewhere will some day contribute their quota to the bright record of his life. His own letters to the *Westminster Gazette*, though naturally of unequal merit, were full of humorous delight in the New World. In one of his travel papers he described the city of Quebec as having "the radiance and repose of an immortal." "That, in so many words," wrote Mr. Walter de la Mare, "brings back his living remembrance. . . . With him there was a happy shining impression that he might have just come—that very moment—from another planet, one well within the solar system, but a little more like Utopia than ours." Not even Stevenson, it would seem, excited a greater enthusiasm among his friends; and between the two men an interesting parallel might be drawn. Brooke made a pilgrimage to Stevenson's home in Samoa, and his life in the Pacific found full and happy expression in his verse. His thoughts, however, turned longingly to England, the land "where Men with Splendid Hearts may go," and he reappeared from the ends of the earth among his friends as apparently little changed "as one who gaily and laughingly goes to bed and gaily and laughingly comes down next morning after a perfectly refreshing sleep."

Then came the War. "Well, if Armageddon's on," he said, "I suppose one should be there." It was a characteristic way of putting it. He obtained a commission in the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division in September, and was quickly ordered on the disastrous if heroic expedition to Antwerp. Here he had his first experience of war, lying for some days in trenches shelled