

COLOUR SEPTEMBER 1920

BOOKS

By
W. Teignmouth Shore

If the shades re-visit the scenes of their earthly labours they must be distressed or amused at the unfulfilment of some of their most emphatic pronouncements. Distressed for the most part, for as a rule prophets seem to be lacking a sense of humour and to take themselves very seriously. Which sage remarks have been inspired by "The Chapbook" for June last, which is "A Bibliography of Modern Poetry, with Poets," compiled and edited by an anonymous "Recorder," which anonymity is, may be, that discretion which is the better part of valour. The Bibliography is as complete as possible a record of poetry published between January, 1912, and the end of May, 1920; and also of "all *new* books of authors who appeared in published form prior to 1912," which, however, is qualified by the word "modern." Altogether the Recorder's Note which introduces this issue of "The Chapbook" is a bit of puzzle, but the body of the work is straightforward as could be desired and highly entertaining, which is unexpected in a bibliography. The entertainment is provided by the critical comments which are attached to many of the entries.

Sometimes these comments are perspicuous, sometimes not so, as for example it is written of Lascelles Abercrombie, "Emotion felt through the intellect and represented by abstract speech characterizes most of his work." May be so, may be not so, who can say? The Poet Laureate is set up on a very high pedestal. Rupert Brooke is summed up as "Intellect and Cynicism"; scarcely adequate? Of Aleister Crowley this is stated, "His knowledge of Oriental mysticism is vast"; is it deep? "His habit of introducing unknown or archaic words into his already almost unintelligible language" is anent a writer who is stated to be "one of the greatest writers of the present day." John Drinkwater's "thought is usually commonplace," and his work shows that he writes "as he feels a poet should." . . .