

Reproduced by kind permission of Evensford Productions Limited and
Pollinger Limited. Copyright © Evensford Productions Limited, 1934.

SELECTED FICTION

THE NAKED TRUTH, by Luigi Pirandello. *Bodley Head*. 7s. 6d.

GENERAL BUNTOP'S MIRACLE, by Martin Armstrong. *Gollancz*. 7s. 6d.

PIRANDELLO and Mr. Martin Armstrong are both extremely experienced craftsmen in the art of the short story. They might be described as two literary carpenters who, using words instead of woods, have mastered the art of making little boxes in which to keep their ideas and characters. Pirandello has served the longer apprenticeship, and has made a great many more boxes than Mr. Armstrong: in his own country he has published, besides seven volumes of poetry, seven novels and twenty-eight plays, no fewer than thirteen volumes of short stories. *General Buntop's Miracle* is only, by contrast, Mr. Armstrong's fourth volume of tales. The balance, however, is on Mr. Armstrong's side, for *The Naked Truth* is only the second consignment of Pirandellian boxes to reach this country.

These two volumes are very representative of the work of these two literary carpenters. They reveal, almost at a glance, wide and interesting differences—differences in technique, material, intention, design, and above all in content. Thus Mr. Armstrong does not seem to have troubled himself much over his choice of woods: like a settled and experienced carpenter he has found the material which suits him, and what has always been good enough for him no doubt always will. He likes an easy wood: he is a worker, in fact, in literary deal, which is cheap and serviceable, and which, if not as fine and beautiful as elm or oak, can always be varnished over. The varnishing is, of course, an art in itself. As to the boxes themselves, the design of Mr. Armstrong's is for the most part simple and unimaginative: four

sides, a base, and a lid which fits perfectly. There are no cunning joints or drawers or unexpected turns of beauty either in the shaping of the wood or in the revelation of its grain. The wood is rough-planed; there are a great many tiresome splinters. The finishing touches are in the clever varnishing and in the neat nailing-down of the lid. But since a box is made to contain something Mr. Armstrong puts into each one an idea, or a plot, or a little wooden figure, and these things rattle with a hollow and artificial sound whenever the box is moved.

In sharp contrast to Mr. Armstrong, Pirandello is a connoisseur in woods. He chooses the wood for his boxes with extreme care, using not one wood alone,

WASHBOURNE & BOGAN, LTD.**SOME NEW BOOKS****NEW PSYCHOLOGY & OLD RELIGION,**

By Dr. Edward F. Murphy, S.S.J., Ph.D.
Foreword by Dr. Fulton J. Sheen, Ph.D.

"...The claims and efforts of the Behaviourist groups of psychologists to regulate the conduct of man, and usurp the part of religion, are completely rejected and strongly disputed by Dr. E. F. Murphy..." — *Irish Standard*. 6/-

SAINT PAULA,

By the Benedictines of Talacre Abbey.
Foreword by His Lordship the Bishop of Meuvia.

"The life of this endearing Saint has not one disappointing line...Of its kind it seems to at least one reader peerless." — *Tablet*. 12/6

FREEMASONRY: A Candid Examination,

By A Past Master.

"This volume will prove intensely interesting to those who want to know something really authoritative about the inner working of Freemasonry." — *Cork Examiner*. 3/6

A MERRY ETERNITY.

A Romance of the Household of Sir Thomas More,
By Noel MacDonald Wilby.

"The characterization is careful and convincing. Long and patient study lies at the back of this work..... Would make a beautiful birthday or wedding gift." — *Columba*. 7/6

Ask for our Latest List.

4, Bloomsbury Square, London, W.C.1.

but many. His various woods are hard and soft, sweet or dry, coarse or delicate, light or heavy, according to his taste or need. Thus the wood in *The Fly* is funereal, dry and sombre, a kind of literary elm; whereas that in *The Naked Truth* is light and fine and subtly polished, reflecting the most delicate tones of colour and atmosphere. The boxes themselves, as contrasted with Mr. Armstrong's, are finely made, with subtle joints, artful turns and beautiful lines, and Pirandello, a great artist with that most essential short-story writer's tool, the plane, relies on the beauty of the wood's grain alone for his effects. There is sometimes a scent of olive oil about his woods, but never of varnish. Lastly, the supreme difference lies in the contents of the boxes. Whereas Mr. Armstrong's boxes are hollow and empty, the Pirandellian box is filled not only with emotion, but with wit and fantasy, and tragedy and colour and the figures of living characters.

H. E. BATES.

HOLY DEADLOCK, by A. P. Herbert.
Methuen. 7s. 6d.

BUMPHREY'S, by R. H. Mottram.
Murray. 7s. 6d.

SWALLOWS, by Elizabeth Montgomery.
Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

of watch committees and government departments: hypocrisy. We have exalted our personal hypocrisies into a system which works pretty well and brings home to each of us the devastating hypocrisies of all our neighbours. We whitewash ourselves, and invent a monster, a Grundy or Dora, who oppresses us. So we hit back—in conversation.

Mr. Herbert attacks this *Dora* from the Press, the wireless, the pages of *Punch* and of novels such as *Holy Deadlock*. Wicked Dora: good old Pewter! The reader has no choice of sides; he must be, he *is*, Pewter; and he looks up to Mr. Herbert, the original Pewter, to speak for him. Who can doubt that it is a case of right against might, and that all the jokes are on our side?

Put by Mr. Herbert the case may seem unanswerable. What he ignores is the fact that in most people the Pewter and the Dora are evenly matched; they live very amiably side by side; and this is the final triumph of hypocrisy—or compromise, if you prefer—which the Satirist must face. Mr. Herbert's attack stops a good deal short of that, and is to that extent shadow-fighting. As an attempt to make our laws better many of his crusades are, of course, admirable.

Holy Deadlock shows up the squalor and indecency which may be forced on two persons who wish for a divorce.