

Pencraft from Dickens to Durrell

By GRANVILLE HICKS

NO ONE can complain that the university presses are neglecting the literature of the twentieth century. As I have pointed out (*SR*, Nov. 11, 1961), the University of Minnesota "Pamphlets on American Writers" have been paying attention to contemporary as well as to earlier figures, and of the four additions to the series (published by Minnesota at 65¢ each) only one deals with a writer who flourished before 1900. This is Benjamin Franklin, whose claims to be regarded as a man of letters are discriminatingly examined by Theodore Hornberger. Louis Coxe writes about Edwin Arlington Robinson, and takes a step towards the revaluation of the poet that seems inevitable. John L. Stewart discusses John Crowe Ransom both as poet and as critic, and particularly as Southerner. In "Recent American Poetry" Clauco Cambon mentions many poets but wisely concentrates on a few, particularly Richard Wilbur, W. S. Merwin, W. D. Snodgrass, Galway Kinnell, and John Logan. By and large, as I noted last fall, these pamphlets are excellent.

Southern Illinois University has initiated an even more ambitious series, called "Crosscurrents/Modern Techniques," under the editorship of Harry T. Moore. Five volumes have been published (at \$4.50 each), and five more have been announced. The five writers currently under examination are Mikhail Lermontov, Willa Cather, George Orwell, Samuel Beckett, and Lawrence Durrell. Moore has edited the volume on Durrell, which contains a score of essays by various hands, some biographical but most of them critical and most of them devoted to "The Alexandria Quartet." Frederick J. Hoffman's "Samuel Beckett," subtitled "The Language of Self," usefully devotes considerable space to Beckett's literary antecedents, and comments on both the novels and the plays of this difficult writer.

Richard Rees concludes his "George Orwell: Fugitive from the Camp of Victory" with personal reminiscences, but for the most part he concentrates on Orwell's writings and on the qualities that have given him a special importance in our times. It is a friendly book but not an injudicious one. Ed-

ward A. and Lillian D. Bloom call their book "Willa Cather's Gift of Sympathy," and sympathy is the virtue they emphasize though it is not the only one to which they call attention. This, too, is a well-balanced study. Lermontov seems a little out of place, although in his preface Moore argues, not without reason, that he has the air of being a contemporary. John Merse-reau, Jr., describes Lermontov's brief life and discusses his early work, but he spends most of his space in a careful and rewarding analysis of "A Hero of Our Times."

Oscar Cargill, N. Bryllion Fagan, and William J. Fisher have edited "O'Neill and His Plays" (New York University, \$7.50), a collection of personal reminiscences, extracts from letters, interviews, and essays, reviews of particular plays, and critical evaluations, early and late. As is indicated by the letters that followed my review of Arthur and Barbara Gelb's biography (*SR*, May 3, 1962), O'Neill continues to be a controversial figure. The extreme positions for and against are represented here, together with a wide range of judgments that lie between. It is an exciting volume and a valuable companion to the Gelb book.

E. M. Forster is one of the grand old men of contemporary literature, and a good deal has been written about him, the latest contribution to the subject being "E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism" by Frederick C. Crews (Princeton, \$4). Despite the somewhat belligerent sound of the subtitle, Crews is sympathetic to Forster and to his humanism. His thesis is that Forster's brand of humanism has its limitations, that Forster himself has recognized them, and that out of that recognition come the tensions that give his novels their vitality. Crews traces the origins of Forster's philosophical and political ideas, and shows how they manifest themselves in the books. He believes that "A Passage to India" is Forster's "sole claim upon posterity."

More than thirty years ago I pub-



lished an article entitled "Ford Madox Ford: A Neglected Contemporary." In a sense Ford has continued to be neglected—he died in 1939—and yet much has been written in praise of "The Good Soldier" and the Tietjens tetralogy, which was published in one volume in 1950 as "Parade's End." Richard A. Cassell's "Ford Madox Ford" (Johns Hopkins, \$5.50) discusses all the novels, and the author finds some interesting things to say about some of the early books; but he concentrates, as the critic must, on the two works on which Ford's reputation has always rested. These are works that not only have a considerable importance in the development of the techniques of fiction but can be read today with high satisfaction.

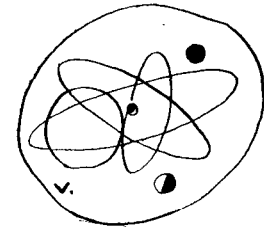
HUBERT H. HOELTJE's "Inward Sky" (Duke, \$10) is a long, sympathetic, and gentle biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne. As he observes, Hoeltje makes less of Hawthorne's "blackness" than Melville did and than many present-day critics do, and what he says about the novels and tales sometimes seems cheerfully superficial. On the other hand, the account of Hawthorne's life is full, making good use of journals and letters, and the book is, in its slightly old-fashioned way, pleasant reading.

In "The Dickens Critics" (Cornell, \$6.50) George H. Ford and Lauriat Lane, Jr., have brought together more than thirty critical pieces, ranging from Edgar Allan Poe's review of "The Old Curiosity Shop," first published in 1841, to a 1960 essay by Angus Wilson. John Ruskin, Henry James, George Gissing, Alice Meynell, G. K. Chesterton, Bernard Shaw, George Santayana, T. S. Eliot, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, and Lionel Trilling are among the authors represented, and what a variety of opinions one finds!

In "The Capsule of the Mind" (Harvard, \$4.50) Theodora Ward, who was associated with Thomas Johnson in the editing of Emily Dickinson's letters, presents a series of observations on the poet and her poems. The first three essays examine, in a sensibly tentative fashion, some of the difficult problems of Miss Dickinson's personality, while the other three explore her friendship with Josiah Gilbert Holland and his wife (Mrs. Ward's grandparents), with Samuel Bowles, and with Thomas H. Higginson.

In several of the volumes on which I have commented I find a note to the effect that publication has been aided by the Ford Foundation. The Foundation has done well by the university presses, which are in turn doing well by the public.

The Physicists' Political Behavior



"American Scientists and Nuclear Weapons Policy," by Robert Gilpin (Princeton. 342 pp. \$6.95), examines the physicists' role in national decision-making and the nonscientific considerations that influence them. Hugh C. Wolf is a former chairman of the Federation of American Scientists.

By HUGH C. WOLF

IN THIS study of the political behavior of American scientists since 1944, Dr. Gilpin has made a significant contribution to understanding of the processes of decision-making in vital areas of our national life. The place of scientific developments in our economic and military systems has become so important that the need for the scientists' advice on policy-making is quite generally recognized.

Gilpin's thesis is that such advice cannot be purely scientific but must necessarily contain a very large political component, reflecting the scientists' views of our national goals and their estimates of the political and military effects of the various possible lines of action. Equally eminent and well-informed scientists, agreeing on the scientific facts, have disagreed sharply on such questions as the initial use of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima, the crash program to produce a hydrogen bomb, the banning of nuclear weapons testing, and general disarmament. Because the public, government officials, and even the scientific community tend to think of the scientists' views as being "scientific" and thus quite objective and free from personal bias, this diversity of opinion has caused confusion and resentment. Understanding the realities of the situation is essential if the advice of the scientists is to be given and used more effectively.

This book is an outgrowth, based on additional years of study, of the author's doctoral dissertation in political science. It is well documented and seems to present fairly the attitudes of the physical scientists, though some of us will doubtless disagree on questions of emphasis. Dr. Gilpin divides the politically active segment of the American scientific community into three schools of thought: the "control school," represented by Linus Pauling; the

"finite containment school," represented by Hans Bethe, and the "infinite containment school," represented by Edward Teller. Most scientists supported the Baruch Plan for international control of atomic energy, and these divisions began to appear about 1948, when it became evident that the Russians would not go along with the Plan.

Those who continued to give the goal of reaching agreement with the Russians precedence over other political and military considerations constitute the control school. A larger group took the position that priority had to be given to the military containment of the Soviet Union. The infinite containment group have believed that agreements with the Russians are wrong in principle until the Soviet political system has changed drastically and Russia has become an open society, and they have advocated unlimited American nuclear build-up. The finite containment group have recognized a serious threat to our security in the unlimited escalation of the arms race, which they have sought to moderate by some restraint on our part and by seeking agreements with the Soviet Union, requiring inspection and control to limit and eventually reverse the arms race.

THE first major break between the two containment groups developed over the H-bomb issue. The General Advisory Committee of the Atomic Energy Commission, under the chairmanship of Robert Oppenheimer, advised the President in 1949 against a crash program to develop a superbomb, which Teller was advocating. They had doubts about the proposed design, which indeed proved to be unfeasible; but they doubted much more the wisdom of a policy of sole reliance on this kind of weapon and the neglect of more conventional areas of our military power. Though President Truman decided in March 1950 to reject their advice on the H-bomb issue, they undoubtedly stimulated a general review of American military policy. The resulting report, completed in March 1950, recommended a vast increase in American capabilities for limited war, and prepared the way for remobilization for the Korean War in that same year.

Oppenheimer's later advice against

reliance on the doctrine of massive retaliation was resented by the advocates of strategic air power. Those who opposed his views, headed by Lewis Strauss, sought successfully to eliminate Oppenheimer's influence by having him declared a security risk. This was a traumatic experience for the scientific community. As the author says, "With the Administration's implication that Oppenheimer could not be trusted because of his opposition to the hydrogen bomb, the government estranged many scientists and weakened their faith in the competence and integrity of American political leadership."

In discussing the nuclear test ban, advocated as a first step toward disarmament, Dr. Gilpin questions the wisdom of the American representatives, headed by James Fisk, in the "scientific" East-West conference at Geneva in August 1958, which preceded the "political" negotiations in this area. He feels that the issues in the scientific conference had a high political content, and that future political negotiations were unfavorably affected by the success of the politically-guided Russian scientists in slanting the agreed report. On this issue, the reviewer is inclined to doubt the author's judgment that our delegation would have done better if political advisers had played a larger role.

In the arguments of American scientists over the test ban issue, Gilpin shows clearly how political and moral considerations influence the so-called scientific advice of the scientists. The "big hole" theory of decoupling for concealment of underground nuclear explosions was developed by anti-ban scientists who wanted to prove that the Geneva control system would not work. The significance and feasibility of cheating by the big hole method were rated low by the pro-ban scientists.

This book is a valuable contribution to the very limited literature on the role of scientists in American political life. Though the author is not a physical scientist and is consequently a little confused about neutrons and the relationship between a "clean" hydrogen bomb and a "neutron bomb," such small errors do not affect the mainstream of analysis. Scientists are here to stay, and it behooves our society to understand them and to make effective use of their services.