

Reproduced by kind permission of Evensford Productions Limited and
Pollinger Limited. Copyright c Evensford Productions Limited, 1933.

PIRANDELLO'S STORIES.

ON the Continent Signor Luigi Pirandello has always been regarded as something besides a writer of metaphysical plays. Besides novels and poetry he has published in his own country no fewer than thirteen books of short stories—exactly the number of volumes in the English edition of Tchekov. Yet "Better Think Twice About It" (John Lane, 7s. 6d.) is the first selection of Pirandello's short stories that has appeared in English, and it contains only thirteen stories, of which several are very slight pieces, hardly perhaps serious or important enough for inclusion in a volume representing his whole output. Doubtless the translators have attempted to give examples of all types of the Pirandello story, in which case they have made a good selection. Their translation, too, is adequate without having the same exquisite and faithful quality of the best translations from the Russian. The Pirandello of the short stories is a little astonishing. There is no trace in the author of "The Other Son," a bare, simple, straightforward tragedy of motherhood, of the involved and baffling Pirandello of plays like "Six Characters," or "Each in his own Way." Indeed, the best of these stories show him as an artist using much the same methods as Maupassant, who might in fact have written "A Call to Duty," a daring little comedy of marital complications. I hope this volume is only a sort of hors d'œuvre to a long meal of Pirandello stories.

In "Twos and Threes," by Barbara Wootton (Howe, 7s. 6d.), there are six stories only. The sketch, the very brief impression conveying a mood, or passing incident, has no place here at all. Its absence is significant, for it seems to emphasize Miss Wootton's inability to say things in that swift, direct, severely economical manner of which Maupassant was such a master. Several of her stories, compressed into half their length, would have been doubly impressive. And this is saying a great deal, for "Odd Man Out" and "Turned Sixty" are stories of original flavour, caustic, vivid, and ironical, and only an unhappy slickness in its final sentences puts "So This is Adultery" below them. "Morning After" is an excellent example of the trying-too-hard-to-say-too-much type of story. In type and atmosphere it is as good as the rest, its satirical conversations are stimulating, but at the end one has that feeling of weariness that comes of going a long way round to come to a point which was plainly visible at the start of the journey.

"The Short Stories of Michael Arlen" (Collins, 7s. 6d. net) is an omnibus full of well-dressed, impossible, elegant, brilliant and romantic people going to equally romantic and impossible destinations. Mr. Arlen, at the wheel, drives at a dashing and dazzling pace that is perfectly in keeping with them.

H. E. BATES.

guess)
young
But his
variety
"Th
Brown
discove
man i
traces
Major
revise
instea
run hi
murde
The r
their
may l
Mr.
fancy
Babu
books
"The
see hi
pated
surely
think
is no
woul
I
Mr.
"Th
Mr.
MO
T
Ellie
nut
in lo
fash
rese
pers
livi
idea
fre
disc
inst
pas
pas
of
par
the
7s.
sin
qu
co
th
pr
ma
RE
M
(C