

HENRY JAMES ON RUPERT BROOKE

It is as much a part of the artist's equipment to find fault as it is to praise, for he wants by nature the true value with which he may relate himself to the sense of beauty. It seems, perhaps only to me, that in Brooke's poems there is but a vigorous indication to poetic expression, whereas doubtless the man himself was being excessively poetic, hour and moment together, and spent much energy of mind and body poetizing sensation. For me, there is a journalistic quality of phrasing and only very rarely the unusual image. As for the "Letters", they are loose and jotty in form, without distinction either in observation or in form, without real felicity or uniqueness. Art is nothing if it is not the object, or the idea, or experience seen in review, with clarity. In Brooke, I feel the super-abundance of joy in the attractiveness of the world, but I do not feel the language of him commensurate or distinguished in the qualities of poetic or literary art. There seems to me to be too much of the blown lock and the wistful glance, too much of the attitudinized poet, lacking, I may even say, in true refinement, often.

A too comfortable poet, and poetry of too much verve without incision, too much "gesturing", which is an easy thing for many talented people, and there is also missing for me the real grip of amazement. You will not find anything in the letters that could not have been done by the cub reporter, save possibly in the more charming of the letters with reference to swimming in the South Seas. Here you feel Brooke