

RUPERT BROOKE

at once so impressive a personality and so inevitable an appeal to the affection of every one who knew him, while there has not been, I think, so grievous a loss to poetry since the death of Shelley. Some of us who knew him may live to be old men, but life is not likely to give us any richer memory than his; and the passion and shapely zest that are in his work will pass safely to the memory of posterity." Mr. Wilfrid Gibson's tribute took the form of a short poem called "The Going:"

He's gone.
I do not understand.
I only know
That, as he turned to go
And waved his hand,
In his young eyes a sudden glory shone,
And I was dazzled by a sunset glow—
And he was gone.

Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie, now perhaps the greatest of our younger poets and a warm personal friend of Brooke's, wrote at greater length:

"'And the worst friend and enemy is but Death' . . . 'And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.' So ended two of the five sonnets, with the common title '1914,' which Rupert Brooke wrote while he was training, between the Antwerp expedition and sailing for the *Ægean*. These sonnets are incomparably the finest utterance of English poetry concerning the Great War. We knew the splendid promise of Rupert Brooke's earlier poetry; these sonnets are the brief perfection of his achievement. They are much more than that: they are among the few supreme utterances of English patriotism. It was natural, perhaps, that they should leave all else that has been written about the war so far behind. It is not so much that they are the work of a talent scarcely, in its own way, to be equalled to-day; it was much more that they were the work of a poet who had for his material the feeling that he was giving up everything to fight for England—the feeling, I think, that he was giving his life for England. Reading these five sonnets now, it seems as if he had in them written his own epitaph. I believe he thought so himself; a few words he said in my last talk with him makes me believe that—now. At any rate, the history of literature, so full of Fate's exquisite ironies, has nothing more poignantly ironic, and nothing at the same