

## RUPERT BROOKE

by the distant German guns. Then followed a strange retreat by night along roads lit by the glare of burning towns, and swarming with pitiful crowds of Belgian refugees. Yet as Mr. Walter de la Mare said of him, when he returned from Antwerp, "Ulysses himself at the end of his voyagings was not more quietly accustomed to the shocks of novelty."

On Brooke, as on many other young men, to whom the gift of self-expression has perhaps been denied, the war had a swiftly maturing influence. Much of the impetuosity of youth fell away from him. The boy who had been rather proud of his independent views—a friend relates how at the age of twelve he sat on the platform at a pro-Boer meeting—grew suddenly, it seemed, into a man filled with the love of life indeed, but inspired most of all with the love of England. Fortunately for himself and for us, Brooke's patriotism found passionate voice in the sonnets which are rightly given pride of place in the 1914 section of this volume. Mr. Clement Shorter, who gives us the skeleton of a bibliography that is all too brief, draws special attention to *New Numbers*, a quarterly publication issued in Gloucestershire, to which Brooke contributed in February, April, August, and December of last year, his fellow poets being Lascelles Abercrombie, John Drinkwater, and Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. He spent the winter in training at Blandford Camp in Dorsetshire, and sailed with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force on the last day of February. He had a presentiment of his death, but he went, as so many others have gone,

"Unstumbling, unreluctant, strong, unknowing,  
Borne by a will not his, that lifts, that grows,  
Sweeps out to darkness, triumphing in his goal,  
Out of the fire, out of the little room. . . .  
—There is an end appointed, O my soul!"

He never reached the Dardanelles. He went first to Lemnos and then to Egypt. Early in April he had a touch of sunstroke from which he recovered; but he died from blood-poisoning on board a French hospital ship at Scyros on Friday, April 23rd—died for England on the day of St. Michael and Saint George. He was buried at night, by torchlight, in an olive grove about a mile inland. "If you go there," writes Mr. Stephen Graham, "you will find a little wooden cross with just his name and the date of his birth and his death marked on it in black."