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Miss Catherine Brody's *Nobody Starves* is a grim and able picture of the great American slump. It is a story of the hardships undergone by the small-wage worker, of the unending search for work, of lack of food and perpetual discomfort, of the pitiable struggle for existence of Molly and Bill, ending in a tragedy that is made to seem inevitable, although it is so obviously wasteful and futile.

Miss Brody's story is so vivid and harrowing that it cannot be read with enjoyment or with the pleasure that is to be obtained from a considerable literary accomplishment, but I can say without hesitation that it should be read by all who give thought to economic conditions to-day because it portrays unemployment and the fear of unemployment more graphically than any other book that I have ever read.

Miss Mary Butts has already revealed in novels, short stories, and pamphlets that she can use the English language as an instrument capable of producing pleasant harmonies. She is also an acute critic of human relationships. Her new short novel, *The Macedonian*, is a chronicle-story of the life of Alexander of Macedon, told in ten connected scenes, and it seems to me to be at least as satisfying as any other account of the life of a strange and great man.

ERIC GILLET.

BETTER THINK TWICE ABOUT IT, by Luigi Pirandello. *The Bodley Head*. 7s. 6d.

OUTSIDE EDEN, by J. C. Squire. *Heinemann*. 7s. 6d.

BESIDES plays, which form twenty-eight volumes in the Italian edition, several volumes of poetry and some novels, Pirandello has published thir-

teen volumes of short stories in his own country, yet *Better Think Twice About It*, which contains thirteen pieces, is the first selection of his tales to appear in English. The translators, who have done their work honestly but without that felicity of touch and purity of feeling that a great translator like Mrs. Constance Garnett possesses, have selected the stories from the whole thirteen volumes, thus aiming to give a varied selection of Pirandello's work in all stages of its development. In a short prefatory note they draw a distinction between the Pirandello of the plays—" 'Pirandellian' has come to suggest something metaphysical, almost as recondite as the fourth dimension, almost as obscure as Einstein"—and Pirandello the writer of stories, who indeed might be another person altogether, so simple, direct, and realistic is his art. This direct realism indeed may account for our ignorance of Pirandello the short-story writer, for a country that could shake its head at a Lawrence might certainly be expected to disapprove of *A Call to Duty*, a bit of frank comedy of which Maupassant might well have been proud, or *Better Think Twice About It* itself, the story of an old professor who, having married

THE ARYAN PATH

Vol. IV. May No. 5

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

- POLITICAL SCIENCE IN OLD INDIA
- I. THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ANCIENT HINDU THOUGHT - - - - - Dr. R. Hough
- II. FOR MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: A Message from Old India - - - - - Prof. F. Edgerton
- III. THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH - - - - - Dr. Manu Subedar
- THE NEXT STEP FORWARD - - - - - J. D. Beresford
- A DREAM EXPERIENCE - - - - - W. Saunders
- REVOLUTION AND RELIGION - - - - - J. Middleton Murry
- AUDAHEY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF A RUSSIAN SKILE - - - - - Prof. R. N. J. Sarma
- DETERMINISM & FREEWILL IN SUFISM - - - - - Dr. Margaret Smith
- PRO. JACKSON ON MANI & MANICHAISM - - - - - Dr. Sir J. J. Modi

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a young girl in order "to act as a benefactor" seeks to make up for his defects by becoming a benefactor to . . . "Well, yes, to *him* too, to his good Giacomino, who had been one of his most promising pupils at the High School", all of which has an engaging sequel. But these are far from being Pirandello's only themes. He is interested in the human soul from an infinite number of angles and "his spirit", as his translators point out, "is volatile and he is at times broadly comic, fantastic, witty, and satirical; but more often he is sad". The saddest piece, *The Other Son*, a tragedy of motherhood that also recalls Maupassant, must in fact rank highest in the volume. Very near it, however, comes *The Jar*, a purely farcical tale which no doubt has its origins in folklore, and *The Quick and the Dead*, a stimulating piece of broad comedy

about a sea-captain who found himself with two wives who were sisters.

Mr. Squire's stories are rather of the kind that figure in collected editions of an author's works, or used to do, under the title of *Reprinted Pieces*. They are the work of Mr. Squire the journalist rather than Mr. Squire the poet; they are clever enough, but all, with one exception, lack any real distinction or originality. That exception is a short sketch called *The Reader*, the portrait of a "man who looked rather ordinary, very like a respectable Continental shopkeeper", who came day after day to read in the British Museum, quietly, unassumingly, rarely speaking, going home every evening to his wife in the rooms he rented in Holborn. "Today his name is known, for execration or reverence, over the whole world." That name is Lenin.

H. E. BATES.