

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The earliest of these stories, *The Flame*, was first published in 1926, having been written a year earlier, when I was twenty; the latest appeared in 1961. The intervening thirty-five years, together with the thirty-five stories I have chosen from that period, therefore give this collection its title, *Seven by Five*. My aim has been to make the book as widely representative of my work as a short story writer as possible, but I have nevertheless refrained from including any of the war-time stories I wrote under the pseudonym of 'Flying Officer X', any of the stories of Uncle Silas and any *novellas*, since these all belong, in my view, to quite separate categories.