

ADVENTURES IN THE ARTS

at home instantly, and the picturing is natural and easy. But other than this, you will find no phrasing to compare with passages of James's preface, such, for instance, as the "sky-clamour of more dollars", surely a vastly more incisive phrase regarding the frenzies of New York, than all that Brooke essays to tell of it. Brooke is distinctly "not there" too often in these so irregular letters of his. Letters are notably rare in these times anyhow, and so it is with the letters of Brooke. We look for distinction, and it is not to be found, they have but little of the intimacy with their subjects that one expects.

As to his poetry, it seems to be a poetry rapidly approaching state approval, there is in it the flavour of the budding laureate, it seems to me to be poetry already "in orders". Brooke was certainly in danger of becoming a good poet, like the several other poets who perished in the throes of heroism. Like them, he would, had he lived, have had to save himself from the evils of prosperity, poetically speaking. He would have had to overcome his tendency toward what I want to call the old-fashioned "gold and velvet" of his words, a very definite haze hanging over them of the ill effect of the eighteen-ninety school, which produced a little excellent poetry and a lot of very tame production. Poetry is like all art, difficult even in its freest interval. Brooke must rest his claim to early distinction perhaps upon the "If I should die" sonnet alone, he would certainly