

VIII. POETRY.

Neighbors, A Book of Poems. By Wilfred Wilson Gibson. The Macmillan Company, 1920. \$1.50 net.

Another volume of verse from this "poet of the poor" is bound to find readers. He has made a real contribution to the advance of English poetry, seen mainly in his grim realism in dealing with the lot of the grimy millions. Like John Masefield, in this he is far from possessing the splendid lyrical gift of that poet. As William Lyon Phelps says: "He is a poet of the people and seems to have taken a vow that we shall not forget them." "Neighbors" takes its title from the first group of poems in the volume, describing in his own distinctive manner English country characters. Then follow war poems which more than fulfill the prophecies made when he published "Battle;" "Travels," a group of pictures of places and a section called "Home" (England), which includes a few poems from an early volume now out of print. The total effect of his work, some one has said, is an indictment. Only whom does he accuse? Is it the government? Is it society? Is it God?

GEO. B. EAGER.

Enslaved and Right Royal. By John Masefield. The Macmillan Company. 1920.

New volumes of poems by John Masefield, which have the ear-marks and show the distinguishing qualities of this poet's work. These Northumberland poets, Masefield and Gibson, have come to be recognized as speaking and having earned a right to speak not only for the inarticulate poor of England, but for suffering, smiling humanity everywhere. In their verses we see, as some one suggests, "art taking the short cut to life, sacrificing if need be every grace to gain reality—the typical goal and

method of twentieth century poetry." We may think them too grewsome, too wholly given over to indictment of modern conditions, but we must feel the heart-throbs of humanity in their verse. In them labor, which ought under God to be man's greatest opportunity and blessing, takes on the aspect of the primal curse, since so many tragedies spring from the root of poverty. All true men and ministers who are followers of Him who gave it as a sign of His Messiahship that the poor had the gospel preached unto them and the common people heard Him gladly, may well study the poems of these men.

GEO. B. EAGER.

Flame and Shadow. By Sara Teasdale. The Macmillan Company, 1920. \$1.75 net.

In 1917 "Love Songs," by Sara Teasdale, won the poetry prize over many competitors. That volume moved one critic to say what doubtless many thought, that her lyrics "will become part of that legacy of pure song which one age leaves to another." The fact that "Love Songs" contains "other kinds of ditties proves that Miss Teasdale is a woman—and a poet," according to Mr. S. W. Firkins. But he says of her work, "The fineness is womanly, but the steadiness is masculine. In phrases where the bare word records the bare fact—in a technique drawing close to the technique of entry . . . the passion and poetry of this writer culminate. The method as method is not new—it scarcely differs from Heine's; but for the time it has become Miss Teasdale's property." All this applies to the poems of this volume. They express a wide range of human emotion in verse that is short and simple, yet rich in music, at times tender, at times full of light, at times of livid darkness. Some one has ventured to say that perhaps no other living poet has had so many poems set to music.

GEO. B. EAGER.